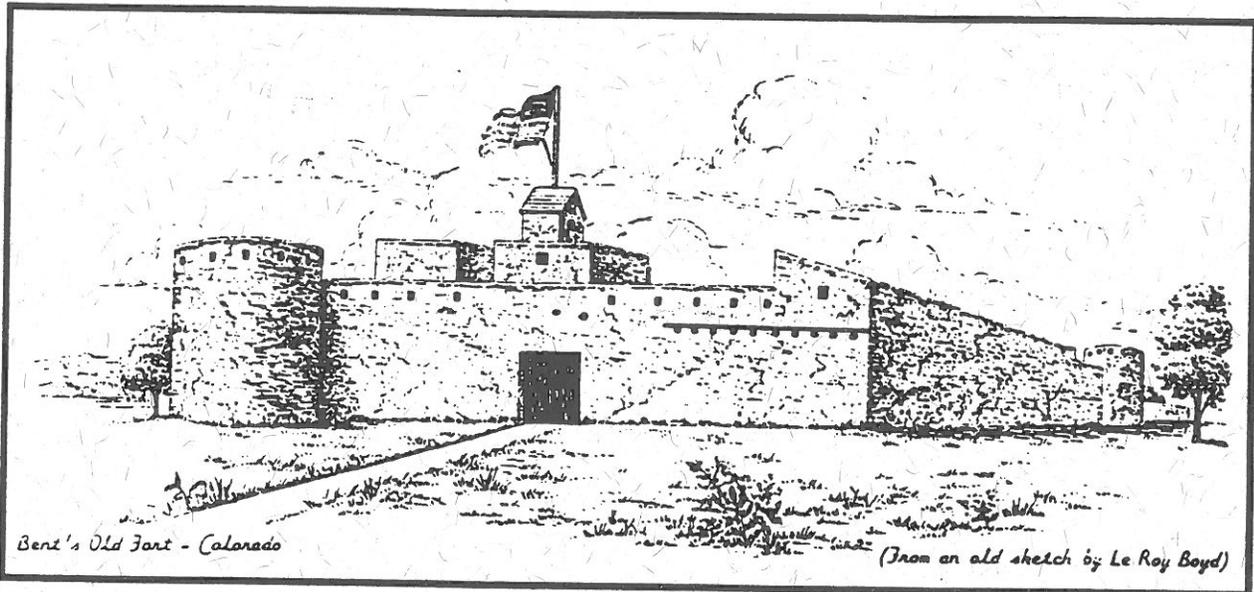

Visitor Services Project
Bent's Old Fort
National Historic Site



Visitor Services Project Report 48
Cooperative Park Studies Unit

 University of Idaho



Visitor Services Project

Bent's Old Fort

National Historic Site

Margaret Littlejohn

Report 48

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Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Western Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitor Services Project Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site during June 19-25, 1992. A total of 436 questionnaires were distributed and 378 returned, an 87% response rate.
- This report profiles Bent's Old Fort visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Visitors were often families (77%) and in groups of two to four (76%). Twenty-eight percent of visitors were 36-50 years old; 24% were 15 years or younger. Most (78%) were first-time visitors to Bent's Old Fort.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 3% of the visitation, with 56% of the international visitors from Sweden. Americans came from Colorado (35%), Kansas (10%), and Oklahoma (9%), with smaller numbers from many other states.
- Most visitors (80%) spent one to two hours at Bent's Old Fort. Fifty-nine percent stayed about the time planned. Most visitors visited the information station (96%), viewed trail exhibits (66%), watched the video program (56%) and took a guided tour (54%).
- Visitors (30%) most often used maps and brochures as sources of information about the park. The section of highway most used to get to Bent's Old Fort was Highway 194 between La Junta and the fort.
- The most frequent reasons bringing visitors to the fort were to learn about history (78%), curiosity (61%) and to see exhibits/furnishings (51%). Seventy-seven percent of the visitors considered history of the West as a special interest/hobby.
- Ninety-one percent of the visitors walked between their vehicle and the fort; 11% rode the electric cart. All the visitors (100%) considered the fort accessible.
- The most used visitor services were the reconstructed fort and room furnishings. The reconstructed fort and guided tour were the most important services according to visitors. The sales area and seeing domestic animals at the fort were the least important services. The reconstructed fort and employee assistance received the highest quality ratings. Seeing domestic animals and restrooms were considered the poorest quality services.
- Most visitors (97%) said they had no difficulty finding their way around the fort.
- Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83844 or call (208) 885-7129.

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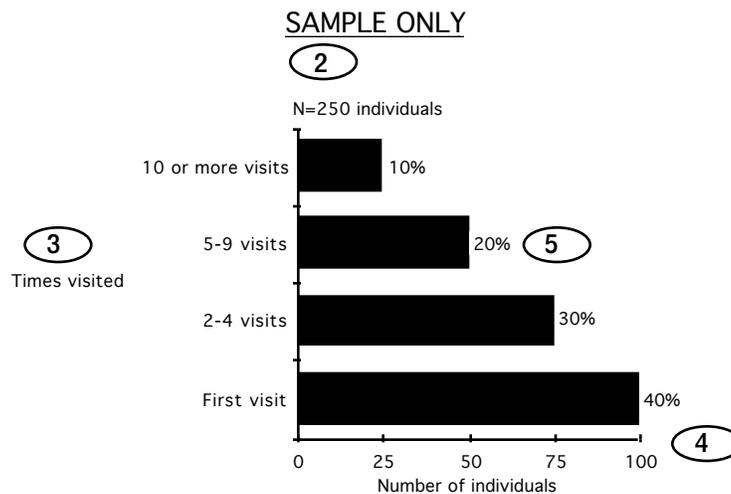
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site (referred to as "Bent's Old Fort"). This visitor study was conducted June 19-25, 1992 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A Methods section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. The Results section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, a Menu for Further Analysis helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the Questionnaire. The separate appendix includes a comment summary and the visitors' unedited comments.

Many of this report's graphs resemble the example below. The large numbers refer to explanations following the graph.



1 Figure 4: Number of visits

- 1: The figure title describes the graph's information.
 - 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding and a description of the chart's information. Interpret data with an 'N' of less than 30 with **CAUTION!** as the results may be unreliable.
 - 3: Vertical information describes categories.
 - 4: Horizontal information shows the number or proportions in each category.
 - 5: In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.
-

METHODS

Questionnaire design and administration

Interviews were conducted and questionnaires distributed to a sample of selected visitors visiting Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site during June 19-25, 1992. Visitors completed the questionnaire during or after their trip and then returned it by mail.

The questionnaire design used the standard format of previous Visitor Services Project studies. See the end of this report for a copy of the questionnaire.

Visitors were sampled as they approached the fort entrance on foot.

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, the interview took approximately two minutes. These interviews included determining group size group type and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This individual was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminder-thank you postcard.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and entered into a computer. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated using a standard statistical software package. Respondents' comments were summarized.

This study collected information on both visitor groups and individual group members. Thus, the sample size ("N"), varies from figure to figure. For example, while Figure 1 shows information for 368 groups, Figure 3 presents data for 1181 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

**Sample size,
missing data
and
reporting
errors**

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions create missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 378 questionnaires were returned, Figure 1 shows data for only 368 respondents.

Questions answered incorrectly due to carelessness, misunderstanding directions and so forth, turn up in the data as reporting errors. These create small data inconsistencies.

Like all surveys, this study has limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results.

Limitations

1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage applies to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire as they visit the park.

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of June 19-25, 1992. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors using other sites in the park or to visitors during other times of the year.

3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever the sample size is less than 30, the word "**CAUTION!**" is included in the graph, figure or table.

RESULTS

Visitors contacted

A total of 446 visitor groups were contacted; 98% accepted questionnaires. Three hundred seventy-eight visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, an 87% response rate.

Table 1 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. Non-response bias was insignificant.

Table 1: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	436	47.2	372	48.2
Group size	436	3.8	368	3.8

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 97 people. Thirty-nine percent of Bent's Old Fort visitors came in groups of two people, 37% came in groups of three or four. Seventy-seven percent of visitors came in family groups, as shown in Figure 2. "Other" groups included Boy Scouts.

Figure 3 shows varied age groups; the most common were visitors aged 36-50 (28%) and 15 years or younger (24%). Most visitors (78%) were first time visitors, (see Figure 4). Most visitors (94%) were white, not of Hispanic origin; 6% were American Indian or Alaska native, as shown in Figure 5.

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 3% of all visitation. Map 1 and Table 2 show that most foreign visitors came from Sweden (56%), Canada (11%) and Costa Rica (11%). Map 2 and Table 3 show that the majority of American visitors came from Colorado (35%), with smaller numbers from many other states.

