National Park System
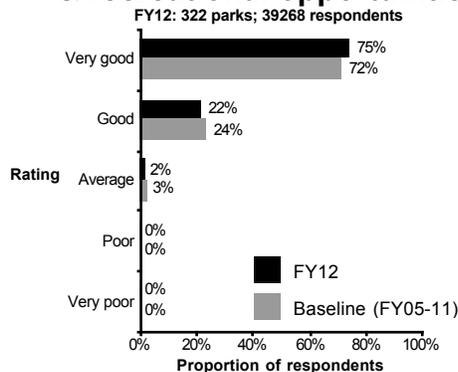# 2012 Visitor Survey Card Data Report

Introduction

To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a visitor survey was conducted in 332 units of the National Park System in FY12. 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 FY12 data (shown in black) with an seven-year baseline data (FY05-11) 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 FY12 GRPA reporting measure for Goal IIa1. The percentage included in the box should be used for reporting GPRA Goal IIa1 performance. The systemwide response rate was 37% with 42084 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;
- FY12 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.

Very Poor | 1 2 3 4 5 | Very Good

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

FY12: 322 parks; 39268 respondents

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 97%
          Average evaluation score: 4.7

FY12 GPRA Reporting Measure for Goal IIa1

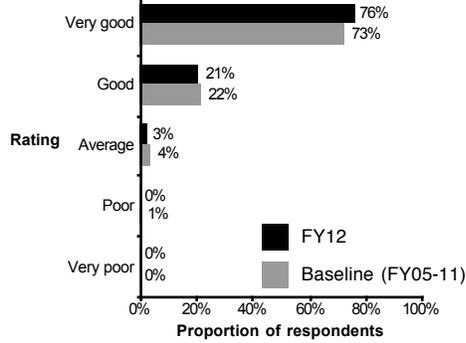Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities:
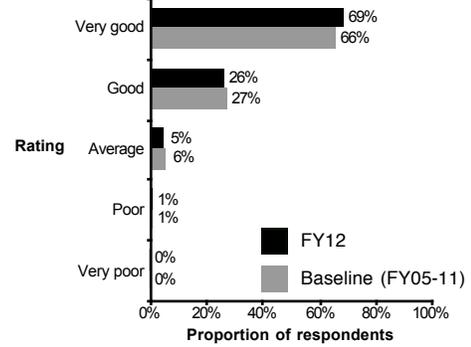
97%

National Park System
Park Facilities

Visitor Center
FY12: 322 parks; 38557 respondents

Rating	FY12	Baseline
Very good	76%	73%
Good	21%	22%
Average	3%	4%
Poor	0%	1%
Very poor	0%	0%

Proportion of respondents

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY05-11)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Exhibits
FY12: 322 parks; 38784 respondents

Rating	FY12	Baseline
Very good	69%	66%
Good	26%	27%
Average	5%	6%
Poor	1%	1%
Very poor	0%	0%

Proportion of respondents

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY05-11)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Restrooms
FY12: 322 parks; 35317 respondents

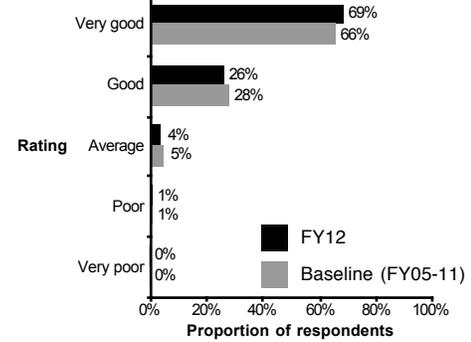| Rating	FY12	Baseline
Very good	59%	57%
Good	29%	30%
Average	10%	11%
Poor	2%	2%
Very poor	1%	1%

