



Social Science Program
National Park Service
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Visitor Services Project



Serving the Visitor 2003



A Report on Visitors to the National Park System

NPS Visitor Services Project

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Table of Contents

	Page
Foreword	1
Introduction	2
How parks have used VSP/VSC results	4
Superintendents' evaluations of the VSP	5
VSP Visitor Studies	6
VSC Satisfaction Card	15
Conclusion	21
Research Methods	22
VSP Visitor Studies Park Units	24

Foreword

From the Director



From Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park to Mojave National Preserve; Cowpens National Battlefield to Oregon Caves National Monument, the depth and breadth of the National Park System makes us proud to offer opportunities for learning, recreation and enjoyment to the American public and international visitors. The wealth of natural, cultural and scenic resources preserved and protected by the National Park System enriches everyone's lives. During 2003, there were over 266 million visits to the 388 park units for these reasons. For example, the parks can provide places of refuge. One visitor recently commented: "Keep it as a place people can get away from the noise and hectic pace to relax, enjoy nature, exercise and learn."

The men and women of the National Park Service manage the sites and educate the public, providing the "service" in the agency's name. The quality of this service determines the quality of the visitor experience. Parks offer visitors many experiences, which cannot always be measured in tangible ways, but the twelve visitor services and facilities studied for this report help determine how well we, the people of the National Park Service, are doing.

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) has provided visitor demographic information and visitor feedback through more than 130 studies in over 110 parks since 1988. The Visitor Survey Card was completed at 333 parks during 2003. This scientific data helps park managers more effectively and efficiently operate the parks. In this report, you will find examples of the ways managers have used VSP data.

This tenth *Serving the Visitor* report demonstrates that the dedicated employees of the National Park Service continue to deserve recognition for the quality of the experience that they offer park visitors. The quality ratings for the twelve services and facilities, without exception, have improved since the first *Serving the Visitor* report was issued in 1994. Read this report and be proud of the job you are doing in serving the American public!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Fran P. Mainella". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran P. Mainella
Director

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS), as a public service agency, needs to know how well public needs are being met. In 2003, the public served by the NPS numbered over 266 million visitors. The Park Studies Unit, based at the University of Idaho, is a branch of the NPS that asks a sample of visitors to evaluate their park visits each year. The Visitor Services Project (VSP) in-depth visitor studies and Visitor Survey Card (VSC) both provide important data on how well the visitor is being served, as well as visitor understanding of park resource issues. This tenth annual report—"Serving the Visitor 2003"—compiles some visitor opinions about their park visits derived from these two types of visitor studies.

Since 1988, the VSP has conducted over 130 in-depth visitor studies in over 110 units of the National Park System. Through these customized studies, park managers obtain accurate information about visitors—who they are, what they do, their needs and opinions. Managers have used this information in a variety of ways to learn from and about visitors (see Page 4). From this data, parks can put the data to use in improving operations and better serving the public. Visitors sometimes comment on improvements in parks that they visit more than once.

The VSC has used a visitor satisfaction card for the past six years to survey visitors to over 300 units of the National Park System. The card continues to be used annually by NPS units to measure performance related to visitor satisfaction and visitor understanding. The survey results allow park managers to report performance in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). In addition, the results can be applied to

management needs, such as improving the design of park facilities, identifying general strengths and weaknesses in visitor services, and employee training. Results are compiled into park, cluster, regional, and national reports.

The first section of this report discusses ways that park superintendents have found the data valuable in managing the parks and serving the public. This is followed by quotes from superintendents' evaluations of the VSP. The next section describes visitors' evaluations of 12 important services, taken from the in-depth visitor studies in selected parks. The quality ratings by visitors in *Serving the Visitor 2003* are *indicators* of customer service—only a few of the services provided by the NPS, and only visitors who responded to the questions are included. In this section, each graph compares 2 years of current data (2002-2003), shown in black, with 5-year baseline data



Grand Canyon National Park, VSP visitor study, 2003

(1998-2002), shown in green. Graphs that show results for less than 5 parks are labeled with "CAUTION!" since data gathered from such a small number of parks should be interpreted and used cautiously.

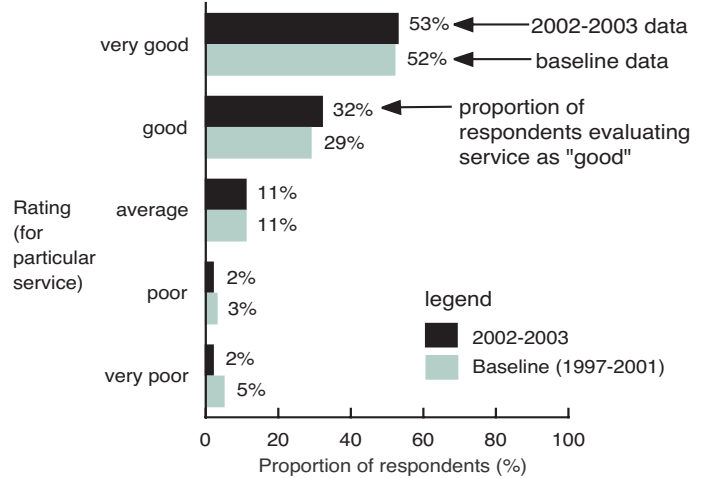
The second section includes visitors' evaluations of important services from the customer satisfaction card surveys conducted in most NPS units. Included are 3 important service categories—park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities—as well as the overall rating used in reporting GPRA performance. In this section, each graph compares current data (2003) shown in black, with a 5-year baseline of data (1998-2002), shown in green.

An appendix at the end of this report describes the research methods and limitations of both types of studies.

A visitor's comment:

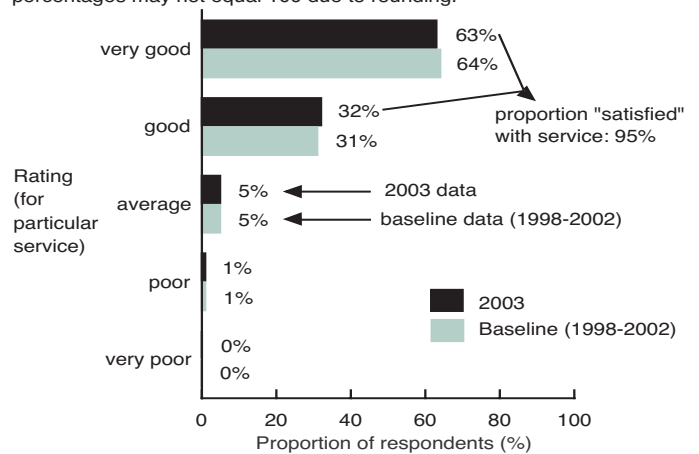
Keep development of facilities to a minimum, but maintain high quality. This is a great platform for education & enjoyment without suffering the crowds found in some of our national parks. Improve the emphasis on educating. Discourage crowds.

2002-2003: Number of parks represented; number of respondents represented; percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.



