Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Visitor Study

Summer 1995

Report 77
Visitor Services Project
Cooperative Park Studies Unit

University of Idaho

Visitor Services Project

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Visitor Study

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Report 77

January 1996

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Visitor Services Project
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
Report Summary

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- This report describes part of the results of a visitor study at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve during July 12-18, 1995. A total of 531 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 444 questionnaires for an 84% response rate.

- This report profiles Wrangell-St. Elias visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix include a summary of visitors' comments.

- Fifty-five percent of the visitors were in family groups; 20% were in groups of friends. Forty-nine percent of Wrangell-St. Elias visitors were in groups of two. Most visitors (56%) were aged 26-55.

- Among Wrangell-St. Elias visitors, 11% were international visitors. Forty percent of those visitors were from Germany. United States visitors were from Alaska (31%), California (7%), Florida (5%) and 43 other states.

- Almost two-thirds of Wrangell-St. Elias visitors (61%) stayed more than one day. On this visit, the most common activities were scenic driving (82%), viewing wildlife (57%), walking around Kennicott (51%) and day hiking (49%).

- Prior to their visit, over three-fourths of the visitors (77%) were aware of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The *Milepost* (45%) was the most used source of information about the park.

- The most visited sites were McCarthy (58%), Kennicott (53%), and the park visitor center (52%). Over one-third of the visitors went to the park visitor center first (35%).

- Half (50%) of the visitors day hiked during their visit to the park. Fourteen percent of the visitors took an overnight backpack trip in the park. Many stayed 2 to 3 nights in the backcountry, 27% stayed 6 or more nights and 27% stayed one night. Twenty-two percent used a plane to access the backcountry.

- The most commonly used forms of transportation to get to the park were private vehicles (53%), rental cars (28%) and RVs (20%). Forty percent of the visitors came from Palmer/ Mat-Su Valley to reach Wrangell-St. Elias; 23% came from Valdez.

- The reasons that brought visitors to the park were to view glaciers/ scenery (68%), view wildlife (59%), visit McCarthy/ Kennicott (55%), and recreation (46%).

- The most used visitor services and facilities were the park brochure/ map, restrooms/ outhouses, and assistance from employees. According to visitors, the most important services were restrooms/ outhouses, trails, guided tours and the national park visitor center. The best quality services were hotels/ motels/ lodges/ bed and breakfasts and assistance from employees.

- Future visitor center services that visitors would most prefer were exhibits (72%), a park movie (64%), trails (62%) and interpretive programs (53%).

- The average <u>visitor</u> <u>group</u> expenditure in the park area during this visit was $241. The average <u>per</u> <u>capita</u> expenditure was $84.

- Many of the visitors (76%) rated the overall quality of park services as "good" or "very good." Visitors made many additional comments.

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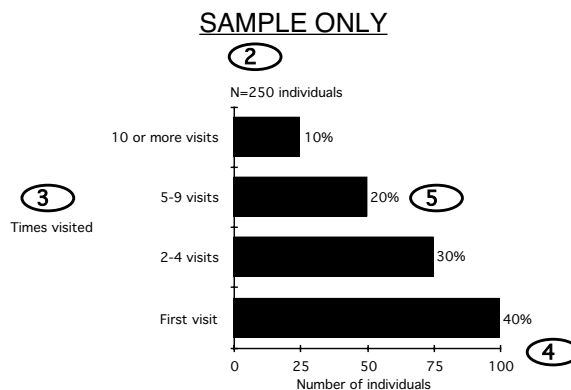| |
|---|
| For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact: |
| Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, |
| College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, |
| Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133 or call (208) 885-7129. |

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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (referred to as "Wrangell-St. Elias"). This visitor study was conducted July 12-18, 1995 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A <u>Methods</u> section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. A <u>Results</u> section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, an <u>Additional Analysis</u> page helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the <u>Questionnaire</u>. The separate appendix includes comment summaries and visitors' unedited comments.

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

<u>SAMPLE ONLY</u>

N=250 individuals

Times visited		
10 or more visits	10%	
5-9 visits	20%	
2-4 visits	30%	
First visit	40%	

Number of individuals

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 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve during July 12-18, 1995. Visitors completed the questionnaire after their visit 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.