Proportion of respondents

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY05-11)
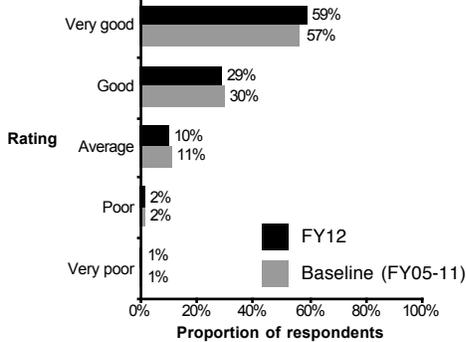
FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 87%
Average evaluation score: 4.4

Walkways, trails, and roads
FY12: 322 parks; 38781 respondents

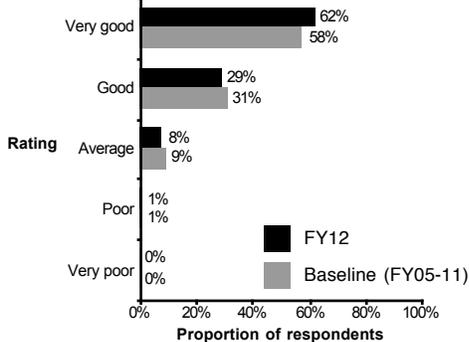| Rating	FY12	Baseline
Very good	69%	66%
Good	26%	28%
Average	4%	5%
Poor	1%	1%
Very poor	0%	0%

Proportion of respondents

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY05-11)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Campgrounds and/or picnic areas
FY12: 322 parks; 17535 respondents

Rating	FY12	Baseline
Very good	62%	58%
Good	29%	31%
Average	8%	9%
Poor	1%	1%
Very poor	0%	0%

Proportion of respondents

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY05-11)
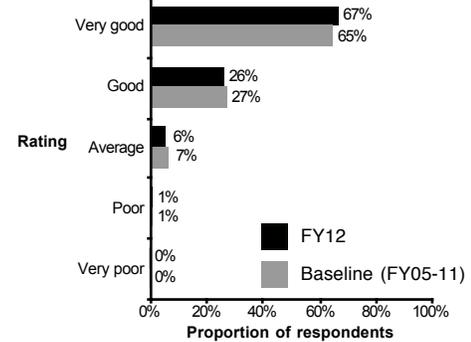
FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 91%
Average evaluation score: 4.5

Combined park facilities
FY12: 38784 respondents (based on 5 indicators)

Rating	FY12	Baseline
Very good	67%	65%
Good	26%	27%
Average	6%	7%
Poor	1%	1%
Very poor	0%	0%

Proportion of respondents
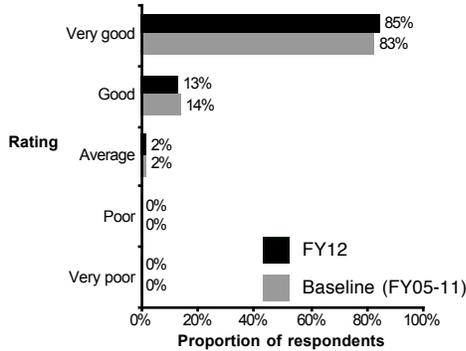
■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY05-11)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

National Park System
Visitor Services

Assistance from park employees
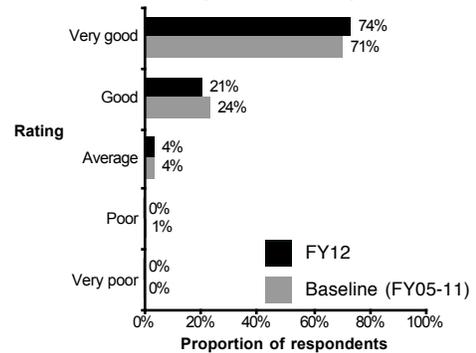**FY12: 322 parks; 39726 respondents**

Rating

Very good	85% (FY12) / 83% (Baseline)
Good	13% / 14%
Average	2% / 2%
Poor	0% / 0%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▨ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