Sample graph for in-depth visitor studies

2003: Number of responses represented; number of indicators represented; percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.



Sample graph for customer satisfaction card surveys

How parks have used VSP/VSC results

Park superintendents and other park managers have been asked how they have used VSP and VSC data. Listed below are some examples of their responses.

"The results are useful and many of our partners are already utilizing the information from the study, such as our local chamber of commerce and their various tourism committees. We have also implemented changes at the park level to improve our signage and wayside exhibits. Many of the changes will enhance a visitor's experience at our park, and are cost-effective for us to implement."

Superintendent
Knife River Indian Villages NHS

Other examples of how parks have used VSP results:

- Kenai Fjords NP shared their data with their community and development groups, which helped obtain funding to build a multi-million dollar state-of-the-art aquarium/research facility.
- Grand Teton NP changed the location of a planned information center after learning that more visitor groups went to another site first.
- Death Valley NP translated safety information into additional foreign languages after learning that 72% of summer visitors were international.
- The Sequoia & Kings Canyon NPs visitor study provided concrete data on visitor demographics/activities and recognition that visitor use is shifting toward day use, allowing adjustment of park operations.
- Catoctin Mountain Park visitor results helped improve the interpretive programs and will be used to update the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, Statement for Management and future General Management Plan.

Visitors who visit parks more than once sometimes notice changes in how the park is managed. Below are some visitor comments about changes visitor groups have noticed in the parks they have visited.

A visitor's comment from the VSP:

In the past we've met rather surly + un knowledgeable employees but that hasn't been a problem for the last couple of years. So - that's a nice change.

A visitor's comment from the VSC:

Hi: I FILLED OUT A SURVEY TWO YEARS AGO WHEN WE WERE LAST HERE. I HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT YOU HEARD ABOUT THE SAME THING FROM NUMEROUS OTHER CONCERNED FOLKS AS YOU DID FROM ME WHICH WAS ABOUT ALL THE SWAMI BUGGIES AND A.T.V.'S RACING ALL AROUND AND THROUGH MONUMENT LAKE CAMP GROUND WHILE WE PAYING R.V.ERS CHOKED ON ALL THE DUST. I WANT TO GIVE A BIG THANKS TO YOU FOLKS FOR TAKING ACTION. WOW THIS IS GREAT.

Superintendents' evaluations of the VSP



C&O Canal National Historical Park, 2003

In order to improve the VSP, park superintendents are asked to evaluate the work at the end of each park's project. Below are some recent evaluations.

"We are just beginning to realize how useful this information will be for the park.

- Adjusted the daily program schedule base on time of visit data.*
- Much of this information will be included in the General Management Plan, currently being written.*
- Family and children audience - the high percentage of family groups and children surprised even the most experienced on the staff. This is especially valuable as the park is planning new wayside and visitor center exhibits."*

Superintendent
Capulin Volcano NM

"There will be immediate operational uses. For example, the results confirmed our assumptions that recent declines in visitor satisfaction at Wright Brothers and the Hatteras Lighthouse stemmed from the facilities being closed to the public for necessary repairs. Similarly, they confirmed the importance of good signage and of our need to resurrect an effective sign plan.

Probably the greatest use will be to provide input to or as supporting data for several ongoing planning projects at the Outer Banks Group. We believe consideration of the VSP results in these plans will give us more accurate assessments of resource management and visitor concerns while developing these plans."

Superintendent
Outer Banks Group parks

"The results have been quite useful, both as we continue with our GMP process, and in providing solid demographics information about park visitors for ourselves, and to our partners in the area. We've shared the report with the Alamosa Tourism Development Board and local chambers of commerce, who tell us that the information is valuable to them."

Superintendent
Great Sand Dunes NM and Preserve

"Every park should have the opportunity for an updated VSP - the VSP gives us an important, timely and relevant tool to manage visitor use effectively and provide the best services we can."

Superintendent
Pinnacles NM

VSP Visitor Studies

General Services

Park personnel

Park employees, such as rangers at entrance stations, maintenance employees, emergency response teams, and law enforcement officers are an important part of many visitors' park experience. Visitors at 17 parks were asked to rate the quality of park personnel at those parks. Many visitor groups (65%) rated the quality of park personnel as "very good," slightly higher than the baseline rating of 64%. Another 23% of visitors rated park personnel as "good" and 8% rated them as "average." Three percent rated park personnel as "poor" or "very poor," less than the baseline rating of 4%.

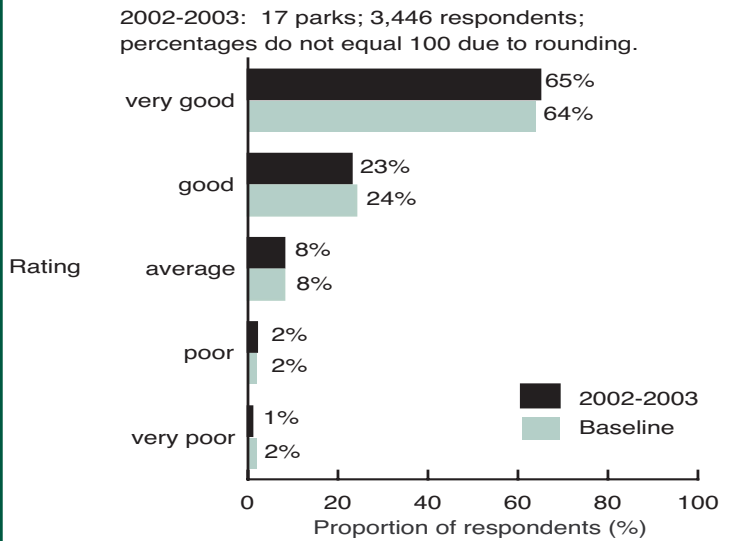


Figure 1: Quality of park personnel

Visitor centers

Visitor centers offer information, publications for sale, and other services to help visitors enjoy their park visit. The general quality of visitor centers in 11 parks was rated as "very good" by 48% of visitor groups, compared to the baseline rating of 53%. Twenty-nine percent of visitor groups rated visitor centers as "good" and 14% rated them as "average." Another 8% rated visitor centers as "poor" or "very poor," compared to the baseline rating of 5%.