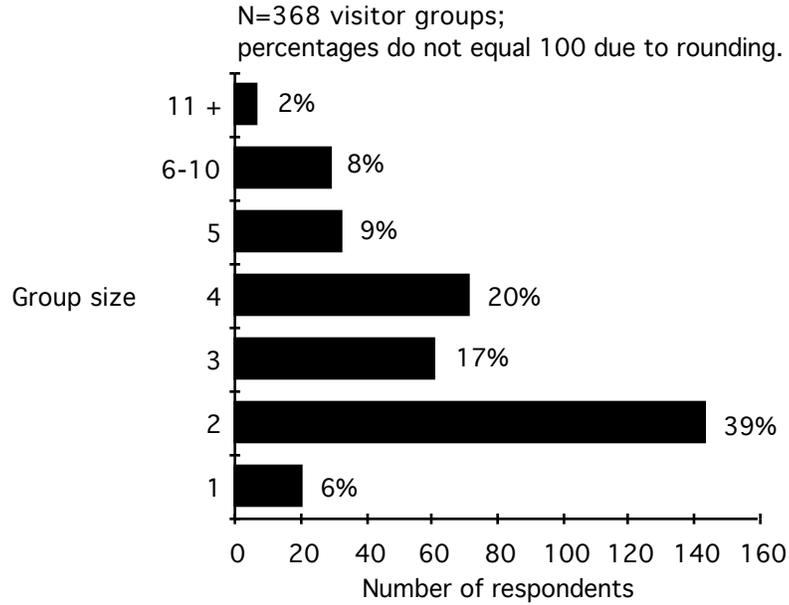


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

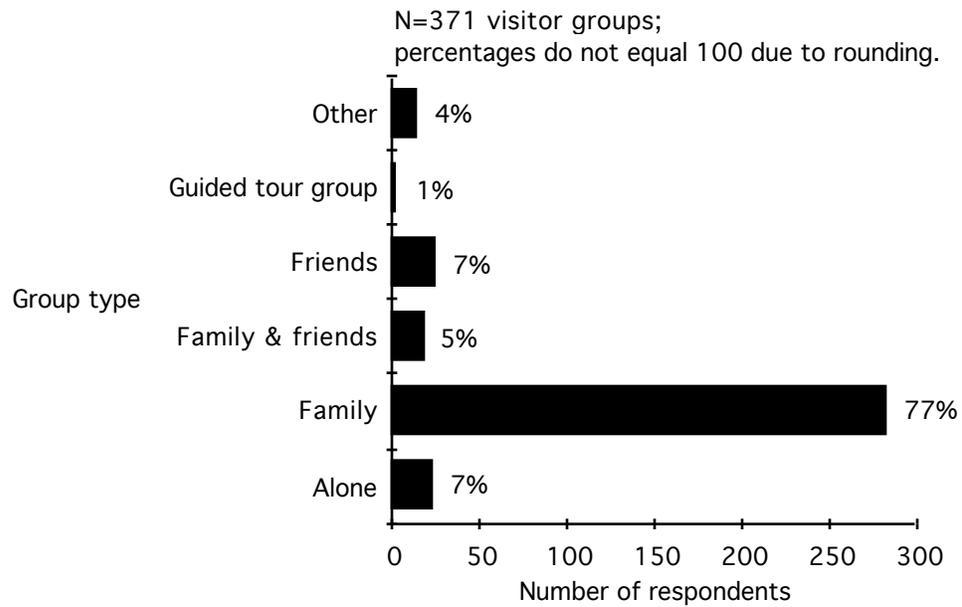


Figure 2: Visitor group types

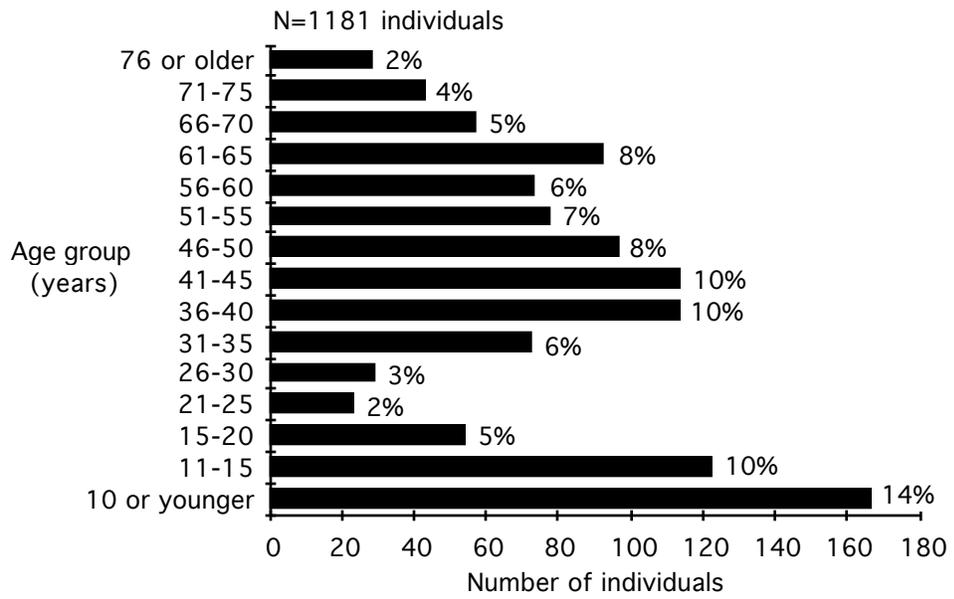


Figure 3: Visitor ages

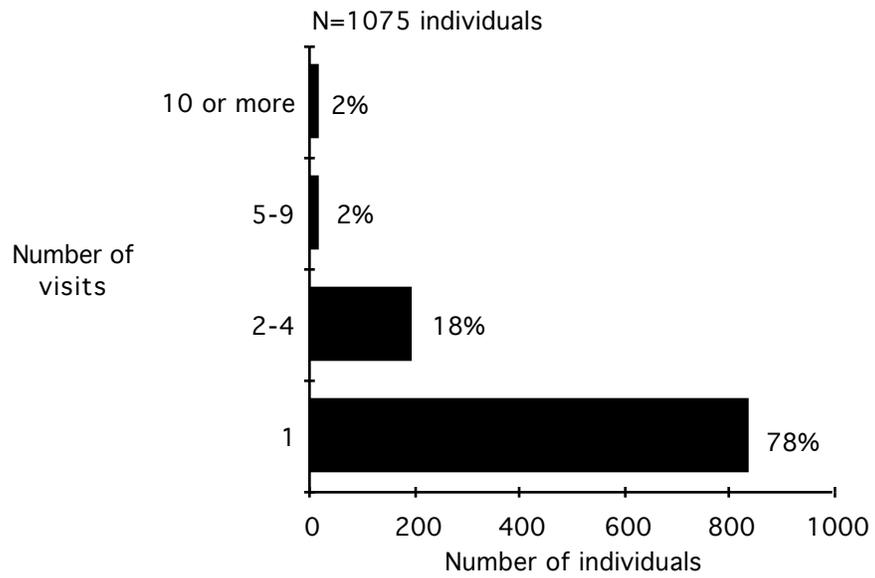


Figure 4: Number of visits

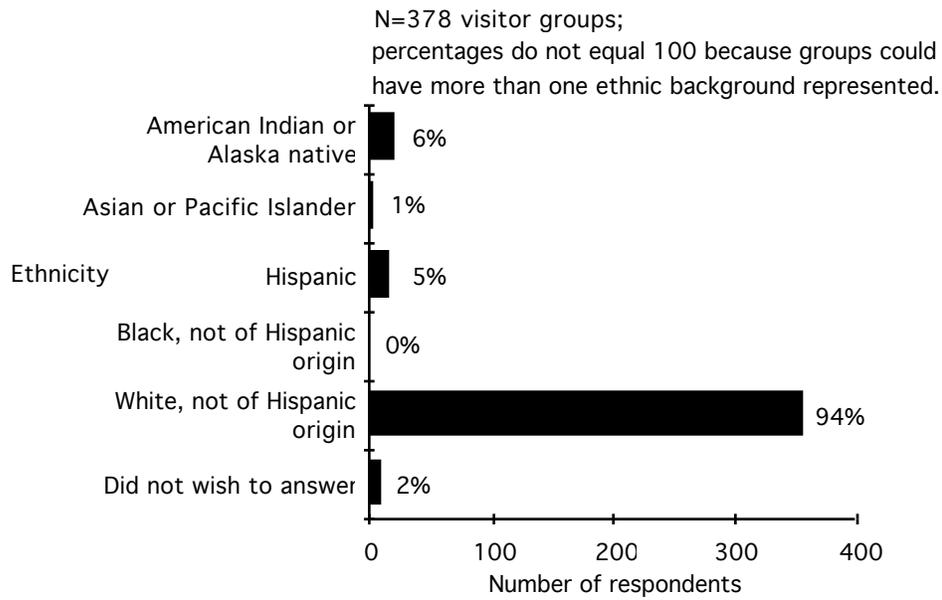


Figure 5: Ethnicity

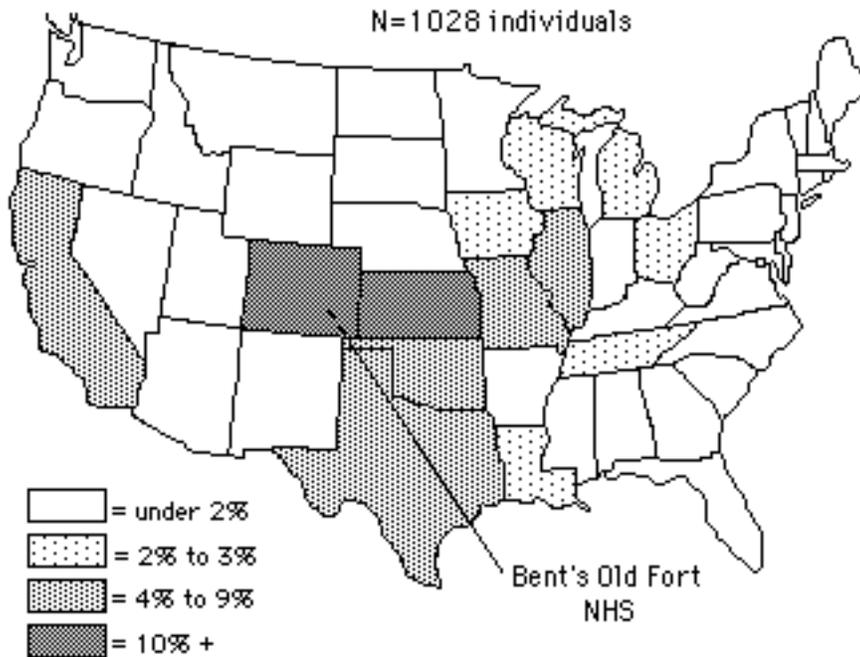


Map 1: Proportion of international visitors by country

Table 2: Visitors by country of residence

N=27 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
CAUTION!

Country	Number of individuals	% of international visitors
Sweden	15	56
Canada	3	11
Costa Rica	3	11
Australia	2	7
England	2	7
Germany	2	7



Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state

Table 3: Proportion of visitors from each state

N=1028 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	% of U.S. visitors
Colorado	356	35
Kansas	100	10
Oklahoma	89	9
Texas	64	6
Illinois	51	5
Missouri	49	5
California	37	4
Ohio	25	2
Michigan	19	2
Louisiana	18	2
Tennessee	17	2
Wisconsin	16	2
Iowa	15	2
New Mexico	14	1
Florida	13	1
Arkansas	10	1
Nebraska	9	1
Oregon	9	1
Other states (24) + D.C.	117	11

Length of stay

Eighty percent of the visitors stayed one to two hours (see Figure 6). Fifty-nine percent of the visitors stayed about the time planned, while 33% spent more time than planned, as shown in Figure 7.

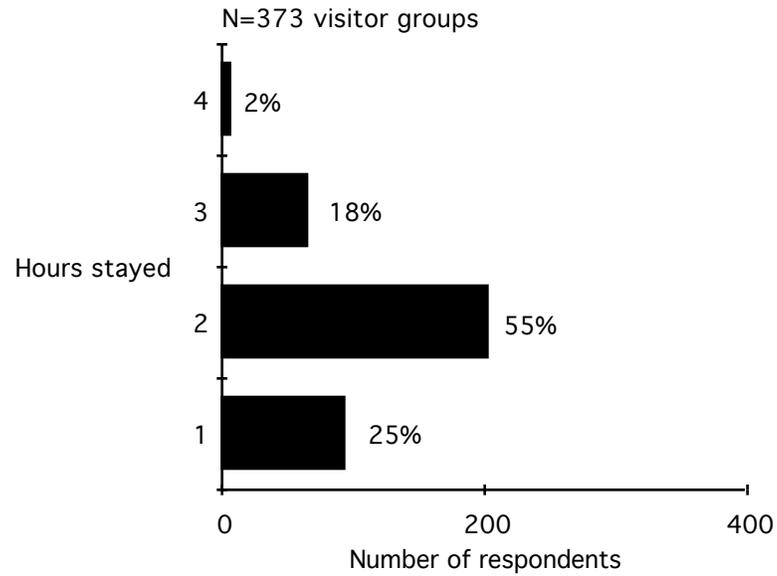


Figure 6: Length of stay (hours)

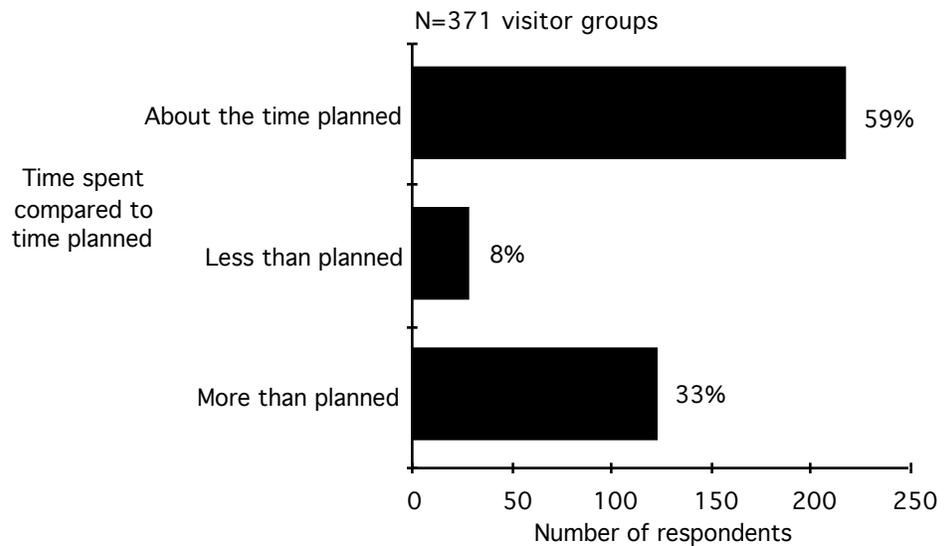


Figure 7: Length of stay compared to time planned

Activities

Figure 8 shows the proportion of visitor groups who participated in various activities during their visit. Common activities were visiting the information station (96%), viewing trail exhibits (66%), watching the video program (56%) and taking a guided tour (54%). Seven percent of the visitors described "other" activities they pursued, including taking self-guided tours, taking photographs, talking to employees/guides and visiting the cemetery.

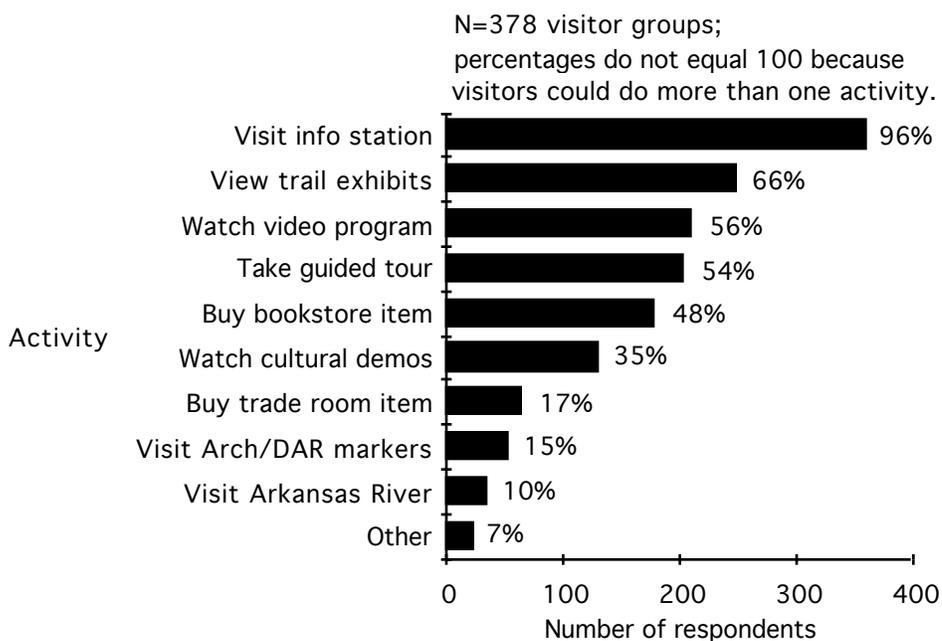


Figure 8: Visitor activities

Sources of park information

The most often used sources of information about the park were maps or brochures (30%), friends and relatives (27%), and travel guides/tour books (27%), as shown in Figure 9. "Other" sources included history books/courses/articles, Santa Fe trail information, Colorado welcome centers, signs on the highway, NPS literature, local businesses or residents, and television.