Park map or brochure
FY12: 322 parks; 36420 respondents

Rating

Very good	74% (FY12) / 71% (Baseline)
Good	21% / 24%
Average	4% / 4%
Poor	0% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▨ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Ranger programs
FY12: 322 parks; 22805 respondents

Rating

Very good	78% (FY12) / 75% (Baseline)
Good	18% / 20%
Average	3% / 4%
Poor	0% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▨ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)
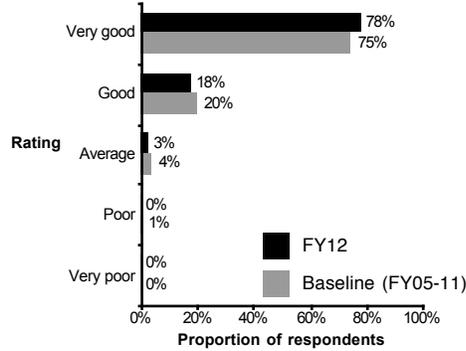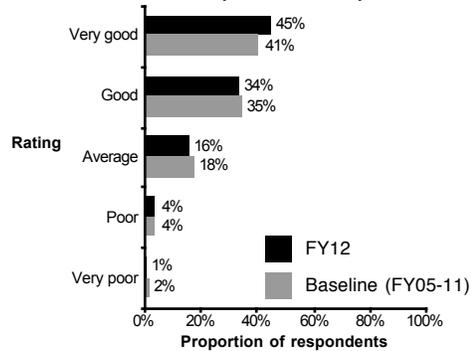
FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Commercial services in the park
FY12: 120 parks; 8142 respondents

Rating

Very good	45% (FY12) / 41% (Baseline)
Good	34% / 35%
Average	16% / 18%
Poor	4% / 4%
Very poor	1% / 2%

■ FY12
▨ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)
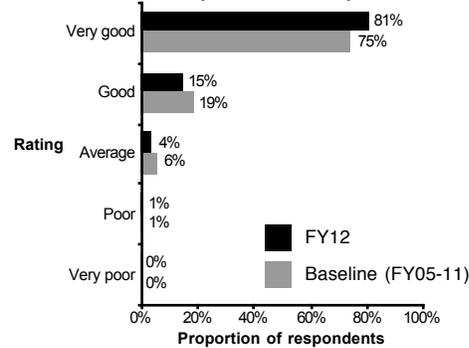
FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 79%
Average evaluation score: 4.2

Value for entrance fee paid
FY12: 143 parks; 17500 respondents

Rating

Very good	81% (FY12) / 75% (Baseline)
Good	15% / 19%
Average	4% / 6%
Poor	1% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▨ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)
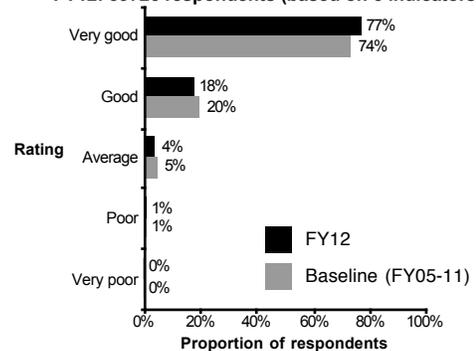
FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

Combined visitor services
FY12: 39726 respondents (based on 5 indicators)

Rating

Very good	77% (FY12) / 74% (Baseline)
Good	18% / 20%
Average	4% / 5%
Poor	1% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▨ Baseline (FY05-11)

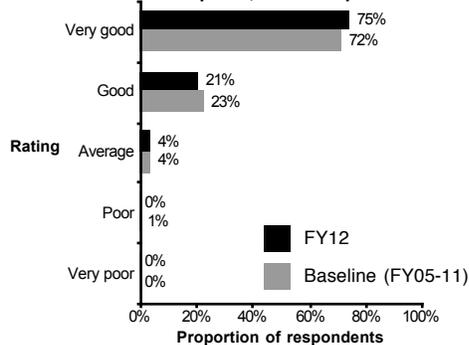Proportion of respondents (0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)