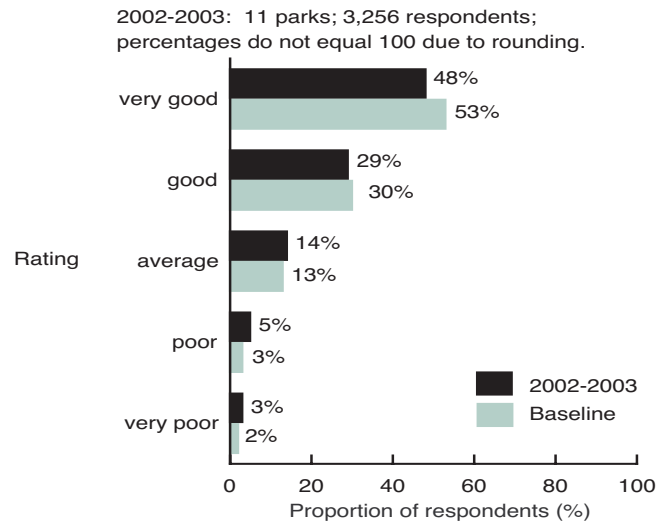


Figure 2: Quality of visitor centers

Directional signs

Directional signs are important in helping visitors find their way around parks and to locate services, facilities, and points of interest. Visitors at 13 parks evaluated the quality of directional signs in and around those parks. Less than one-half (47%) of the visitor groups rated the directional signs as “very good,” equal to the baseline rating of 47%. About one-third of visitor groups (32%) felt the directional signs were “good,” while 15% rated them as “average.” Another 6% rated the directional signs as “poor” or “very poor,” less than the baseline rating of 7%.



Fort Stanwix National Monument, 2003

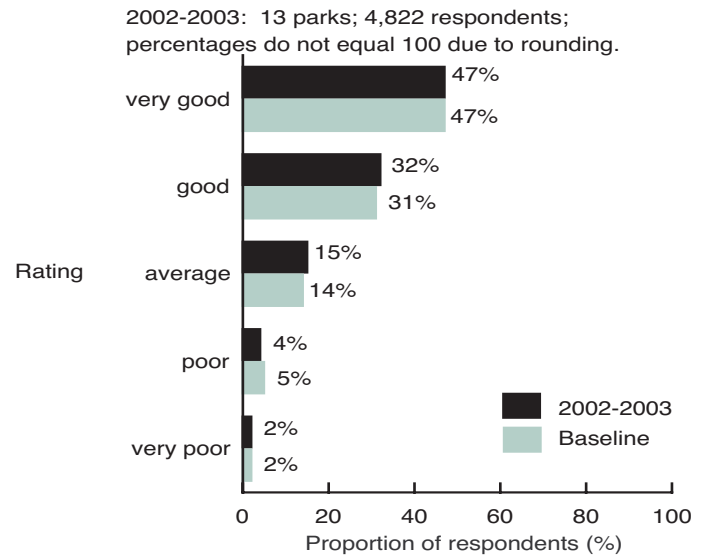


Figure 3: Quality of directional signs

A visitor's comment:

*You are doing well with the resources
& funding available. All the staff
made us feel welcome & readily
answered questions.*

NPS Facilities

Restrooms

Restrooms are a necessity for park visitors. Visitors at 19 parks were asked to rate the quality of the restrooms in those parks. The quality of restrooms was rated as "very good" by 45% of the visitor groups, compared to the baseline rating of 40%. Another 31% of visitors felt the restrooms were "good" and 17% rated them as "average." Seven percent rated the restrooms as "poor" or "very poor," compared to the baseline rating of 9%.

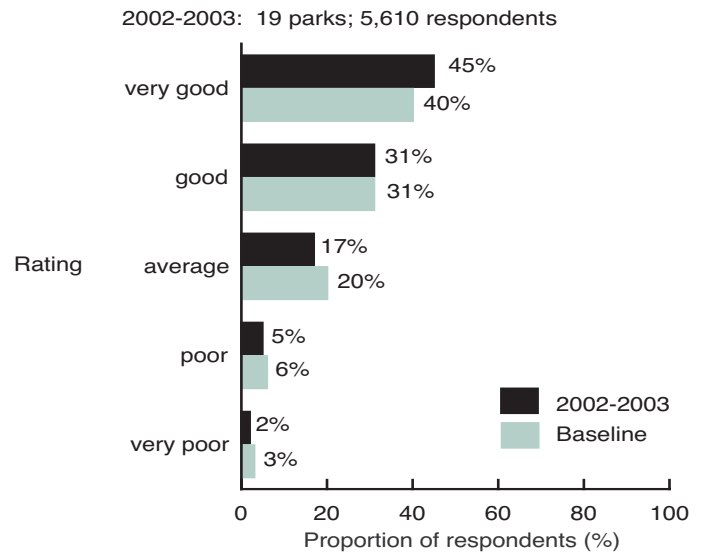


Figure 4: Quality of restrooms

Campgrounds

Camping is a central part of some visitors' park experience. Visitors at 9 parks were asked to rate the quality of NPS campgrounds in those parks. Forty-six percent rated the campgrounds as "very good," equal to the baseline rating of 46%. Another 34% responded that the campgrounds were "good" and 15% felt they were "average." Six percent of visitor groups rated the campgrounds as "poor" or "very poor," compared to the baseline rating of 8%.

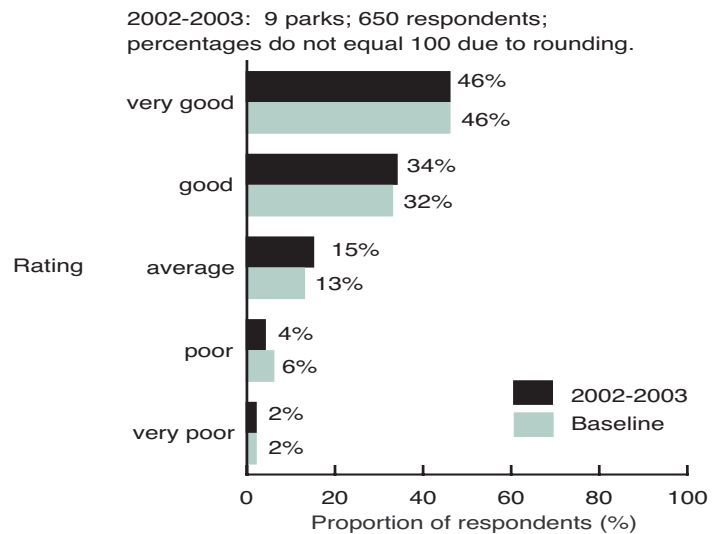


Figure 5: Quality of campgrounds

Picnic areas

Picnicking is a traditional park activity that many visitors enjoy. Visitors at 17 parks were asked to rate the quality of picnic areas in those parks. For 41% of the visitor groups, the quality of the picnic areas was “very good,” compared to the baseline rating of 42%. Another 33% felt the picnic areas were “good” and 20% rated them as “average.” However, 6% felt the picnic areas were “poor” or “very poor,” compared the baseline rating of 5%.