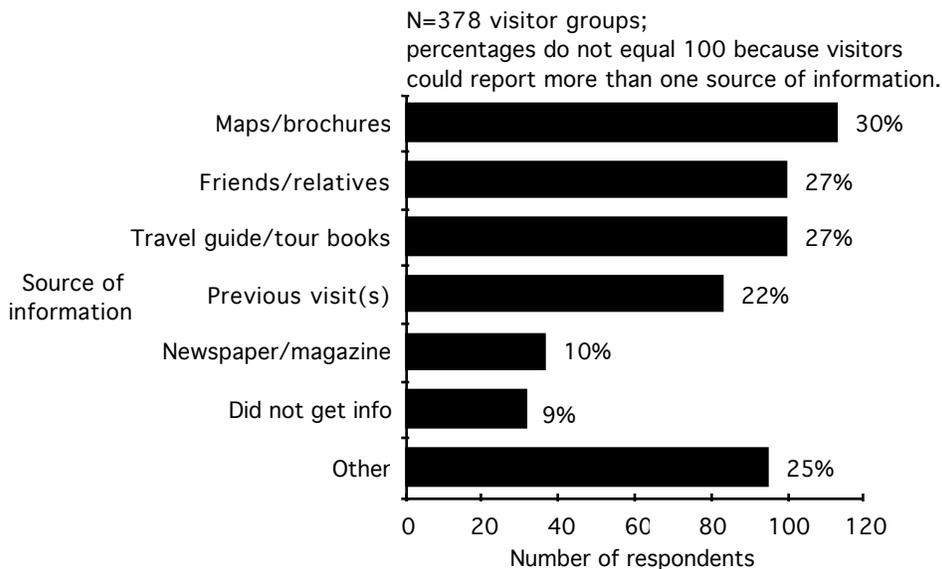
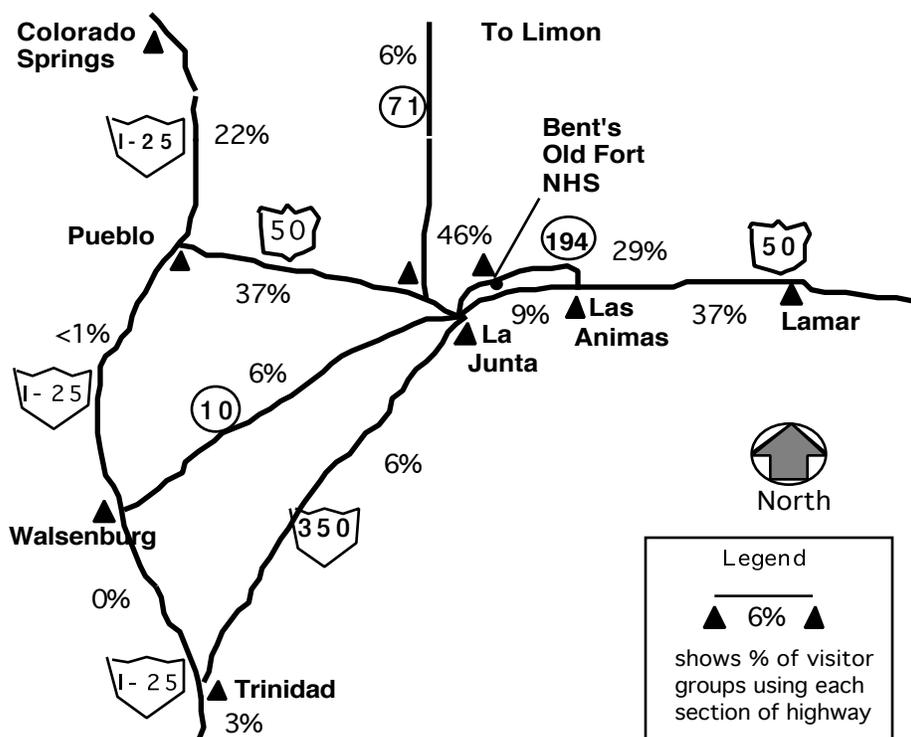


Figure 9: Sources of park information

Visitors were asked to identify the route they used to arrive at Bent's Old Fort. The most often used highway section was Highway 194 between La Junta and the fort (46%), as shown in Map 3. Highway 50 between Lamar and Las Animas (37%), Highway 50 between Pueblo and La Junta (37%), and Highway 194 between the fort and Highway 50 (29%) were the next most used routes.

Route used to get to Bent's Old Fort

N=340 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because
visitors could use more than one section of highway.



Map 3: Routes used to get to Bent's Old Fort

Places visited

Visitors were asked what regional places they had visited or planned to visit on this trip. The most often mentioned places were Royal Gorge (27%), Pikes Peak (24%) and Mesa Verde NP (21%), as shown in Figure 10.

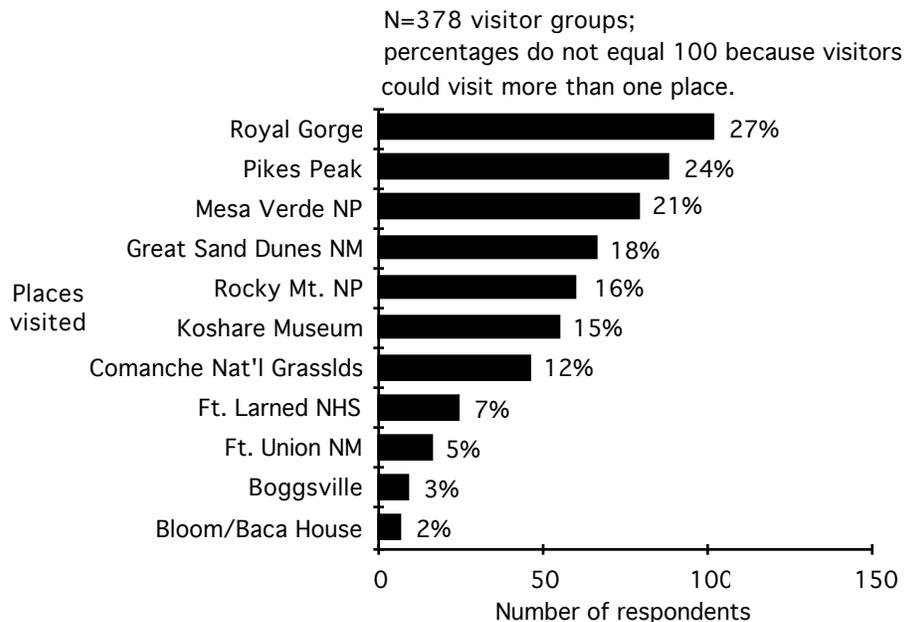


Figure 10: Places visited or planned to visit on this trip

Visitors identified their reasons for visiting Bent's Old Fort. These included to learn about history (78%), curiosity (61%), and to see exhibits/furnishings (51%), as shown in Figure 11. "Other" reasons visitors listed included to show the fort to someone, following the Santa Fe trail, because of interest in history, to get information for teaching, for something to do, and because it was recommended by friends or relatives.

Reasons for visit



Figure 11: Reasons for visiting

History of West as hobby

Visitors were asked if any member of their group considered the history of the West (such as fur trade, opening of the West, living history, etc.) as a special interest/hobby. Seventy-seven percent said someone in their group considered the history of the West as a special interest/hobby (see Figure 12).

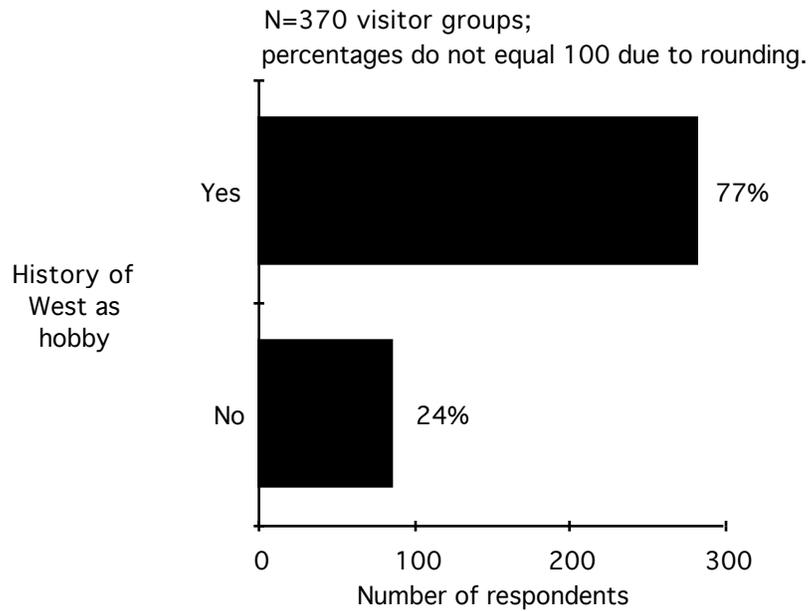


Figure 12: Visitors with history of West as interest/hobby

Visitors were asked how they got to the fort from their vehicle. Most (91%) walked to the fort and 11% rode in the electric cart (see Figure 13).

Fort accessibility

Next, visitors were asked if they found the fort accessible (were they able to get into rooms, climb stairs, etc.) One hundred percent found the fort to be accessible, as shown in Figure 14.

Finally, they were asked how they would improve the fort's accessibility. Many visitors said the accessibility was acceptable; that they would not change it, as shown in Table 4. Other suggestions included improving access to the second level, making visitors aware of the electric cart option, and preserving the fort's authenticity.

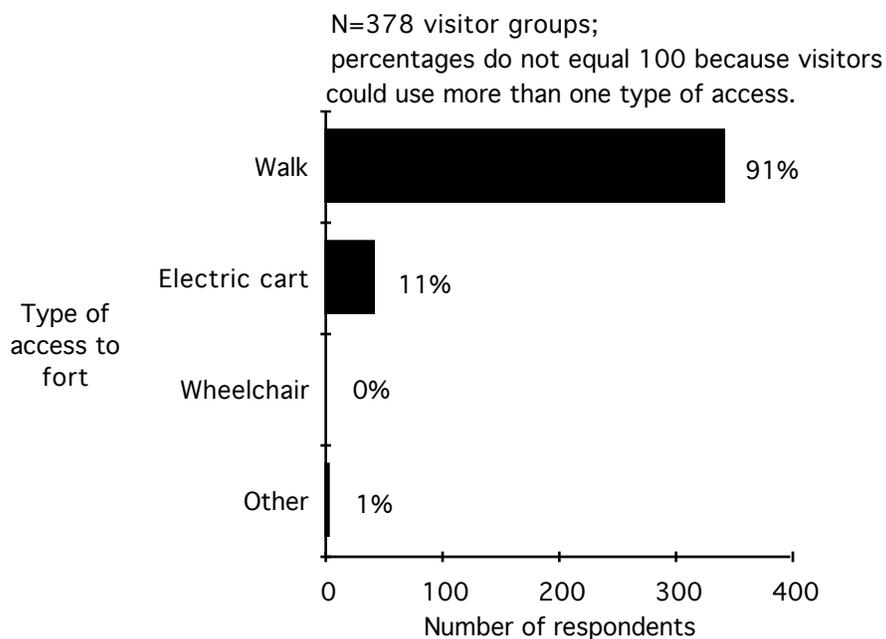


Figure 13: Transportation used between fort and vehicle

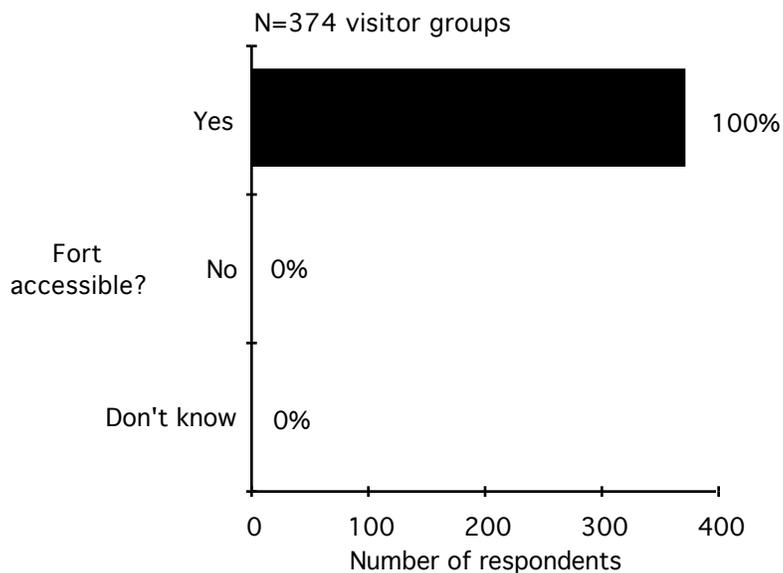


Figure 14: Was fort accessible?

Table 4: Ways to improve fort's accessibility
N=148 visitor comments

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Current accessibility okay/wouldn't change	98
Add lift/ramp/better access to second level	9
Provide cart for those needing it	8
Parking should be closer to fort	8
Preserve fort's authenticity	7
Keep parking away from fort	5
Advertise cart availability	3
Use horse drawn wagon to take people between fort and parking	3
Make it wheelchair accessible	2
Make rest of grounds more accessible	2
Other comments	3

The most commonly used visitor services were the reconstructed fort (83%), room furnishings (77%), park brochure/maps (69%), and restrooms (60%), as shown in Figure 15.

Visitor services: use, importance and quality

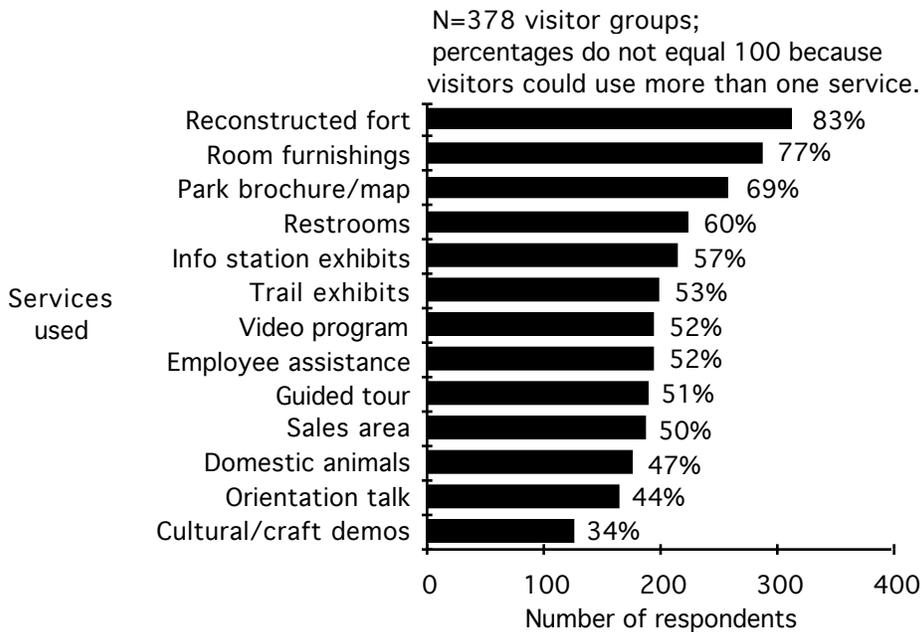


Figure 15: Use of visitor services

Visitors rated the importance and quality of visitor services they used. They used a five point scale (see boxes below).