FY12:   Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

National Park System
Recreational Opportunities
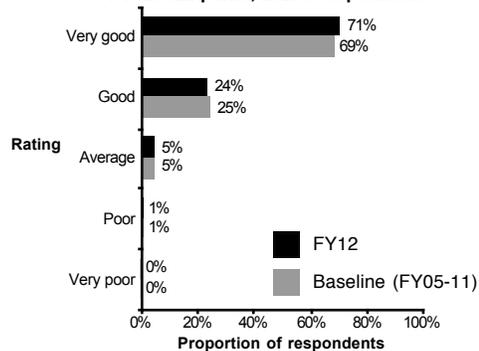
Learning about nature, history, or culture
FY12: 322 parks; 35384 respondents

Rating

Very good	75% / 72%
Good	21% / 23%
Average	4% / 4%
Poor	0% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▉ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Outdoor recreation
FY12: 322 parks; 25265 respondents

Rating

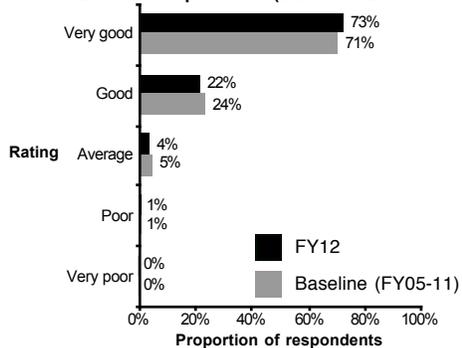|	
Very good	71% / 69%
Good	24% / 25%
Average	5% / 5%
Poor	1% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▉ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 94%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Combined recreational opportunities
FY12: 35384 respondents (based on 2 indicators)

Rating
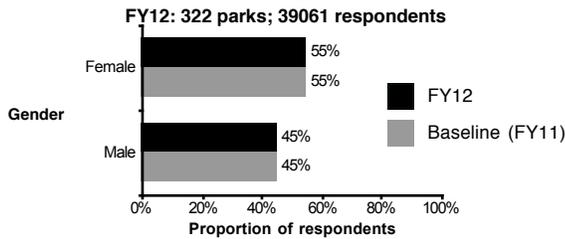
Very good	73% / 71%
Good	22% / 24%
Average	4% / 5%
Poor	1% / 1%
Very poor	0% / 0%

■ FY12
▉ Baseline (FY05-11)

Proportion of respondents

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

National Park System
Visitor Gender and Age Group

Visitor gender
FY12: 322 parks; 39061 respondents

Gender

Female — FY12: 55%, Baseline (FY11): 55%
Male — FY12: 45%, Baseline (FY11): 45%

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY11)

Proportion of respondents

Visitor age group
FY12: 322 parks; 40424 respondents

Age group

71 and over — FY12: 8%, Baseline (FY11): 8%
61 - 70 — FY12: 24%, Baseline (FY11): 23%
51 - 60 — FY12: 23%, Baseline (FY11): 23%
41 - 50 — FY12: 19%, Baseline (FY11): 20%
31 - 40 — FY12: 13%, Baseline (FY11): 13%
22 - 30 — FY12: 9%, Baseline (FY11): 9%
18 - 21 — FY12: 4%, Baseline (FY11): 4%

■ FY12
■ Baseline (FY11)

Proportion of respondents

Please note: Baseline data for this report has been normalized to begin in FY05 due to the addition of the "Value for entrance fee paid" question and the inclusion of "Sightseeing" in the Outdoor Recreation survey question in 2005.

Research Methods

Survey cards were distributed to a random sample of visitors in 332 units in the system during the periods from February 1- August 31, 2012. 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.

For more information about the VSC contact Jennifer Hoger Russell, VSC Project Director at the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit (208) 885-4806 (vsc@psu.uidaho.edu)

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Visitor Survey Card Project

Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

University *of* Idaho
A LEGACY OF LEADING

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