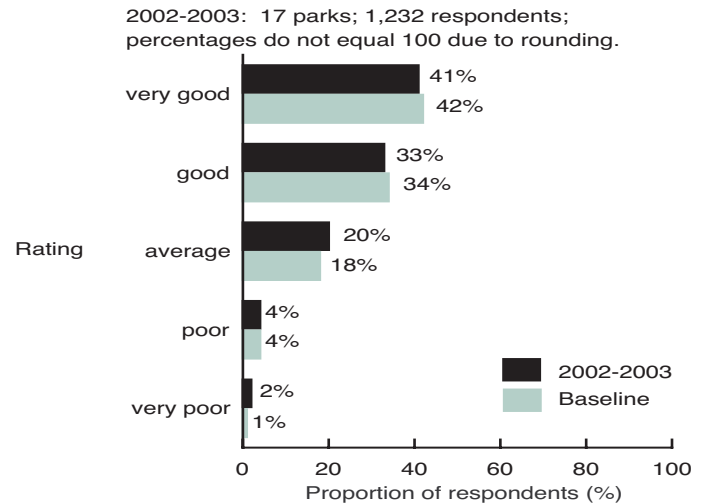


Figure 6: Quality of picnic areas

A visitor's comment:

Focus on doing the core offerings well rather than trying to do many things "ok". Maintain the visitor center it was a very good start to our visit.



Cape Hatteras National Seashore, 2002

Interpretive Services

Ranger programs

Ranger programs include guided walks and tours, campfire programs, and living history demonstrations. In 18 parks, visitors were asked to rate ranger programs. Most visitor groups (63%) rated the ranger programs as “very good,” equal to the baseline rating of 63%. While 25% responded that the ranger programs were “good,” 9% felt they were “average.” Another 4% rated the ranger programs as “poor” or “very poor,” equal to the baseline rating of 4%.

Exhibits

Exhibits, which are found inside museums and visitor centers and along roads and trails, are a valuable interpretive service offered in parks. Visitors at 16 parks evaluated the quality of exhibits in those parks. Forty-four percent of visitor groups rated the exhibits as “very good,” compared to the baseline rating of 45%. Exhibits were rated as “good” by 35% of visitors and 17% felt the exhibits were “average.” Another 4% rated the exhibits as “poor” or “very poor,” equal to the baseline rating of 4%.

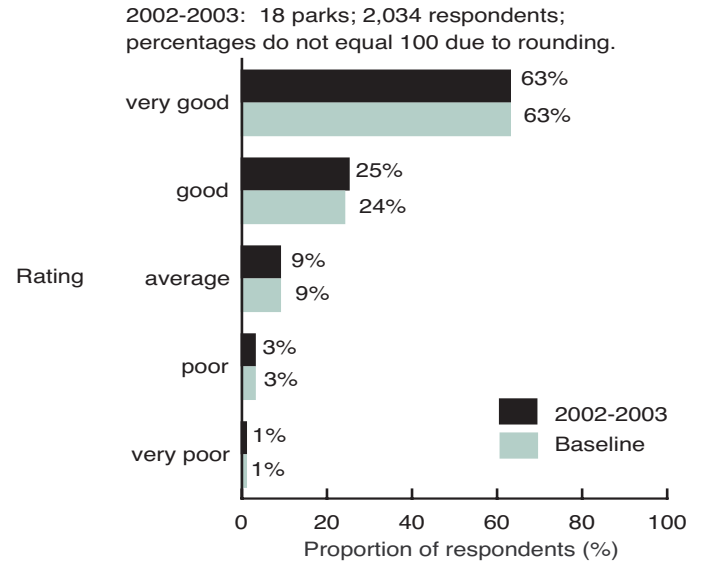


Figure 7: Quality of ranger programs

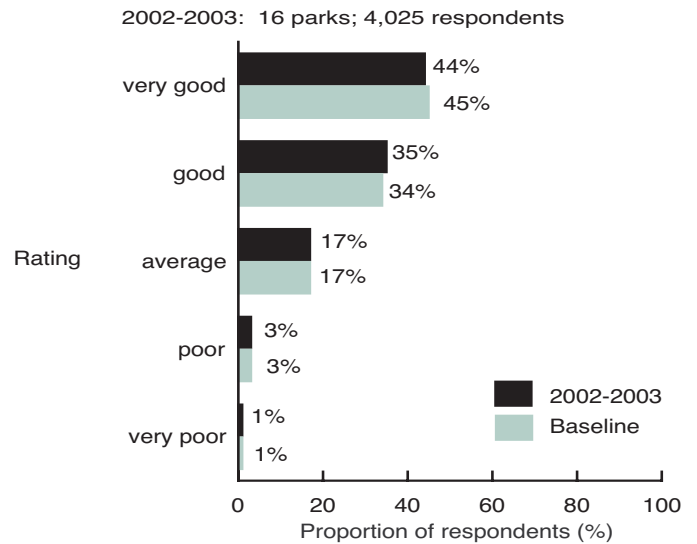


Figure 8: Quality of exhibits

Park brochures

Most parks have a brochure containing a map and basic information to help visitors plan their visit. The brochure is usually distributed to visitors as they enter the park or arrive at a visitor center. Visitors at 17 parks were asked to rate the quality of these brochures. More than one-half of visitor groups (54%) rated the brochure as “very good,” compared to the baseline rating of 51%. While 33% rated the park brochures as “good,” 11% rated them as “average.” A small proportion of visitor groups (3%) felt the park brochures were “poor” or “very poor,” equal to the baseline rating of 3%.

2002-2003: 17 parks; 6,232 respondents;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

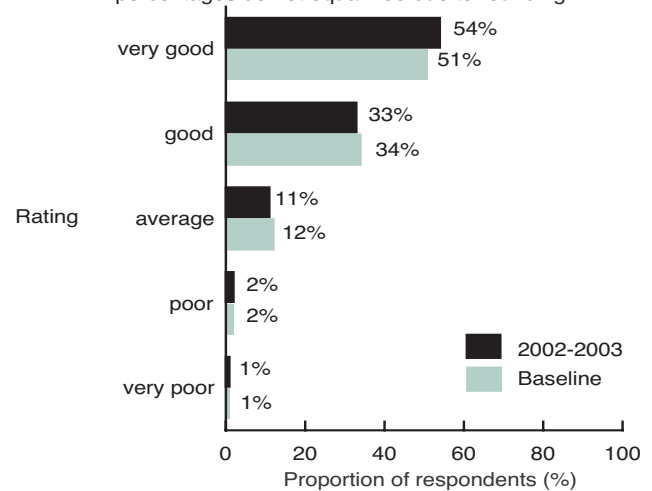


Figure 9: Quality of park brochures



Grand Canyon National Park, 2003

A visitor's comment:

Rangers were really helpful. Exhibits could use more signs, information, open exhibits, etc. However, I understand that you are limited by budgets.

Concession Services

Lodging

Many parks have hotels or motels within their boundaries and these facilities are an important part of some visitors' park experience. Visitors at 5 parks were asked to rate the quality of overnight accommodations in those parks. The quality of park lodging was rated as "very good" by 38% of visitor groups, compared to the baseline rating of 42%. Another 31% of visitor groups felt the lodging was "good" and 20% rated it as "average." Eleven percent of visitor groups rated the lodging as "poor" or "very poor," compared to the baseline rating of 6%.