IMPORTANCE	QUALITY
1=extremely important	1=very good
2=very important	2=good
3=moderately important	3=average
4=somewhat important	4=poor
5=not important	5=very poor

Figure 16 shows the average importance and quality ratings for each service. An average score was determined for each service based on ratings by visitors who used that service. This was done for both importance and quality. The results were plotted on the grid shown in Figure 16. Services were all rated above average in importance and quality.

Figures 17-29 show that several services received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: reconstructed fort (88%), guided tour (86%), restrooms (83%) and room furnishings (83%). The highest "somewhat important" to "not important" ratings were for sales area (24%) and seeing domestic animals in and around fort (24%).

Figures 30-42 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" ratings: reconstructed fort (88%), employee assistance (87%), and guided tour (86%). The services receiving the highest "poor" to "very poor" ratings were seeing animals in and around fort (15%) and restrooms (14%).

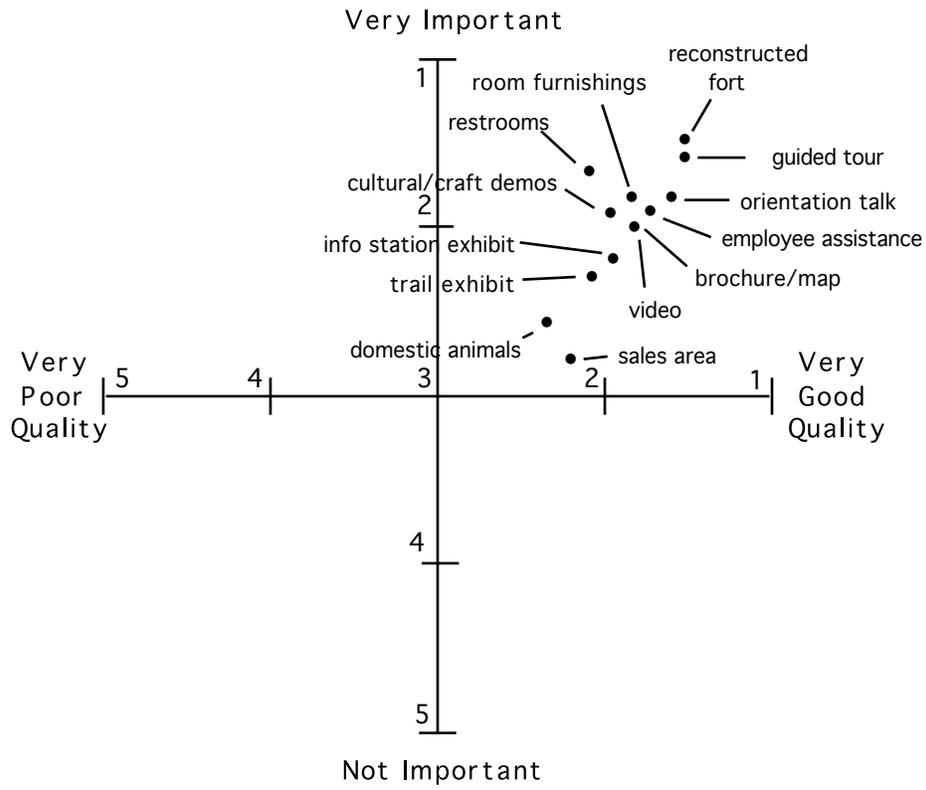


Figure 16: Average ratings of visitor services importance and quality

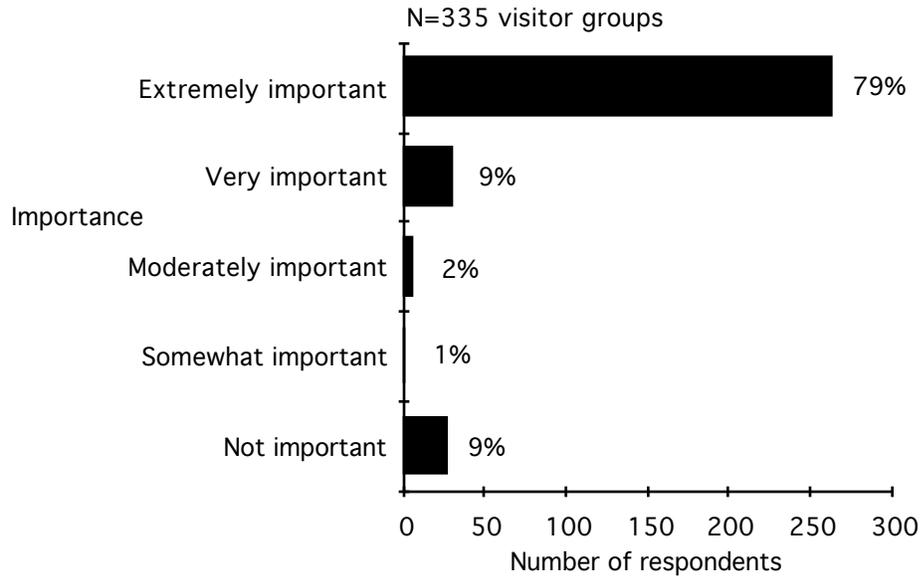


Figure 17: Importance of reconstructed fort

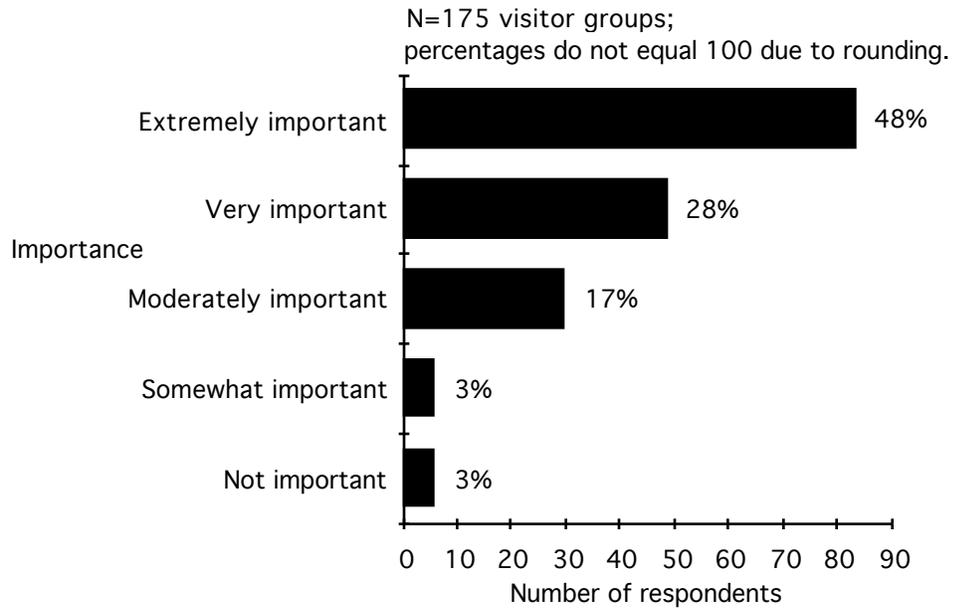


Figure 18: Importance of orientation talk

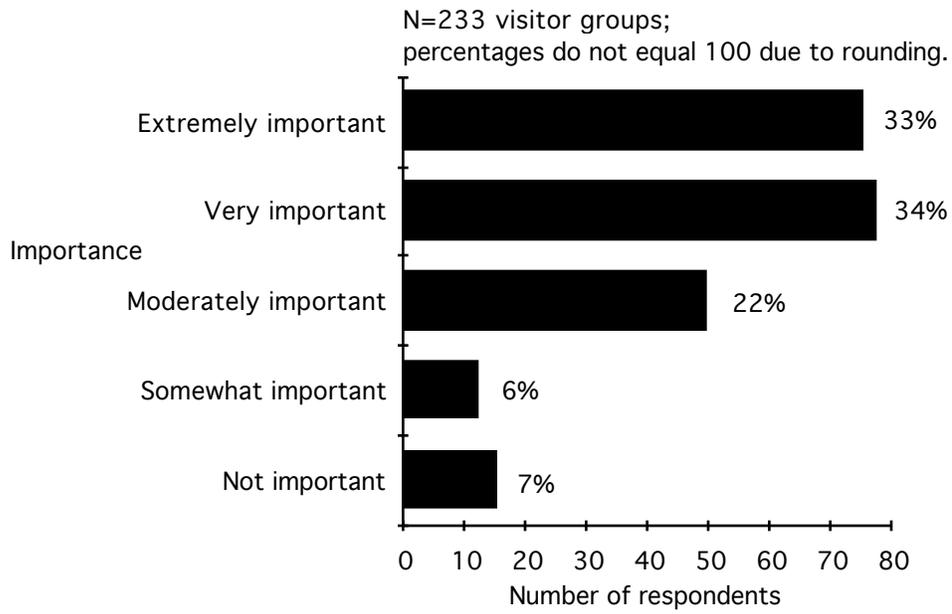


Figure 19: Importance of information station exhibits

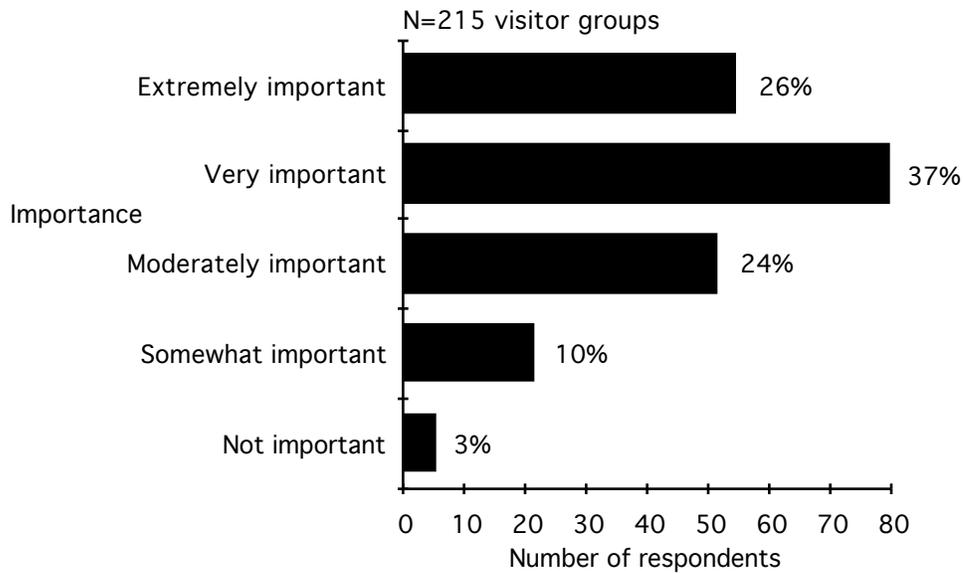


Figure 20: Importance of trail exhibits

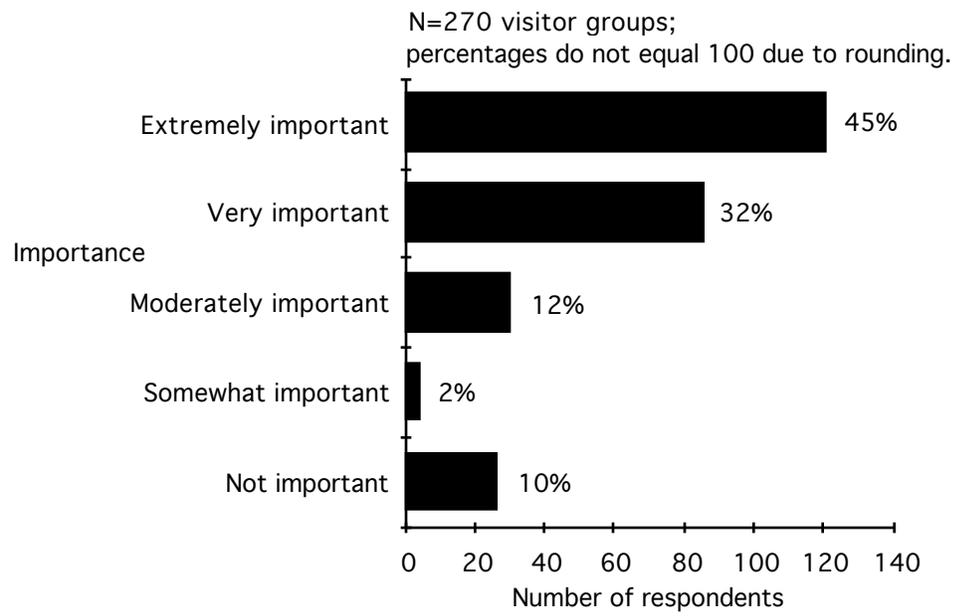


Figure 21: Importance of park brochure/map

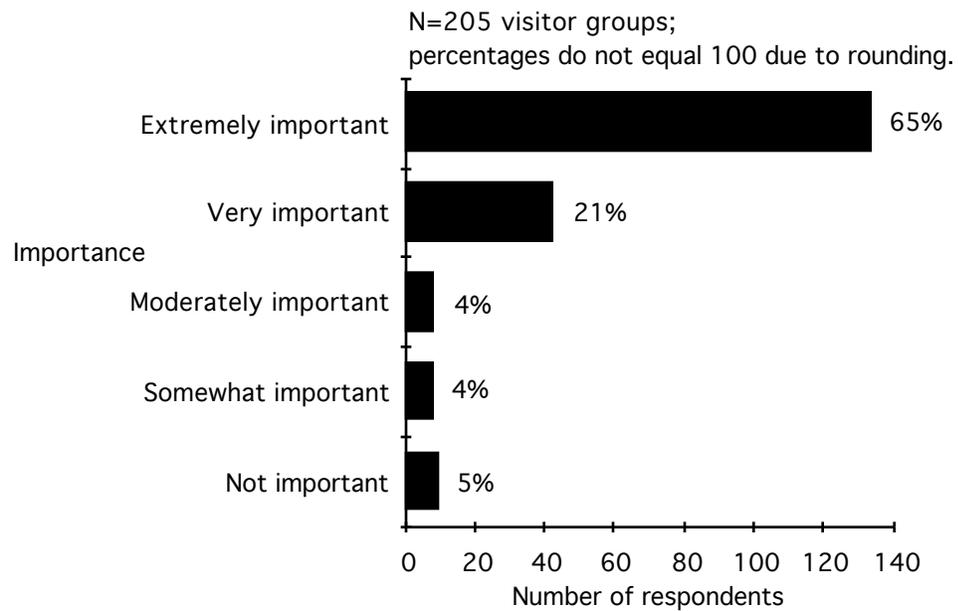


Figure 22: Importance of guided tour

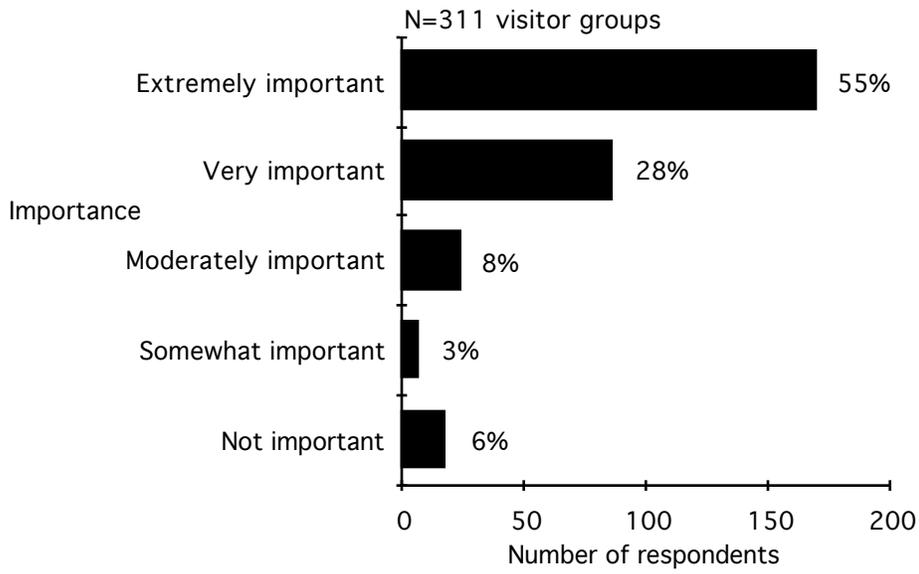


Figure 23: Importance of room furnishings

