Introduction

To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a visitor survey was conducted in 328 units of the National Park System in FY11. The survey was developed to measure each park unit’s performance related to NPS GPRA Goals IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and appreciation).

The results of the Visitor Survey Card (VSC) survey are summarized in this data report. A description of the research methods and limitations is on the back page.

Below (left) is a graph summarizing visitor opinions of the "overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities" in the system. This graph compares FY11 data (shown in black) with an six-year baseline data (FY05-10) shown in gray. The satisfaction measure below this graph is a combined percentage of "good" and "very good" responses. This is the primary performance measure for Goal IIa1. (The satisfaction measure may not equal the sum of "very good" and "good" percentages due to rounding.)

Below (right) is the FY11 GRPA reporting measure for Goal IIa1. The percentage included in the box should be used for reporting GRPA Goal IIA1 performance. The systemwide response rate was 32% with 37059 total visitors responding to the survey.

Understanding the Results

Inside this report are graphs that present the combined survey results for the National Park System. The report contains three categories of data—park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Within these categories are graphs for each indicator evaluated by park visitors. For example, the park facilities category includes indicators such as visitor center, exhibits, restrooms, and so forth. In addition, responses for indicators within each category are averaged into a combined graph for the category (e.g., combined park facilities).

Each graph includes the following information:

- the number of parks and visitor responses for the indicator;
- FY11 data (black), and baseline data (gray);
- the percentage of responses which were "very good," "good," "average," "poor," and "very poor;" 
- a satisfaction measure that combines the percentage of total responses which were "very good" or "good;" and
- an average evaluation score (mean score) based on the following values: very poor = 1, poor = 2, average = 3, good = 4, very good = 5.

The higher the average evaluation score, the more positive the visitor response.

- graph percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding

Overall quality of facilities, services & recreational opportunities

FY11: 311 parks; 32644 respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>Baseline (FY05-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 97%

Average evaluation score: 4.7

FY11 GPRA Reporting Measure for Goal IIa1

Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities:

97%
FY11: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Visitor Center
FY11: 311 parks; 33903 respondents

Restrooms
FY11: 311 parks; 30915 respondents

Walkways, trails, and roads
FY11: 311 parks; 33840 respondents

Campgrounds and/or picnic areas
FY11: 311 parks; 15517 respondents

Combine park facilities
FY11: 34154 respondents (based on 5 indicators)

Exhibits
FY11: 311 parks; 34154 respondents

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 94%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Report # NAPA11
**Goal data (shown in black) with an six-year baseline data**

**Methods**

IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and each park unit’s performance related to NPS GPRA Goals survey.

**Survey of the National Park System**

- **2011 Visitor Survey Card Data Report**
  - FY11: 311 parks; 15517 respondents
  - FY11: 311 parks; 33903 respondents
  - FY11: 311 parks; 32844 respondents

**Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall**

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

**Ranger programs**

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

**Commercial services in the park**

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 79%
Average evaluation score: 4.2

**Value for entrance fee paid**

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7
National Park System
Recreational Opportunities

Learning about nature, history, or culture
FY11: 311 parks; 31610 respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>Baseline (FY05-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Outdoor recreation
FY11: 311 parks; 23219 respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>Baseline (FY05-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Combined recreational opportunities
FY11: 31610 respondents (based on 2 indicators)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>Baseline (FY05-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FY11: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7
Survey cards were distributed to a random sample of visitors in 328 units in the system during the periods from February 1- August 31, 2011. At each park, visitors were sampled at selected locations representative of the general visitor population.

Returned cards were electronically scanned and the data analyzed. Responses from individual parks in the system were combined into one dataset. Data from parks with less than 30 returned cards, or from park with discrepancies in the data collection methods, were omitted from this report. Frequency distributions were calculated for each indicator and category.

Results reported for the survey questions: "Value for entrance fee paid" and "Commercial services in the park" consist of only parks that charge an entrance fee or offer commercial services. For this reason the number of parks and number of respondents will be lower in these charts than in others in this report.

All percentage calculations were rounded to the nearest percent. Therefore, individual percentages in each graph may not add to 100 percent.

The response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of returned survey cards by the total number of survey cards distributed. The sample size ("N") varies from figure to figure, depending on the number of responses.

For most indicators, the survey data are expected to be accurate within ±6% with 95% confidence. This means that if different samples had been drawn, the results would have been similar (±6%) 95 out of 100 times.

The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year, to park visitors who did not visit the survey locations, or to park units in the system that did not participate in the survey.

Low survey response rates increase the probability of non-response bias. Non-response bias occurs when those who choose to participate in a survey differ substantially and systematically from those who choose not to participate. If these differences are related to GPRA measures, the results may be unreliable.
Evaluating Visitor Responses for GPRA Goal IIb1
Visitor Understanding

Step-by-Step Instructions for Evaluating Visitor Responses

To evaluate visitor responses pertaining to GPRA Goal IIb1 - Visitor Understanding, please use the following steps:

**Step 1** Separate the cards that have no written response for the understanding question—these will be interpreted as missing data and will not be included in this evaluation. The cards without responses to this question should be put aside but not discarded.

**Step 2** Examine the responses for the understanding question in the stack of cards that have written responses. If none of the responses on a card are at all related to this question, i.e. “Ranger Joe is AWESOME!” place the card with the non-response cards determined in Step 1. These cards will also be interpreted as missing data and will not be included in this evaluation.

**Step 3** The remaining stack of cards will now be evaluated to determine if the visitor understood the significance of the site they were visiting. Count and number all these cards—this will be the total number of surveys that will determine Goal IIb1.

**Step 4** Locate a copy of your Park Significance Worksheet. It can be found on the PSU website if your park has submitted an electronic worksheet: psu.uidaho.edu

**Step 5** Determine if the visitor’s response(s) match any of the items listed on the Park Significance Worksheet (remember that the Park Significance List contains up to a maximum of 5 items). Use the following guidelines for making this determination:

- Identify the response as a “match” if the **key words or phrases accurately reflect the meaning of the Significance List item** (e.g., a response such as “large number of petroglyphs” is a “match” with a significance item such as the largest concentration of petroglyphs in North America).
- Identify the response as a “no match” if the key words or phrases provided by visitors are not related to any Significance List item.
- You will have 2 piles—“match” & “no match”

**Step 6** Repeat this evaluation process for each visitor response in your stack of returned survey cards that include a response to the understanding question.

**Step 7** Total the number of survey cards for each “match” and “no match” pile.

**Step 8** Divide the number of surveys in the “match” pile by the total number of survey cards that had a response to the understanding question (Step 3).

\[(\text{Step 7 “Match” Total} / \text{Step 3 Total # Surveys with responses}) \times 100 = \text{IIb1 score}\]

**Step 9** The percentage generated in Step 8 is to be reported in the NPS Performance Management Data System (PMDS) for GPRA Goal IIb1.
Understanding Scoring Sheet- Goal IIb1

Total number of cards (step 3) ___________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Number of Survey Card</th>
<th>“Match”</th>
<th>“No Match”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals ____________ ____________

GPRA IIb1 score = (Match total________ / Step 3 total_______) x 100
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  

Natural Resource Stewardship and Science  

The Visitor Survey Card Project  

University of Idaho  
Park Studies Unit  
College of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 441139  
Moscow ID, 83844-1139  
vsc@psu.uidaho.edu  
Jennifer L. Hoger Russell, Project Director  
208 885 4806  
psu.uidaho.edu/vsc