Food services

The restaurants, cafeterias, snack bars, and other food services offered in parks can be important to visitors. Visitors at 5 parks with food services were asked to rate the quality of those services. About one-third of visitor groups (32%) rated the quality of food services as "very good," compared to the baseline rating of 34%. Just over one-fourth of the groups (27%) rated the food services as "good" and 23% felt these services were "average." Eighteen percent rated the food services as "poor" or "very poor," compared to the baseline rating of 10%.

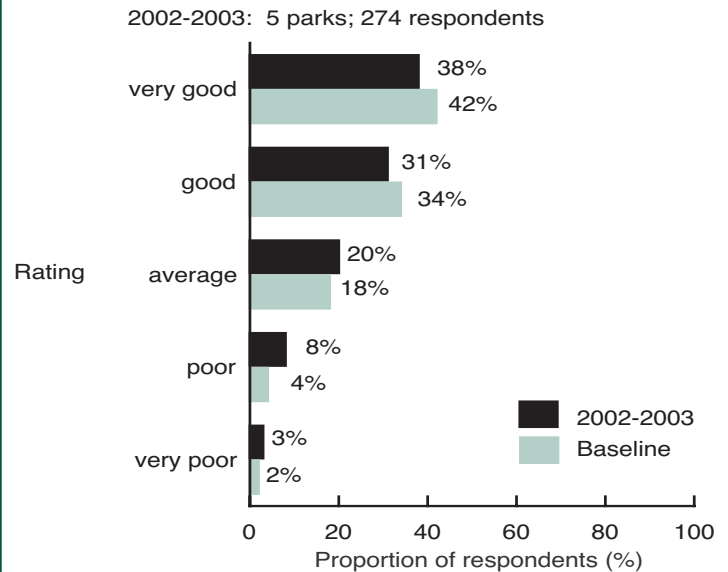


Figure 10: Quality of lodging

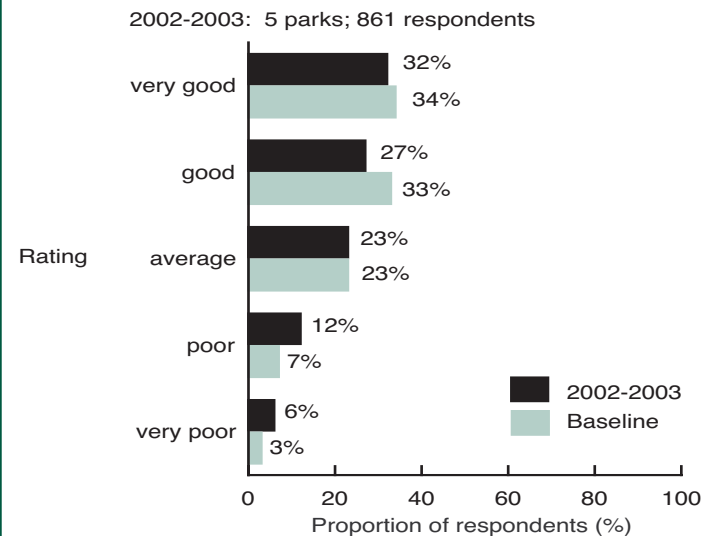


Figure 11: Quality of food services

Gift shops

Gift shops in parks provide visitors with an opportunity to bring home mementos of their park visit. Visitors at 16 parks rated the quality of gift shops in those parks. Among the respondents, 39% rated the quality of gift shops as “very good,” compared to the baseline rating of 36%. Another 37% rated the gift shops as “good” and 19% felt they were “average.” Four percent of visitor groups rated the gift shops as “poor” or “very poor,” compared to the baseline rating of 6%.

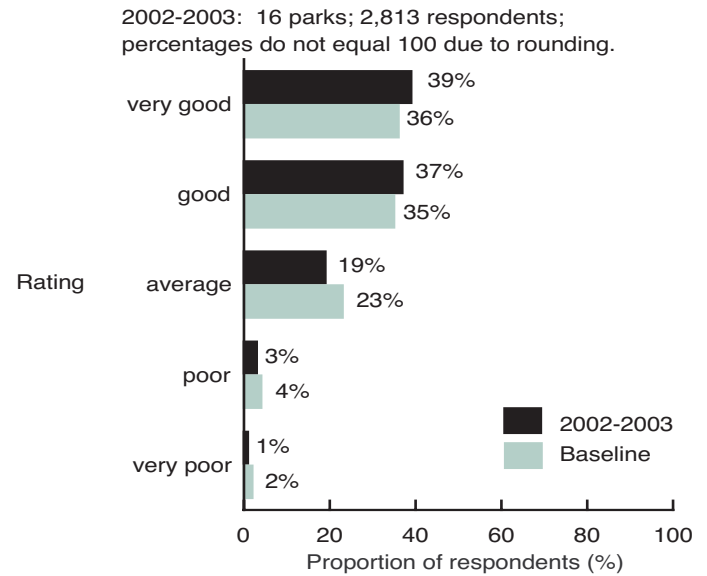


Figure 12: Quality of gift shops

A visitor's comment:

- 1- nicer lodging, even if more expensive
- 2- better adjacency of parking lot
- 3- better patio furniture w/ shade available
- 4- nicer front desk staff
- 5- cleaner motel room
- 6- more pillows



Oregon Caves National Monument, 2003

Overall Quality of Services

The services evaluated by the in-depth visitor studies are *indicators* of how well the NPS is serving the public. Figure 13 shows ratings of 12 visitor services, based on 35,261 respondents at 17 parks. These ratings are an index created by combining the ratings for the individual services. Slightly less than one-half (49%) of the visitor groups rated the 12 services in the parks as “very good,” compared to the baseline rating of 47%. The overall quality was rated as “good” by 31% of visitor group and 15% rated the services as “average.” Six percent of the groups rated the services as “poor” or “very poor,” equal to the baseline rating of 6%.

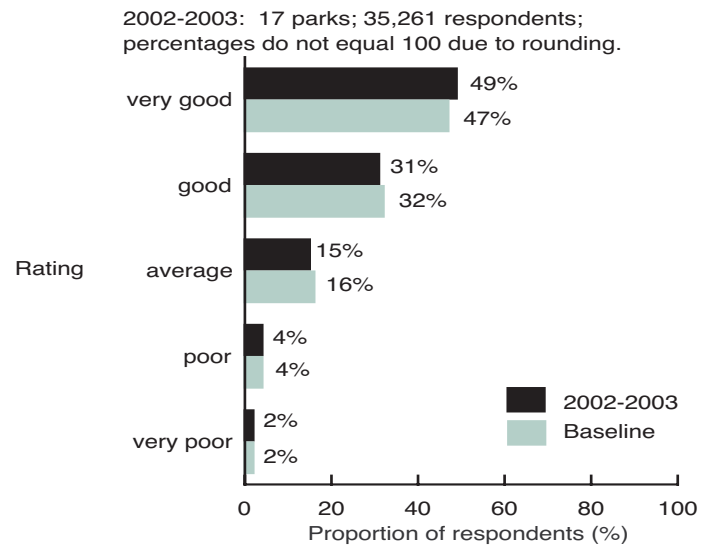


Figure 13: Overall quality of 12 services

A visitor's comment:

Being a manager in real life, I we thought the park was just fine we were impressed with all the services, from food that we used.