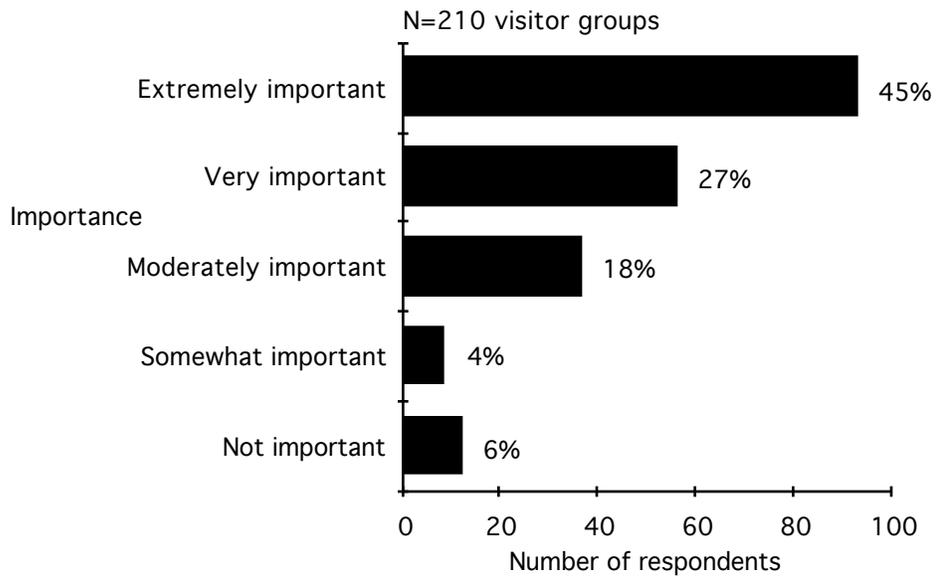


Figure 24: Importance of video program

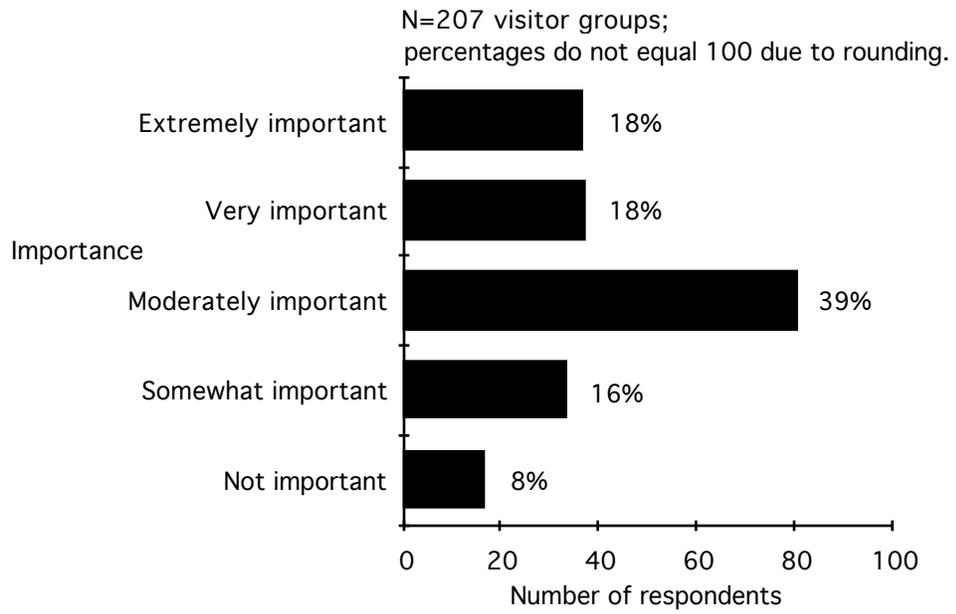


Figure 25: Importance of sales area

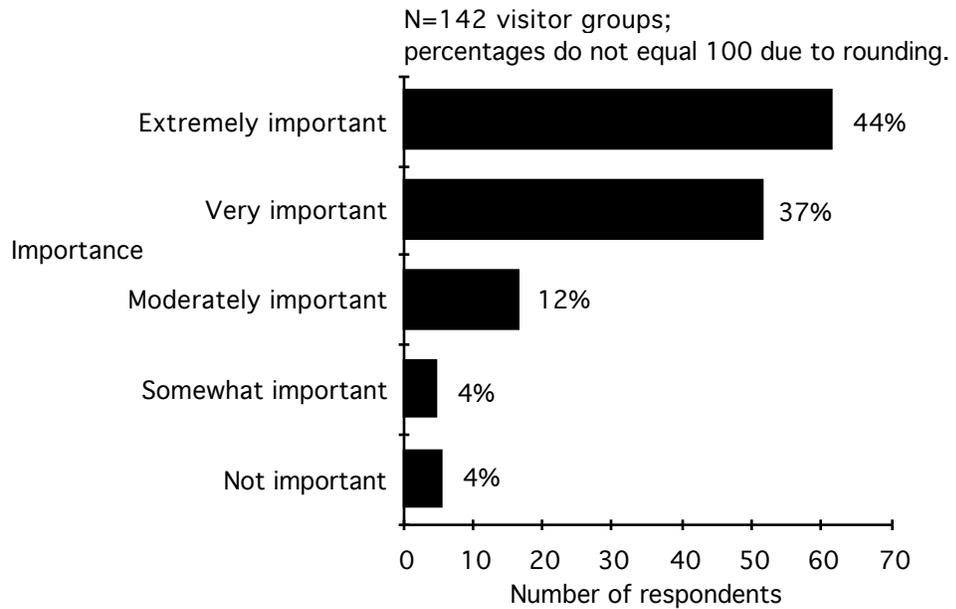


Figure 26: Importance of cultural/craft demonstrations

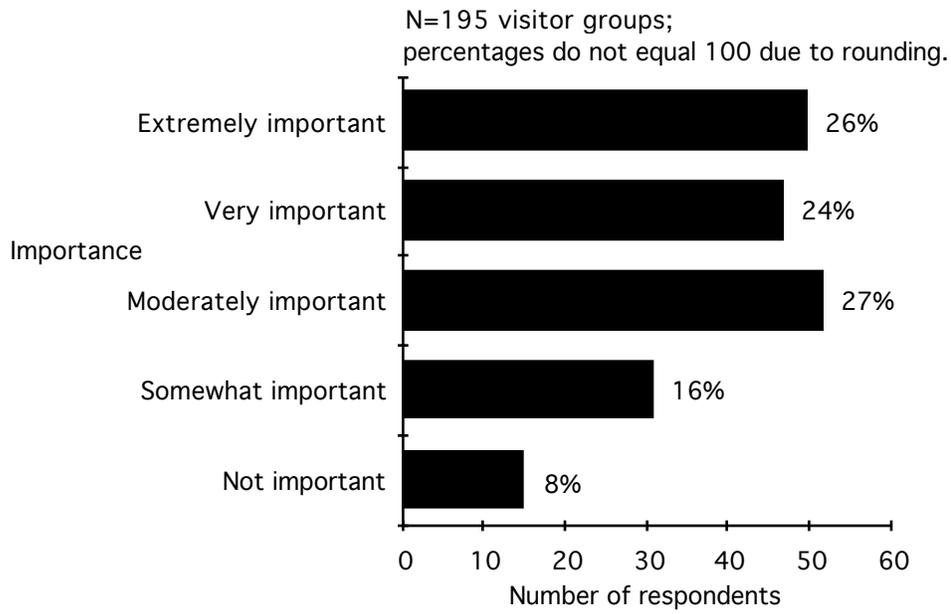


Figure 27: Importance of seeing domestic animals in and around fort

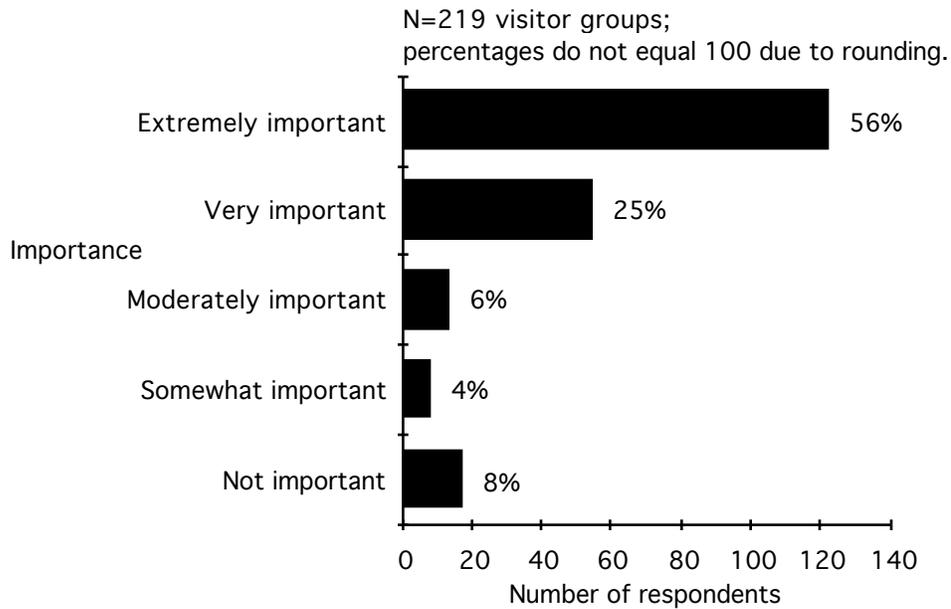


Figure 28: Importance of employee assistance

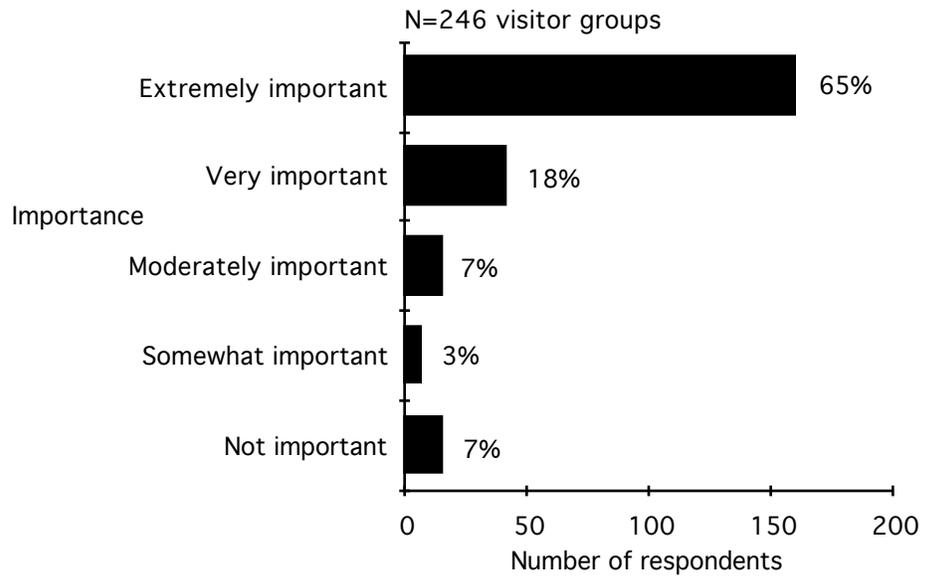


Figure 29: Importance of restrooms

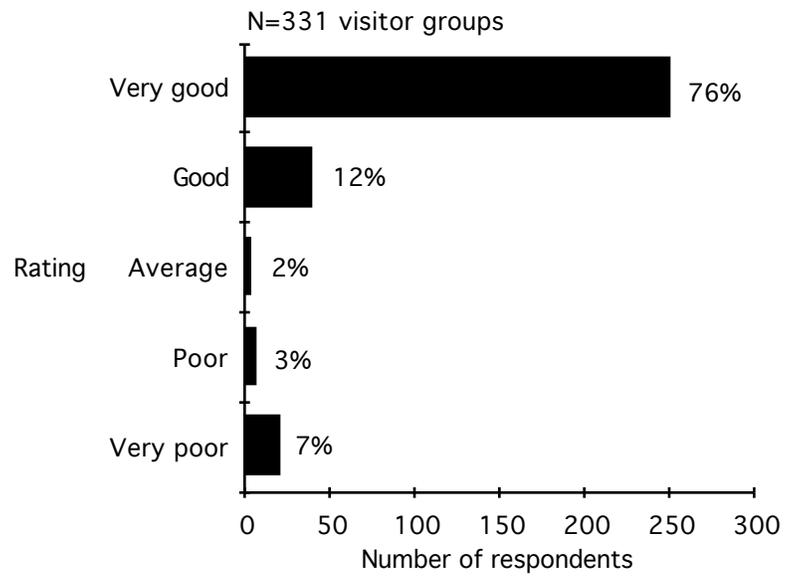


Figure 30: Quality of reconstructed fort

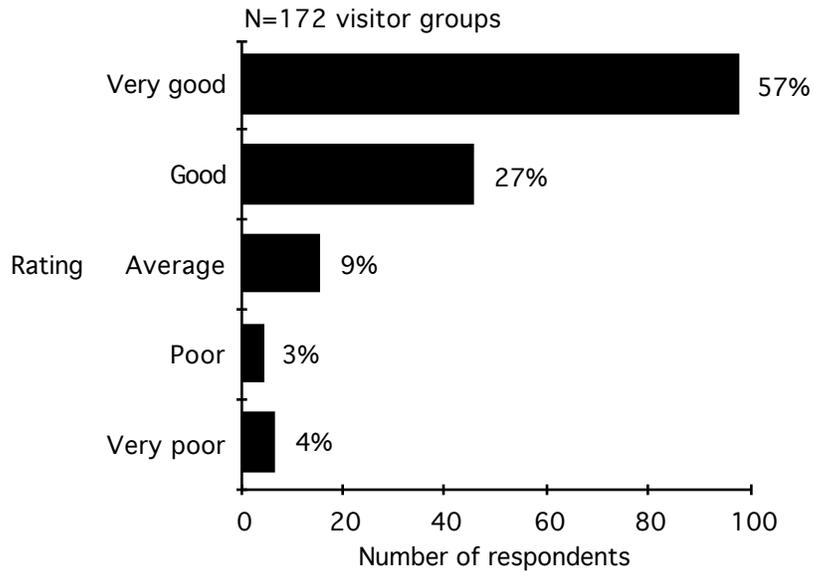


Figure 31: Quality of orientation talk

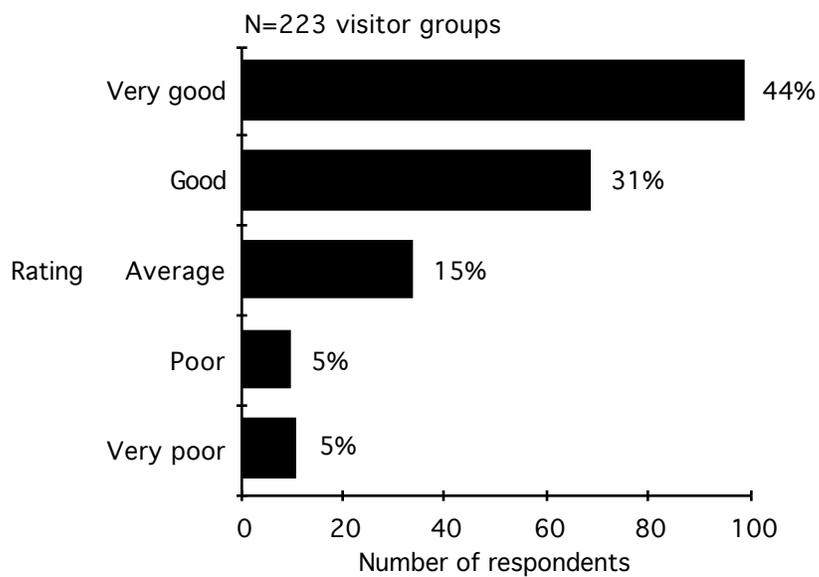


Figure 32: Quality of information station exhibits

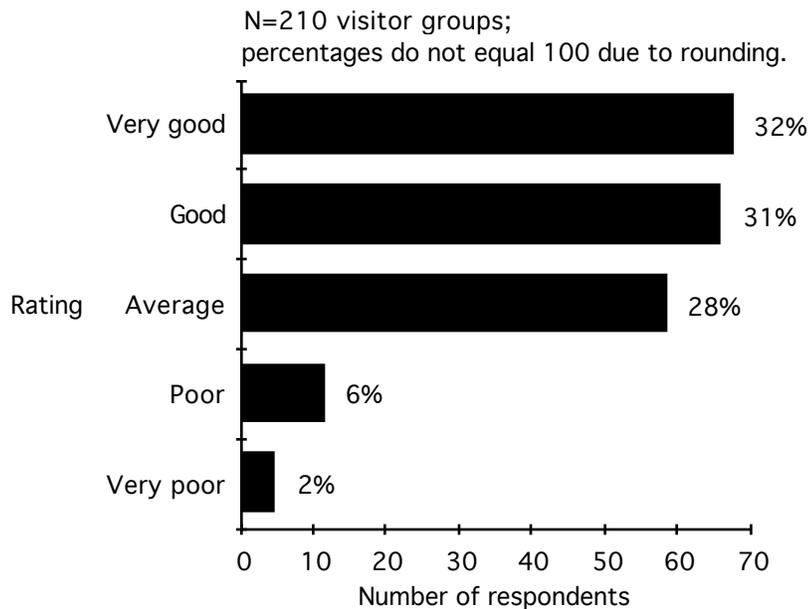


Figure 33: Quality of trail exhibits

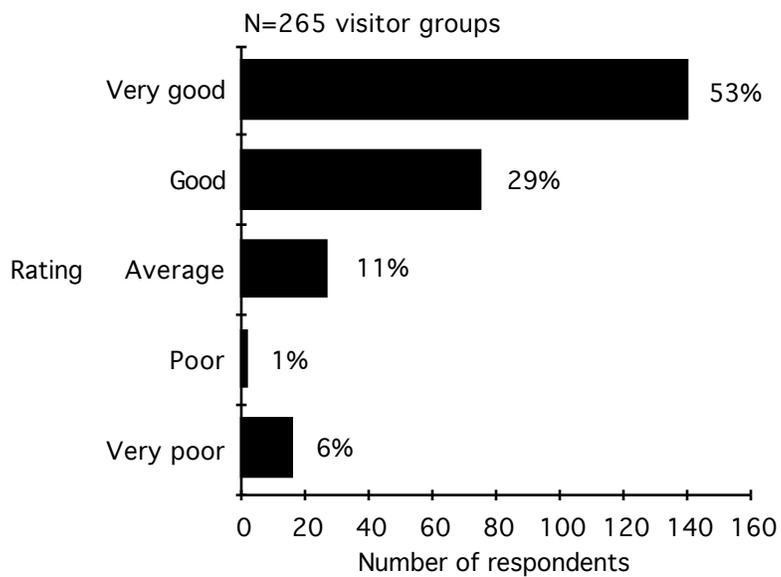


Figure 34: Quality of park brochure/map

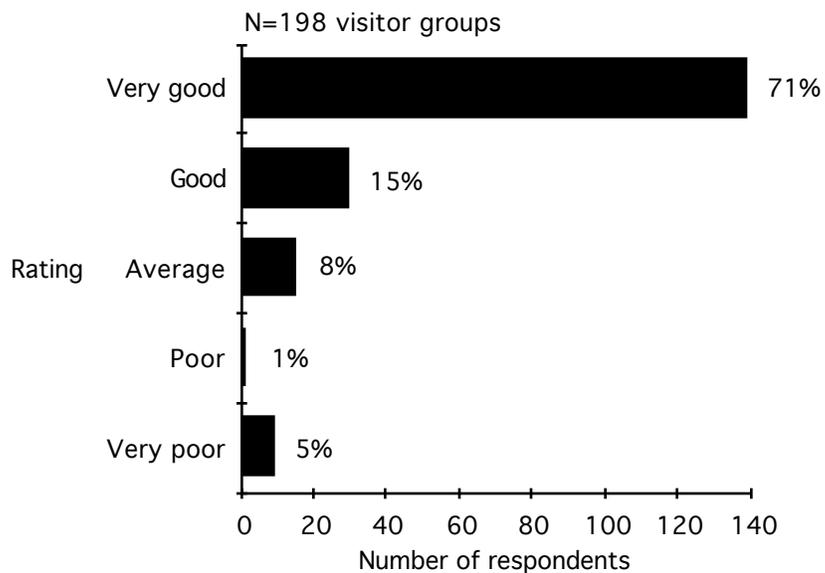


Figure 35: Quality of guided tour

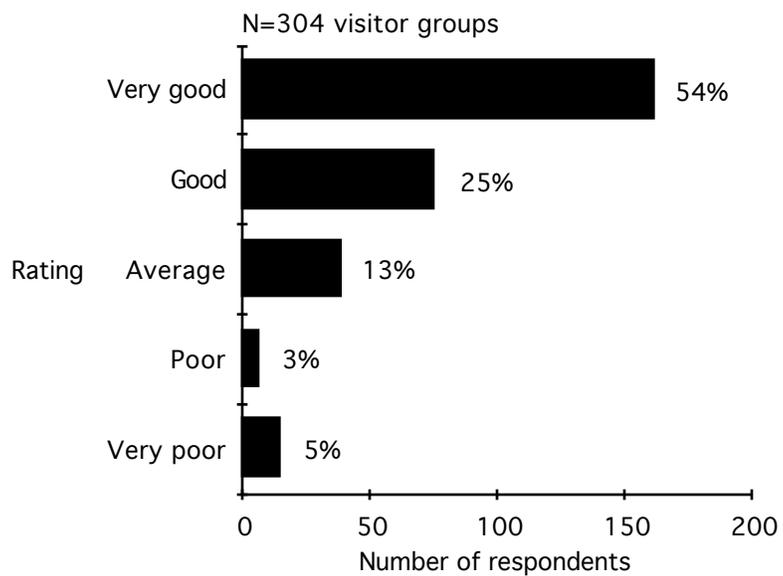


Figure 36: Quality of room furnishings

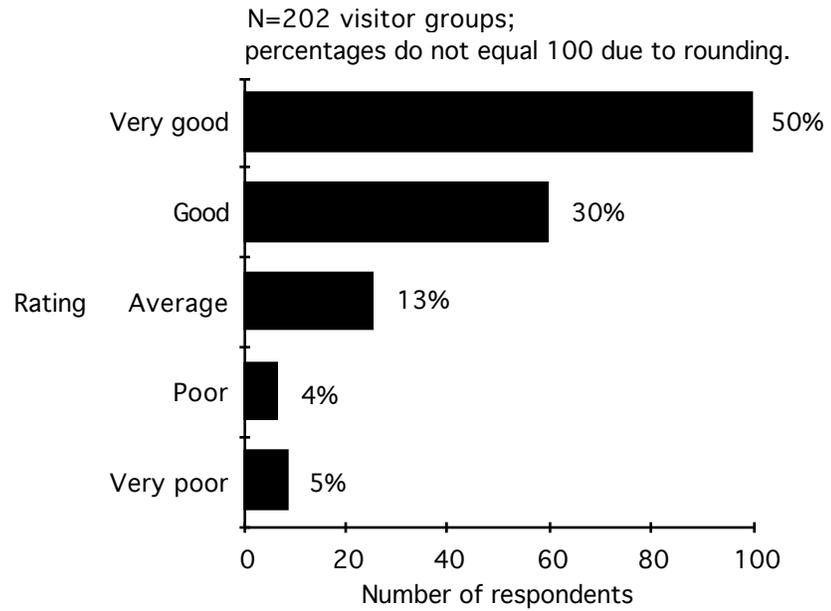


Figure 37: Quality of video program

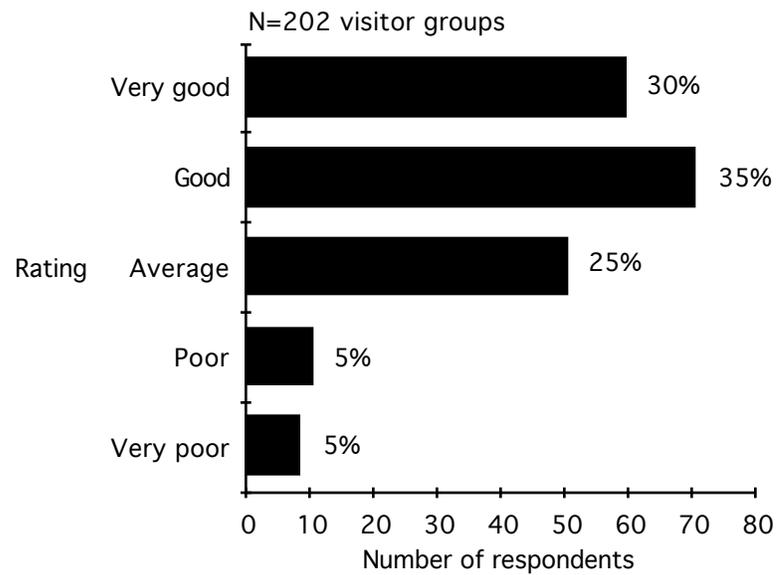


Figure 38: Quality of sales area

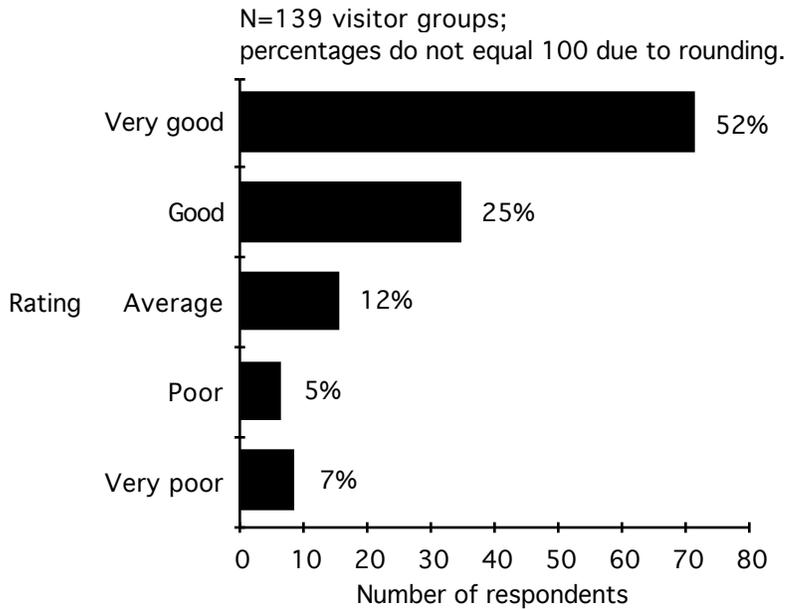


Figure 39: Quality of cultural/craft demonstrations

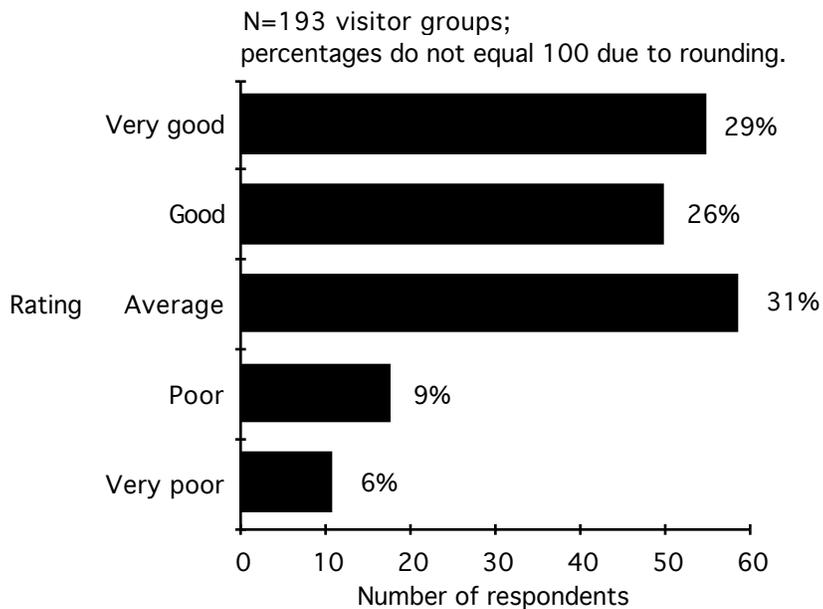


Figure 40: Quality of seeing domestic animals in and around fort

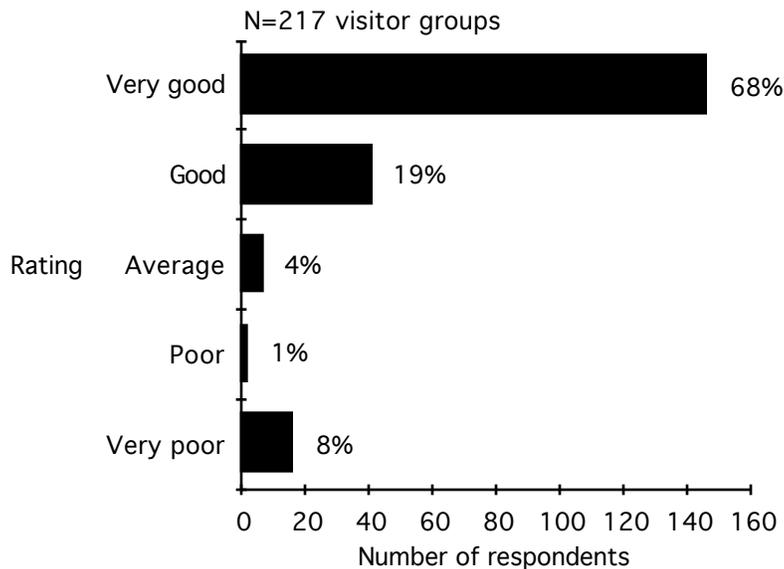


Figure 41: Quality of employee assistance

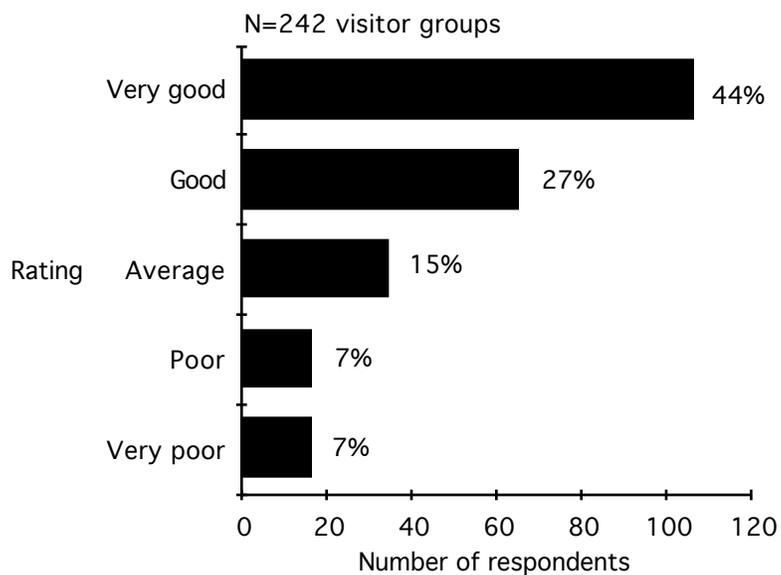


Figure 42: Quality of restrooms

Visitors were asked if they had difficulty finding their way around the fort. Most visitors (97%) said they did not have difficulty finding their way around the fort, as shown in Figure 43.

Finding way around the fort

