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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>FY12: 322 parks; 39266 respondents</th>
<th>Baseline (FY05-11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>75% 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22% 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2% 3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0% 0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>0% 0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

**Visitor Center**

- Very good: 76%
- Good: 21%
- Average: 4%
- Poor: 0%
- Very poor: 0%

**Restrooms**

- Very good: 59%
- Good: 29%
- Average: 11%
- Poor: 1%
- Very poor: 1%

**Campgrounds and/or picnic areas**

- Very good: 62%
- Good: 29%
- Average: 9%
- Poor: 1%
- Very poor: 0%

**Exhibits**

- Very good: 69%
- Good: 26%
- Average: 6%
- Poor: 1%
- Very poor: 0%

**Walkways, trails, and roads**

- Very good: 69%
- Good: 26%
- Average: 4%
- Poor: 1%
- Very poor: 0%

**Combined park facilities**

- Very good: 67%
- Good: 26%
- Average: 7%
- Poor: 1%
- Very poor: 0%

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6
National Park System
Visitor Services

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

- **Very good**: 85% (FY12), 82% (Baseline)
- **Good**: 13% (FY12), 14% (Baseline)
- **Average**: 2% (FY12), 2% (Baseline)
- **Poor**: 0% (FY12), 0% (Baseline)
- **Very poor**: 0% (FY12), 0% (Baseline)

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

**Park map or brochure**
FY12: 322 parks; 36420 respondents

- **Very good**: 74% (FY12), 71% (Baseline)
- **Good**: 21% (FY12), 24% (Baseline)
- **Average**: 4% (FY12), 4% (Baseline)
- **Poor**: 0% (FY12), 1% (Baseline)
- **Very poor**: 0% (FY12), 0% (Baseline)

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

**Ranger programs**
FY12: 322 parks; 22805 respondents

- **Very good**: 78% (FY12), 70% (Baseline)
- **Good**: 16% (FY12), 20% (Baseline)
- **Average**: 2% (FY12), 4% (Baseline)
- **Poor**: 0% (FY12), 1% (Baseline)
- **Very poor**: 0% (FY12), 0% (Baseline)

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

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

- **Very good**: 45% (FY12), 41% (Baseline)
- **Good**: 34% (FY12), 35% (Baseline)
- **Average**: 18% (FY12), 18% (Baseline)
- **Poor**: 4% (FY12), 4% (Baseline)
- **Very poor**: 1% (FY12), 2% (Baseline)

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 79%
Average evaluation score: 4.2

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

- **Very good**: 81% (FY12), 75% (Baseline)
- **Good**: 15% (FY12), 19% (Baseline)
- **Average**: 4% (FY12), 6% (Baseline)
- **Poor**: 1% (FY12), 1% (Baseline)
- **Very poor**: 0% (FY12), 0% (Baseline)

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

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

- **Very good**: 77% (FY12), 74% (Baseline)
- **Good**: 18% (FY12), 20% (Baseline)
- **Average**: 4% (FY12), 5% (Baseline)
- **Poor**: 1% (FY12), 1% (Baseline)
- **Very poor**: 0% (FY12), 0% (Baseline)

FY12: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7
Learning about nature, history, or culture
FY12: 322 parks; 35384 respondents

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<tr>
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FY12: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Outdoor recreation
FY12: 322 parks; 25265 respondents

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

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

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FY12: Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7
National Park System
Visitor Gender and Age Group

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)

Report # NAPA12
Responding for Goal IIa1. (The satisfaction measure may not equal the graph is a combined percentage of "good" and "very poor" opportunities.) To be clear, a proportion of respondents were discouraging, which is an added context to the satisfaction measure.

Therefore, the overall satisfaction is calculated as a combined percentage of respondents who are either "good" or "very poor". This percentage is then used to assess the performance of the National Park System.

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. The research included systematic samples from August 2011 to August 2012.

When normalizing the dataset, the research team uses a baseline score of 72% for the average satisfaction across all indicators.

The Visitor Survey Card Data Report FY12: 322 parks; 22,805 respondents

Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall (FY05-11) was 60%.

The satisfaction measure includes data from three categories of data—park facilities, visitor services, and visitor center. The research team included 71% of respondents from the Idaho National Park System.

Therefore, visitor services scored 72%, with a 74% satisfaction rate. Visitor center and park facilities scored 69%, with a 66% satisfaction rate.

The research team also noted the importance of the addition of the "Value for entrance fee paid" question, which helped in normalizing the dataset.

Overall, the research team found that the satisfaction rate of respondents was 60%, which is a combined percentage of respondents who are either "good" or "very poor". This percentage is then used to assess the performance of the National Park System.

Additional data was included from the National Park System Research Center.

For more information, please contact vsc@psu.uidaho.edu or psu.uidaho.edu/vsc.