Wright Brothers National Memorial, 2003

Visitor Survey Card

In 1993, Congress enacted the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). This law requires all federal agencies to set goals and report progress toward those goals. One of GPRA's purposes is to promote "...a new focus on results, service quality, and customer satisfaction" for the American people. The NPS is following the lead set forth by GPRA by setting agency goals to better manage its resources and services.

For the natural, cultural, and recreational resources in NPS care, and for the people served, GPRA requires the NPS to report how its goals are being met. One way to measure these goals is to survey visitors and ask them about the quality of their experiences while visiting NPS units (i.e., measure visitor satisfaction).

The NPS is moving forward to meet GPRA requirements by measuring visitor satisfaction. In early 1998, the NPS completed the development of a standardized customer satisfaction card. The card has been used annually (since 1998) by most NPS units to measure performance related to visitor satisfaction. In 2003, the customer satisfaction card was completed by a sample of visitors at 329 national park units. At year's end, a total of 28,612 visitors had completed and returned the customer satisfaction card.

On the following pages are graphs showing visitor evaluations of the quality of services within 3 important service categories—park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. These ratings are an index created by combining the ratings for individual indicators within the service category. For this section, and for GPRA requirements, a visitor is "satisfied" when he or she rated a service as either "good" or "very good."



Chickasaw National Recreation Area, 2004

A park coordinator's comment:

*Visitors were very receptive & willing
to share their opinions.*

Park Facilities

Visitor opinions of 5 key indicators are used to measure visitor satisfaction with park facilities. These indicators are:

- ▶ visitor centers,
- ▶ exhibits,
- ▶ restrooms,
- ▶ walkways, trails, and roads, and
- ▶ campgrounds and/or picnic areas.

Most visitors (85%) were satisfied with these park facilities provided within the National Park System, compared to the baseline of 89%.

A visitor's comment:

Enjoyed the very clean restrooms, well maintained center and knowledgeable employees. keep up the good work.

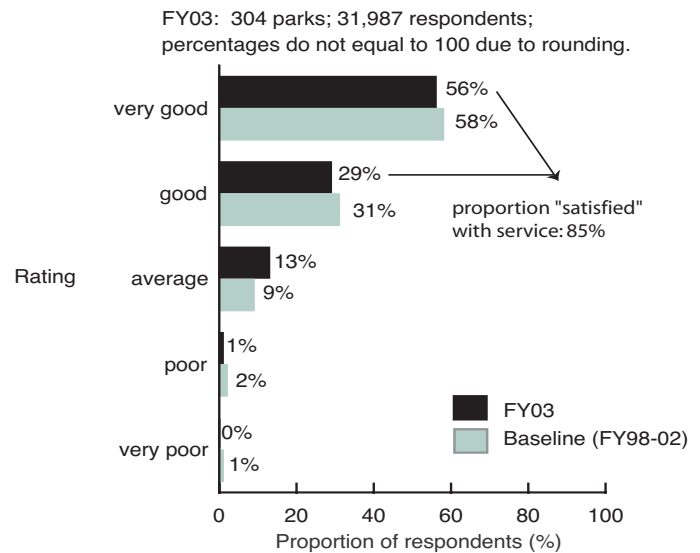


Figure 14: Combined index for satisfaction with park facilities



Olympic National Park, 2000

Visitor Services

Visitor opinions of 4 key indicators are used to measure satisfaction with visitor services provided in the parks. These indicators are:

- ▶ assistance from park employees,
- ▶ park maps or brochures,
- ▶ ranger programs, and
- ▶ commercial services in the park.

The majority of visitors (92%) were satisfied with these services provided within the National Park System, compared to the baseline rating of 91%.

A visitor's comment:

THANK YOU FOR HAVING RANGER EVENING PROGRAMS !! THEY WERE REALLY FUN.

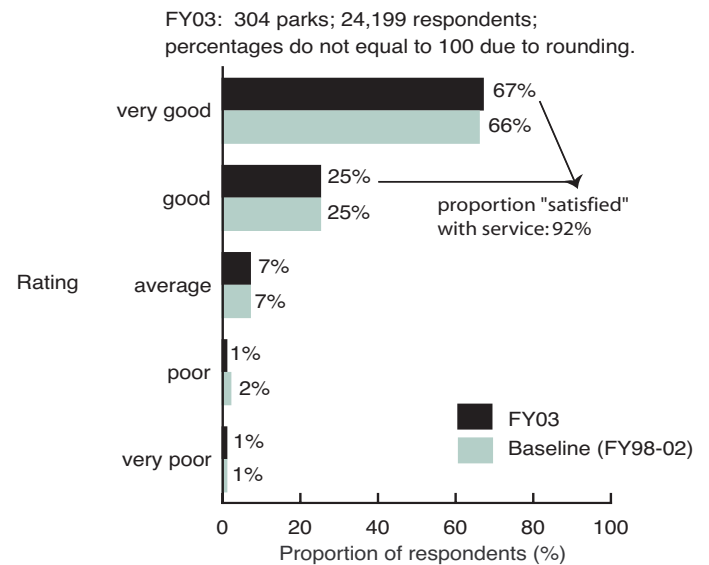


Figure 15: Combined index for satisfaction with visitor services



Grand Canyon National Park, 2003

Recreational Opportunities

Visitor opinions of 3 important indicators are used to measure visitor satisfaction with recreational opportunities provided in the parks. These indicators are:

- ▶ learning about nature, history, or culture,
- ▶ outdoor recreation, and
- ▶ sightseeing.

Ninety-three percent of visitors were satisfied with these recreational opportunities provided within the National Park System, compared to the baseline rating of 92%.

A visitor's comment:

Unique bicycling opportunities.
Nearby lodging, rec facilities
at Brian Head. No need for
commercial facilities in the
park.

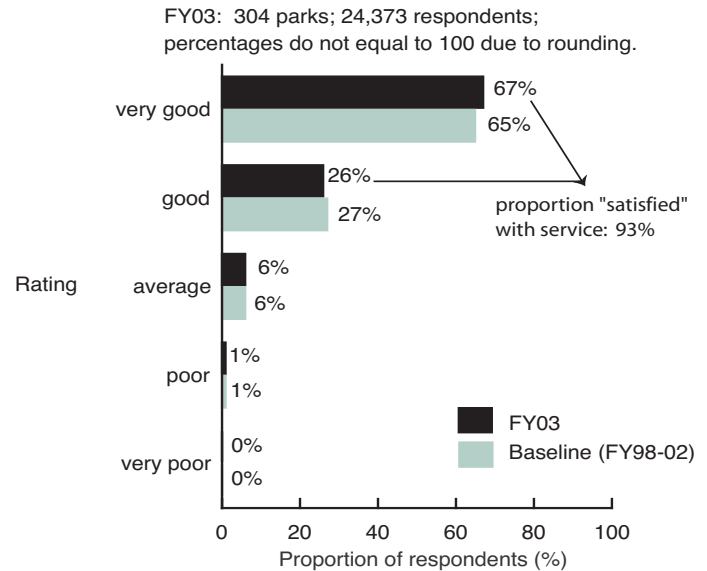


Figure 16: Combined index for satisfaction with recreational opportunities



Chattahoochee National Recreation Area, 1998

Overall Quality of Facilities, Services, and Recreational Opportunities

NPS units are required to annually report performance related to a broad list of GPRA goals. Visitor satisfaction is one of these goals. The NPS 1999 GPRA goal IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) states that “95% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.”