If visitors had difficulty finding their way, they were asked to explain. Their responses are listed in Table 5 and in the appendix.

Those who had difficulty were also asked if they were able to get assistance in finding their way around if they needed it. Most (98%) said they were able to get assistance (see Figure 44).

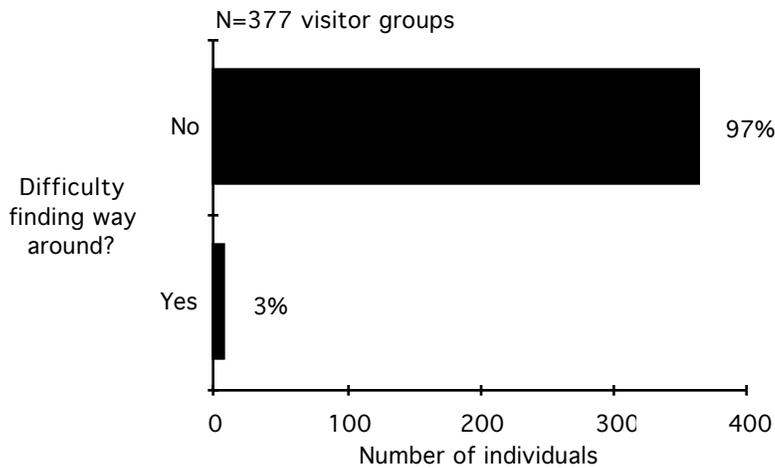


Figure 43: Difficulty finding way around the fort

Table 5: Reasons for difficulty in finding way around the fort
N=11 comments

Comment	# times mentioned
Needed better directions in fort	3
Needed fort brochure before starting self-guided tour	3
Needed explanatory signs in rooms	2
Brochure map of fort not clear	2
No one to ask for directions	1

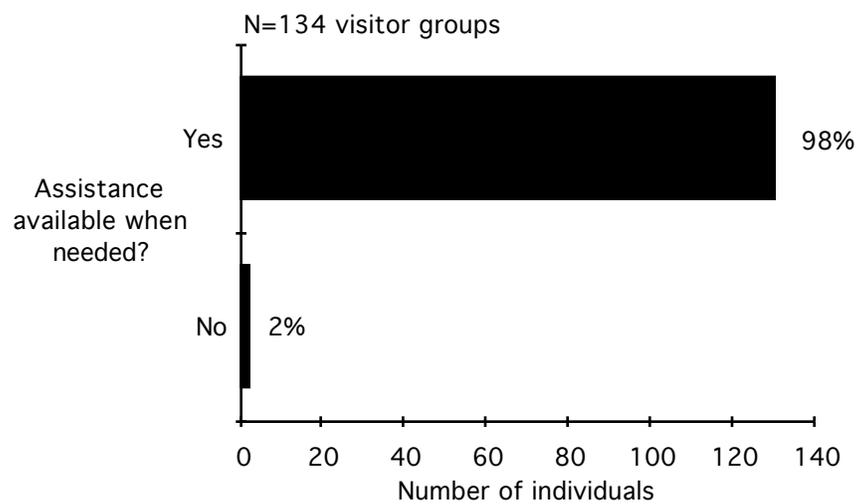


Figure 44: Assistance available if needed

Visitors were asked to identify what they liked most about this visit to Bent's Old Fort. Table 6 below and the appendix list what visitors liked about their visit.

What
visitors
liked most

Table 6: Visitors' likes about their visit
N=577 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	# times mentioned
Fort reconstruction authentic	79
Guided tour	59
Historical interest/importance	57
Guides knowledgeable, friendly	47
Everything, whole fort site	47
Authentically furnished	35
Historic authenticity	30
Feeling of going back in time	28
Staff friendly, helpful, knowledgeable	17
Staff in historical costumes	17
Access to rooms & historic objects without restrictions	14
Video	13
Craft demonstrations	12
Trade room/trade room items	12
Being able to handle objects	10
Being able to go in restored rooms	10
Blacksmith shop and demonstration	10
That fort functions in original time period	8
Exhibits	7
Workmanship/good condition	7
Kitchen	5
Animals	5
Parapets/guns on top of fort	4
The experience	4
Minimum of modern intrusions	3
That fort was reconstructed	3
Billiard room	3
Hands-on experience for kids	3
Everyone friendly	3
Orientation talk	2
Glad repairs being made	2
Talking to blacksmith	2
Inexpensive	2
Fort's original design	2
External appearance	2
Other comments	13

What visitors liked least Visitors were asked what they liked least about this visit to Bent's Old Fort. Table 7 below and the appendix list what visitors liked least about their visit.

Table 7: Visitors' dislikes about their visit
N=324 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	# times mentioned
Nothing	81
Long walk from parking	18
Hot weather	15
Lack of time/late arrival	15
More cultural/craft demonstrations needed	13
Lack of description at each room	11
Tour rushed/lacking information	10
Odorous bathrooms	10
No refreshments at fort	10
Pit toilets unclean	7
Bugs	7
Rooms which were almost empty	6
Employees unknowledgeable about their jobs/site	6
Poor lighting in rooms	5
Fort's isolation	5
Not enough costumed interpreters	5
Drinking fountains too scarce/inoperative	5
Trade room/trade room items	5
Missed the tour	4
Lack of thorough orientation to site	4
Video poor quality/old	4
Difficult to find	4
Fort not in good repair	4
Not enough animals	3
Didn't get a park brochure--needed the map	3
Tours not offered more frequently	3
No animals	3
Other visitors rude/inconsiderate	3
Brochure information inadequate	3
Lack of outside seating	2
Animal smells in fort	2
Video room hot/stuffy/crowded	2
Lack of exhibits	2
Souvenirs high priced	2
Guide too long-winded/repetitive	2
Staff unhelpful/unfriendly	2
Indians not represented	2
Parking lot	2
No restrooms at fort	2
Cement in construction	2
Not much to see	2
Other comments	28

Visitors were asked what they would propose if they were a park manager planning for the future of Bent's Old Fort. A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

.....