For GPRA reporting purposes, the customer satisfaction card includes an overall quality question used as the primary measure of visitor satisfaction. This question asked visitors to rate the “overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.” Visitor responses to this question are used to calculate each park’s visitor satisfaction rating. Again, a visitor is considered “satisfied” if their response to this overall quality question was either “very good” or “good.”

Figure 17 shows the overall quality rating based on 26,064 respondents in 304 units in the National Park System. In 2003, this satisfaction level (96%) was greater than the 94% baseline rating.

The customer satisfaction card results show strong evidence of excellent visitor service across the National Park System. The NPS has demanding GPRA goals for visitor satisfaction. Of the 304 parks which successfully completed a 2003 visitor satisfaction survey, 199 parks (65%) met the annual servicewide goal of 95% visitor satisfaction. Most parks (263 or 87%) of the 304 parks had a visitor satisfaction rating of 90% or greater.

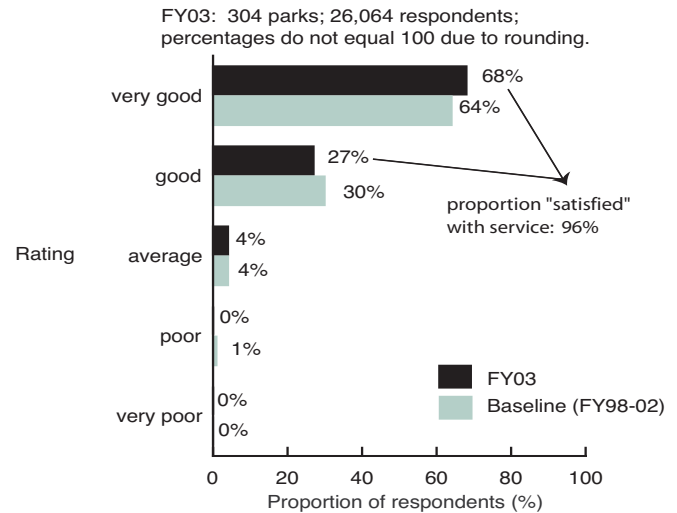


Figure 17: Overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities

A visitor’s comment:

We are very satisfied with this park and the employees. Very clean and well kept. ENJOYED our visit THANK YOU.

The results from the customer satisfaction card surveys at individual parks were combined to produce a satisfaction rating for each individual NPS region. Figure 18 shows the 7 regions and the percentage of park visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities. Regional overall visitor satisfaction scores are very similar, ranging from 94% to 96%.

The customer satisfaction card results can provide parks with benefits beyond simply meeting annual GPRA reporting requirements. These results can be useful in planning, operations, management, and research related to the national parks. The results allow park managers to better understand visitor needs, protect natural and cultural resources, and improve visitor services.

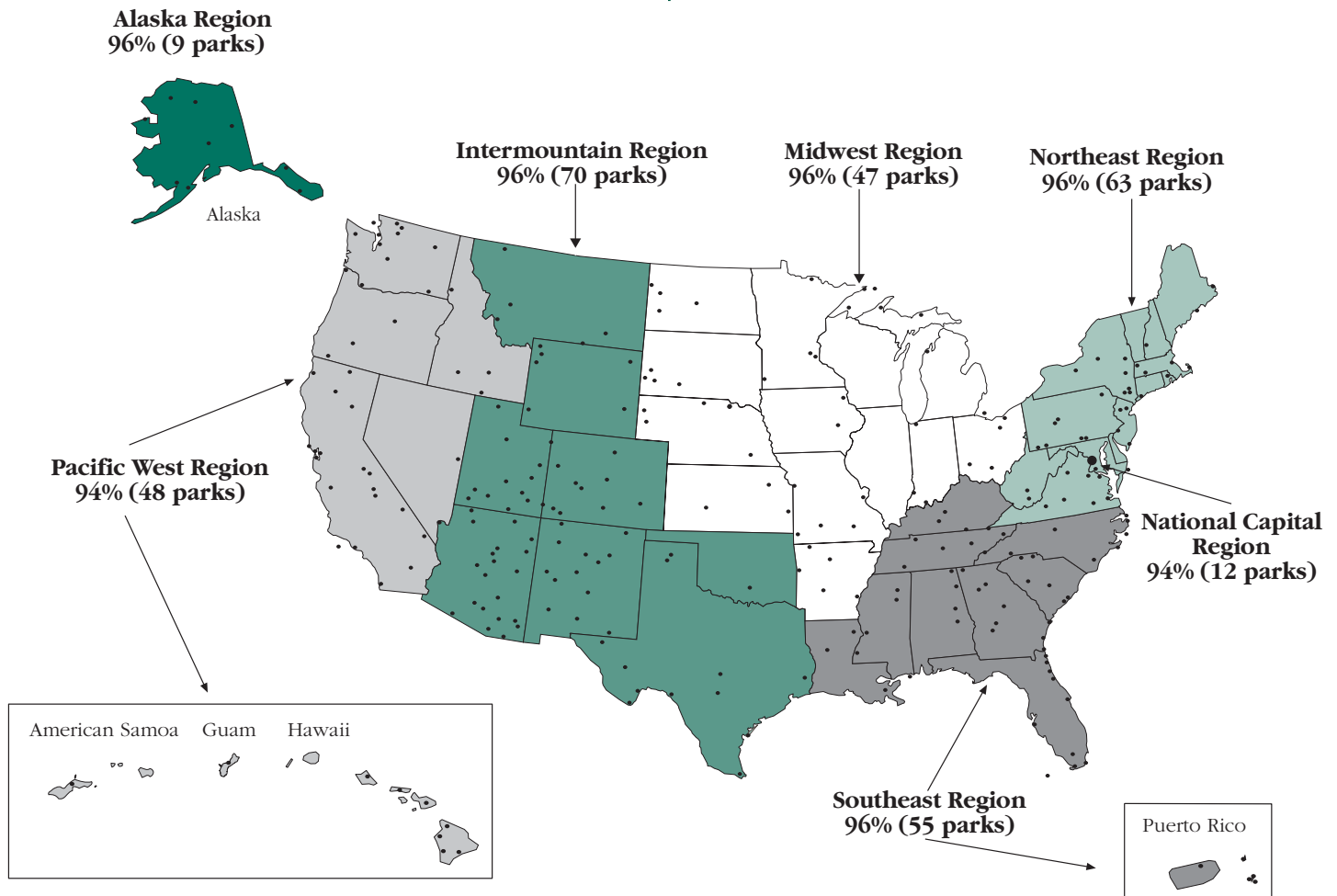


Figure 18: Percentage of visitors satisfied overall, by NPS region, 2003

Conclusion

Both the in-depth visitor studies and the customer satisfaction card asked visitors to rate the overall quality of the services provided during their visit.