Planning for the future

N=470 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Maintain quality personnel	4
Improve assistance offered by staff	3
Other comments	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize more	28
Continue as is	25
Provide more info/exhibits about fort's people	19
Put up tepees/encampments around fort	18
Add more animals	17
Provide information about rooms/artifacts at each room	17
Need Indian perspective	17
Provide more information about nearby historical sites	16
Provide path to river and advertise	11
Display more room furnishings/artifacts	11
Sell more souvenirs/gifts	10
Schedule more special events	8
Need visitor center/history museum	7
Provide more detailed self-guided brochure	5
Improve cemetery	5
Advertise cart availability	5
Provide more chance for visitor participation	5
Add interpretive trails	5
Do more research on fort	5
Improve video room & operation	5
Show trading going on	4
Add restrooms to information station	3
Plant small garden/field crops	3
Don't commercialize	3
Need larger, better lit sales room	2
Price items in trade room	2
Hide modern objects	2
Provide sound effects for various rooms	2

Use mannequins	2
Provide more information on Susan Magoffin	2
Operate wagons	2
Other comments	14

Personal	
Need more costumed interpreters doing crafts	45
Provide more cultural/craft demonstrations	27
Offer longer, more detailed tours	6
Provide more frequent tours	5
Keep costumed interpreters/craft demonstrations	5
Offer more services until closing/stay open later	4
Need smaller tour groups	3
Had trouble hearing tour guide	2
Craft demonstrations should be scheduled	2
Offer working vacations to train volunteers	2
Improve guided tours	2
Other comments	2

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

General	
Provide snack bar	9
Provide shaded picnic tables nearby	8
Improve restrooms	8
Need better highway signing	7
Maintain upkeep	6
Continue restoration	6
Improve parking lot	5
Reconstruct/improve exterior historic scene	5
Provide camping area	4
Improve RV access/parking	3
Provide shaded benches along trail to fort	3
Improve upkeep	2
Demonstrate adobe-making/construction	2
Other comments	6

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Other comments	2
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Many visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments are summarized below and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions on how to improve the park; others describe what visitors enjoyed or did not enjoy.

Comment Summary

Visitor Comment Summary

N=425 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Staff friendly, helpful, knowledgeable	30
Guide excellent	11
Other comments	3
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize more	7
Enjoyed animals	4
Provide more info about historic area attractions	5
Demonstrate Indian life/culture	3
Add signs to each room explaining use	3
Wanted more info on fort/history	3
Good bookstore	2
Wanted to know more about Bents	2
Map of fort should be given to every visitor group	2
Video great	2
Other comments	12
Personal	
Enjoyed smells/experiences of earlier times	7
Enjoyed period costumes	5
Enjoyed craft demonstrations	2
Tour too rushed	2
Offer long and short tours	2
Guided tours should be advertised	2
Great "hands-on" experience	2
Saw only one demonstration	2
Other comments	10

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

General	
Fort restoration well done	5
Glad it's restored/preserved	4
Highway signs poor	4
Very authentic	3
Fort well maintained	3
Direction signs clear	2
Boggsville should be acquired/restored	2
Good progress on restoration	2
Enjoyed shady picnic area at park	2
Other comments	6

POLICIES

Entrance fee low	2
------------------	---

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Uncrowded	2
Other comment	1

VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT

Thanks for asking my opinion	4
Other comments	3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Enjoyed visit	75
Good job/thanks	44
Plan/hope to return	23
Fort interesting	22
Informative	15
One of the most interesting forts visited	8
Will tell our friends/relatives	8
Need places like this to increase interest in history	7
It was more than expected	6
One of best parts of our trip	5
Return visit	4
Would liked to have stayed longer	4
Very authentic	3
Weather too warm	2
This historic site should help local economy	2
Live nearby	2
Arrived late in day	2
Saw fort on TV	2
Enjoy visiting forts/museums	2
Grew up near here	2
Other comments	19

MENU FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Park personnel who wish to see other tables, graphs, and maps to learn more about their visitors may request such information from the VSP. Two kinds of analyses are available:

1) Two-way comparisons compare two characteristics. For example, to learn about the sites visited by visitors with history of West as a hobby, request a comparison of sites visited by history of West as hobby; to help learn about the ages of visitors who take a guided tour, request a comparison of visitor ages by take guided tour.

2) Three-way comparisons compare a two-way comparison to a third characteristic. For example, to learn about first time visitors' reasons for visiting and the sites they visited, request a comparison of (reasons for visiting by first time visitors) by sites visited; to learn about age group participation in an interpretive service, request a comparison of (age group by activity) by interpretive service.

Consult the list of characteristics for Bent's Old Fort visitors; then complete the appropriate blanks on the order form. Make a copy of the order form which follows the example below.

SAMPLE

Visitor Services Project Analysis Order Form
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
Report 48

Date of request: _____/_____/_____

Person requesting analysis: _____

Phone number (commercial): _____

The following list has the variables available for comparison from your park's visitor survey. Use this list to find the characteristics for which you want to request additional two-way and three-way comparisons. Be as specific as possible—you may select a single program/service/facility instead of all those listed in the questionnaire.

• Group size	• Sites visited	• Vehicle to fort transport
• Group type	• Information sources	• Fort accessibility
• Age	• Highway routes used	• Interp. service use
• State residence	• Ethnicity	• Interp. service importance
• Country residence	• Reasons for visit	• Interp. service quality
• Number times visited	• Activity	• Difficulty finding way
• Length of stay	• History of West as hobby	• Assistance available
• Length of stay compared to time planned		

Two-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

Sites visited by history of W. as hobby

by _____

by _____

Three-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

age group by activity by interp service

by _____

by _____

by _____

Special instructions Tell us why you need the information what you're trying to find out, etc.

Mail to:
Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83843-4199

Visitor Services Project Analysis Order Form
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
Report 48

Date of request: ____/____/____

Person requesting analysis: _____

Phone number (commercial): _____

The following list has the variables available for comparison from your park's visitor survey. Use this list to find the characteristics for which you want to request additional two-way and three-way comparisons. Be as specific as possible--you may select a single program/service/facility instead of all those listed in the questionnaire.

- Group size
- Group type
- Age
- State residence
- Country residence
- Number times visited
- Length of stay
- Length of stay compared to time planned
- Places visited
- Information sources
- Highway routes used
- Ethnicity
- Reasons for visit
- Activity
- History of West as hobby
- Vehicle to fort transport
- Fort accessibility
- Interp. service use
- Interp. service importance
- Interp. service quality
- Difficulty finding way
- Assistance available

Two-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

_____ by _____
_____ by _____
_____ by _____

Three-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

_____ by _____ by _____
_____ by _____ by _____
_____ by _____ by _____

Special instructions _____

Mail to: Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844

QUESTIONNAIRE



Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-4 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All VSP reports listed below are available from the parks where the studies were conducted.

1985

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex

1986

6. Crater Lake National Park

1987

7. Gettysburg National Military Park
8. Independence National Historical Park
9. Valley Forge National Historical Park
10. Colonial National Historical Park
11. Grand Teton National Park
12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
13. Mesa Verde National Park
14. Shenandoah National Park
15. Yellowstone National Park
16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study

1988

17. Glen Canyon National Recreational Area
18. Denali National Park and Preserve
19. Bryce Canyon National Park
20. Craters of the Moon National Monument

1989

21. Everglades National Park
22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
23. The White House Tours, President's Park
24. Lincoln Home National Historical Site
25. Yellowstone National Park
26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

28. Canyonlands National Park
29. White Sands National Monument
30. National Monuments
31. Kenai Fjords National Park
32. Gateway National Recreation Area
33. Petersburg National Battlefield
34. Death Valley National Monument
35. Glacier National Park
36. Scott's Bluff National Monument
37. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

1991

38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
39. Joshua Tree National Monument
40. The White House Tours, President's Park
41. Natchez Trace Parkway
42. Stehekin-North Cascades National Park/Lake Chelan National Rec. Area
43. City of Rocks National Reserve
44. The White House Tours, President's Park

1992

45. Big Bend National Park
46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
47. Glen Echo Park
48. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83844 or call (208) 885-7129.

Visitor Services Project
Bent's Old Fort
National Historic Site

Appendix

Visitor Services Project

Bent's Old Fort

National Historic Site

Appendix

Margaret Littlejohn

Report 48

February 1993

This volume contains a summary of visitors' comments for Questions 15 through 18. The summary is followed by their unedited comments.

Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Western Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Table 5: Reasons for difficulty in finding way
around the fort

N=11 comments

Comment	# times mentioned
Needed better directions in fort	3
Needed fort brochure before starting self-guided tour	3
Needed explanatory signs in rooms	2
Brochure map of fort not clear	2
No one to ask for directions	1

Table 6: Visitors' likes about their visit

N=577 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	# times mentioned
Fort reconstruction authentic	79
Guided tour	59
Historical interest/importance	57
Guides knowledgeable, friendly	47
Everything, whole fort site	47
Authentically furnished	35
Historic authenticity	30
Feeling of going back in time	28
Staff friendly, helpful, knowledgeable	17
Staff in historical costumes	17
Access to rooms & historic objects without restrictions	14
Video	13
Craft demonstrations	12
Trade room/trade room items	12
Being able to handle objects	10
Being able to go in restored rooms	10
Blacksmith shop and demonstration	10
That fort functions in original time period	8
Exhibits	7
Workmanship/good condition	7
Kitchen	5
Animals	5
Parapets/guns on top of fort	4
The experience	4
Minimum of modern intrusions	3
That fort was reconstructed	3
Billiard room	3
Hands-on experience for kids	3
Everyone friendly	3
Orientation talk	2
Glad repairs being made	2
Talking to blacksmith	2

Inexpensive	2
Fort's original design	2
External appearance	2
Other comments	13

Table 7: Visitors' dislikes about their visit

N=324 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	# times mentioned
Nothing	81
Long walk from parking	18
Hot weather	15
Lack of time/late arrival	15
More cultural/craft demonstrations needed	13
Lack of description at each room	11
Tour rushed/lacking information	10
Odorous bathrooms	10
No refreshments at fort	10
Pit toilets unclean	7
Bugs	7
Rooms which were almost empty	6
Employees unknowledgeable about their jobs/site	6
Poor lighting in rooms	5
Fort's isolation	5
Not enough costumed interpreters	5
Drinking fountains too scarce/inoperative	5
Trade room/trade room items	5
Missed the tour	4
Lack of thorough orientation to site	4
Video poor quality/old	4
Difficult to find	4
Fort not in good repair	4
Not enough animals	3
Didn't get a park brochure--needed the map	3
Tours not offered more frequently	3
No animals	3
Other visitors rude/inconsiderate	3
Brochure information inadequate	3
Lack of outside seating	2
Animal smells in fort	2
Video room hot/stuffy/crowded	2
Lack of exhibits	2
Souvenirs high priced	2
Guide too long-winded/repetitive	2
Staff unhelpful/unfriendly	2
Indians not represented	2
Parking lot	2
No restrooms at fort	2
Cement in construction	2
Not much to see	2
Other comments	28

Planning for the future

N=470 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Maintain quality personnel	4
Improve assistance offered by staff	3
Other comments	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize more	28
Continue as is	25
Provide more info/exhibits about fort's people	19
Put up tepees/encampments around fort	18
Add more animals	17
Provide information about rooms/artifacts at each room	17
Need Indian perspective	17
Provide more information about nearby historical sites	16
Provide path to river and advertise	11
Display more room furnishings/artifacts	11
Sell more souvenirs/gifts	10
Schedule more special events	8
Need visitor center/history museum	7
Provide more detailed self-guided brochure	5
Improve cemetery	5
Advertise cart availability	5
Provide more chance for visitor participation	5
Add interpretive trails	5
Do more research on fort	5
Improve video room & operation	5
Show trading going on	4
Add restrooms to information station	3
Plant small garden/field crops	3
Don't commercialize	3
Need larger, better lit sales room	2
Price items in trade room	2
Hide modern objects	2
Provide sound effects for various rooms	2
Use mannequins	2
Provide more information on Susan Magoffin	2
Operate wagons	2
Other comments	14

Personal	
Need more costumed interpreters doing crafts	45
Provide more cultural/craft demonstrations	27
Offer longer, more detailed tours	6
Provide more frequent tours	5
Keep costumed interpreters/craft demonstrations	5
Offer more services until closing/stay open later	4
Need smaller tour groups	3
Had trouble hearing tour guide	2
Craft demonstrations should be scheduled	2
Offer working vacations to train volunteers	2
Improve guided tours	2
Other comments	2

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

General	
Provide snack bar	9
Provide shaded picnic tables nearby	8
Improve restrooms	8
Need better highway signing	7
Maintain upkeep	6
Continue restoration	6
Improve parking lot	5
Reconstruct/improve exterior historic scene	5
Provide camping area	4
Improve RV access/parking	3
Provide shaded benches along trail to fort	3
Improve upkeep	2
Demonstrate adobe-making/construction	2
Other comments	6

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS

Other comments	2
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Visitor Comment Summary

N=425 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Staff friendly, helpful, knowledgeable	30
Guide excellent	11
Other comments	3
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize more	7
Enjoyed animals	4
Provide more info about historic area attractions	5
Demonstrate Indian life/culture	3
Add signs to each room explaining use	3
Wanted more info on fort/history	3
Good bookstore	2
Wanted to know more about Bents	2
Map of fort should be given to every visitor group	2
Video great	2
Other comments	12
Personal	
Enjoyed smells/experiences of earlier times	7
Enjoyed period costumes	5
Enjoyed craft demonstrations	2
Tour too rushed	2
Offer long and short tours	2
Guided tours should be advertised	2
Great "hands-on" experience	2
Saw only one demonstration	2
Other comments	10
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Fort restoration well done	5
Glad it's restored/preserved	4
Highway signs poor	4
Very authentic	3
Fort well maintained	3
Direction signs clear	2
Boggsville should be acquired/restored	2
Good progress on restoration	2
Enjoyed shady picnic area at park	2
Other comments	6

POLICIES

Entrance fee low 2

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Uncrowded 2

Other comment 1

VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT

Thanks for asking my opinion 4

Other comments 3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Enjoyed visit 75

Good job/thanks 44

Plan/hope to return 23

Fort interesting 22

Informative 15

One of the most interesting forts visited 8

Will tell our friends/relatives 8

Need places like this to increase interest in history 7

It was more than expected 6

One of best parts of our trip 5

Return visit 4

Would liked to have stayed longer 4

Very authentic 3

Weather too warm 2

This historic site should help local economy 2

Live nearby 2

Arrived late in day 2

Saw fort on TV 2

Enjoy visiting forts/museums 2

Grew up near here 2

Other comments 19