The study results included in this report show that visitors are largely satisfied with the quality of services they are receiving in the National Park System.

By monitoring visitor satisfaction through different types of visitor studies, and using the information to improve all aspects of park operations, the NPS can continue to protect resources and provide high quality visitor service.



C&O Canal National Historical Park, 2003

A visitor's comment:

INTERESTING & EDUCATIONAL AS WELL
AS SCENIC, TO THOSE VISITING
FROM FAR AWAY AREAS.

Research Methods

VSP Visitor Studies

The in-depth visitor studies conducted by the VSP are based on systematic surveys of park visitors. A random sample of visitor groups is chosen to represent the general visitor population during a 1-week study period. The sample is usually “stratified,” or distributed by entrance or zone, depending upon park characteristics. Sample size and sampling intervals are based upon estimates using the previous year’s visitation statistics. Results are usually accurate to within 4 percentage points for simple questions, and are somewhat less accurate for more complex ones. The results are statistically significant at the .05 level. This means that if different samples had been drawn, the results would have been similar 95 out of 100 times.

VSP personnel hold an on-site workshop with park staff to develop the survey questionnaire and plan the study. Standard demographic questions are included in each survey, and park managers can include additional “customized” questions to reflect their information needs. In addition, questionnaires include open-ended questions in which visitors are asked to provide comments about their visit.

Short (2-minute) interviews are conducted as visitors arrive at a sampling site. The interviews are to collect data for a non-response bias check, obtain mailing addresses for follow-up reminders, and distribute the mail-back questionnaires. The refusal rate (the proportion of visitors contacted that decline to participate) currently averages 7%. The response rate (the proportion of visitors that return their questionnaires) currently averages 78%. The data are

coded and entered on a computer by the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University. The data are analyzed using a standard statistical analysis program. A respondent, for the purposes of this report, is a member of a visitor group that provided a response to a particular questionnaire item. A check on key variables is conducted to see if those visitors who did not respond (from initial interview data) were significantly different from those who returned their questionnaires (non-response bias). Responses to open-ended questions (in which visitors write comments) are categorized and summarized by VSP staff.

In-depth visitor studies have several limitations. Responses to mail-back questionnaires may not reflect actual behavior or opinions. The results cannot always be generalized beyond the study periods. Visitor groups that do not include an English-speaking person may be under-represented. These limitations apply to all studies of this type.

Visitor Survey Card Studies

The customer satisfaction card surveys have a somewhat different methodology than the in-depth visitor studies. For each survey, park staff select an interval sampling plan based on the previous years' visitation. 400 customer satisfaction cards are distributed to a random sample of visitors in each park during a 30-day study period. Results are usually accurate to within 6 percentage points. For individual park reports, results are statistically significant at the .05 level. This means that if different samples had been drawn, the results would have been similar 95 out of 100 times. For the National Park System as a whole, results are accurate to within 1 percentage point. These results are statistically significant at the .01 level.

Park staff are trained to distribute cards according to a standard set of survey instructions and guidelines. A standardized customer satisfaction card which includes the same set of service-related questions is used for each survey. In addition, the card includes an open-ended question to evaluate visitor understanding.

Returned cards were electronically scanned, and the data coded and prepared by Visual Input Systems Analysts, Incorporated, located in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The response rate (the proportion of visitors that return their survey card) for the 304 customer satisfaction card surveys averaged 26%. A test for non-response bias was conducted by comparing the results for the same question from both the customer satisfaction card and the in-depth visitor studies. The data were gathered in the same parks, seasons, and survey locations. The results of

this test suggest that non-response bias was not significant.

For individual park reports, frequency distributions are calculated for each indicator and category. At the end of the calendar year, responses from individual park surveys are combined to create reports at the cluster, region, and systemwide levels. Data from parks with less than 30 returned cards, or from parks with discrepancies in data collection methods, are omitted from these reports and *Serving the Visitor*.

The customer satisfaction card surveys have several limitations. The data reflect visitor opinions about the NPS unit's facilities, services, and recreational opportunities during the survey period. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year, or park visitors who did not visit one of the survey locations. Visitor groups that do not include an English-speaking person may be under-represented. These limitations apply to all studies of this type.



Gateway National Recreation Area--Floyd Bennett Field, 2003

VSP Visitor Studies

The data for in-depth visitor studies in this report came from the following NPS units. The questionnaires and complete reports are available online at: <<http://www.psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.htm>>.

Acadia National Park, Maine
Arches National Park, Utah
Badlands National Park, South Dakota
Big Cypress National Preserve, Florida
Biscayne National Park, Florida
Capulin Volcano National Monument, New Mexico
Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Georgia
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park,
Washington D.C./Maryland/West Virginia
Colonial National Historical Park-Jamestown Island, Virginia
Cowpens National Battlefield, South Carolina
Crater Lake National Park, Oregon
Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, Tennessee
Cumberland Island National Seashore, Georgia
Dry Tortugas National Park, Florida
Eisenhower National Historic Site, Pennsylvania
Everglades National Park, Florida
Fort Stanwix National Monument, New York
Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, Alaska
Grand Canyon National Park-North Rim, Arizona
Grand Canyon National Park-South Rim, Arizona
Great Falls Park, Virginia
Great Sand Dunes National Monument & Preserve, Colorado
Haleakala National Park, Hawaii
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, Pennsylvania
Iwo Jima/Netherlands Carillon Memorials, Washington, D.C.
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve, Louisiana
Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Alaska
Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site,
North Dakota
Lassen Volcanic National Park, California
Mojave National Preserve, California
National Monuments & Memorials (National Mall),
Washington, D.C.
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Massachusetts
Olympic National Park, Washington
Oregon Caves National Monument, Oregon

Outer Banks Group (Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Wright
Brothers National Memorial, Fort Raleigh National
Historic Site), North Carolina
Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Michigan
Pinnacles National Monument, California
Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota
Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.
San Juan National Historic Site, Puerto Rico
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Wisconsin/Minnesota
Sequoia & King Canyon National Parks and Sequoia National
Forest, California
Shenandoah National Park, Virginia
Stones River National Battlefield, Tennessee
USS *Arizona* Memorial, Hawaii
Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, California
White House Tours and White House Visitor Center,
Washington, D.C.

VSP Customer Satisfaction Card Surveys

The data for customer satisfaction card surveys in this report came from 304 NPS units. Reports are available online at: <<http://www.psu.uidaho.edu/vsc.htm>>.

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