At Wrangell-St. Elias, visitors were sampled as they visited the park visitor center, Slana Ranger Station, Chitina Ranger Station, drove the Nabesna road, drove the McCarthy road, or as they visited McCarthy at the tram or at the airport.

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 the information 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 439 groups, Figure 4 presents data for 1,263 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

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 444 questionnaires were returned by visitors, Figure 1 shows data for only 439 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.

Sample size, missing data and reporting errors

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

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 <u>soon after they visit</u> the park.

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of July 12-18, 1995 The results do not necessarily apply 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.

Limitations

During the study week, weather conditions at Wrangell-St. Elias were fairly typical of Alaska summers and should not have impacted visitors activities or length of stay.

Special conditions

RESULTS

**Visitors
contacted**

At Wrangell-St. Elias, 603 visitor groups were contacted; 88% accepted questionnaires. Four hundred forty-four visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, an 84% response rate.

Table 1 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. The 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)	525	44.9	432	45.4
Group size	528	3.4	439	3.5

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 95 people. Forty-nine percent of visitors came in groups of two; 27% came in groups of three or four. Fifty-five percent were families; 20% were friends (see Figure 2). "Other" groups included various tour groups. Three percent of the visitors were with a guided tour of Alaska (see Figure 3). Two percent of the visitors were with a guided tour of Wrangell-St. Elias (see Figure 4). One percent of the visitors were with an educational group (see Figure 5).

The most common ages were 26-55 (56%), as shown in Figure 6. Ten percent of the visitors were aged 15 years or younger. Many visitors (80%) were first-time visitors to Wrangell-St. Elias (see Figure 7).

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 11% of Wrangell-St. Elias visitors. International visitors were from Germany (40%), England (11%), Austria (10%) and Switzerland (10%), as well as ten other countries (see Map 1 and Table 2). United States visitors were from Alaska (31%), California (7%), Florida (5%) and 43 other states, as shown in Map 2 and Table 3.

N=439 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Group size

- 11+ — 3%
- 6-10 — 9%
- 5 — 5%
- 4 — 14%
- 3 — 13%
- 2 — 49%
- 1 — 8%

Number of respondents
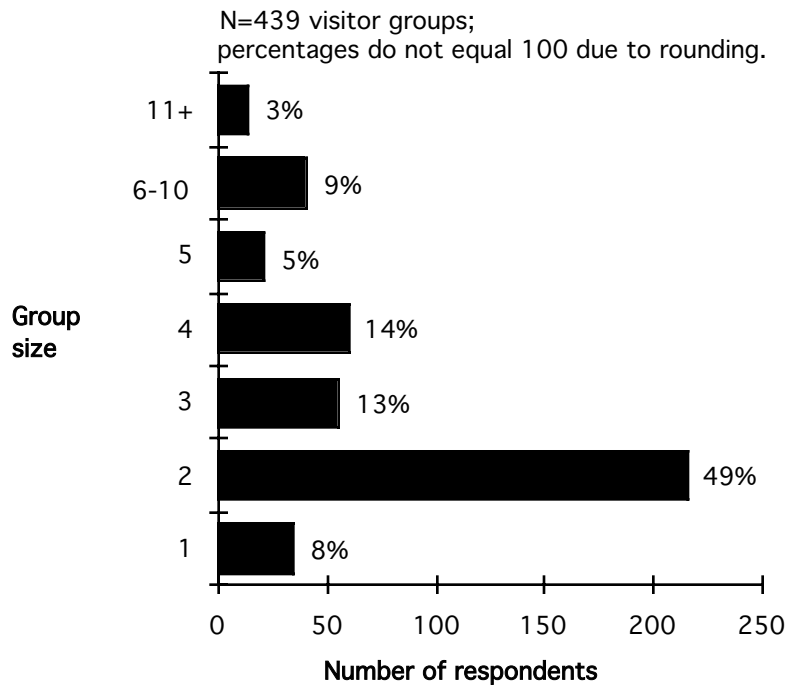
Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

N=436 visitor groups

Group type

- Alone — 10%
- Family — 55%
- Friends — 20%
- Family — 12%
- Other — 3%

Number of respondents
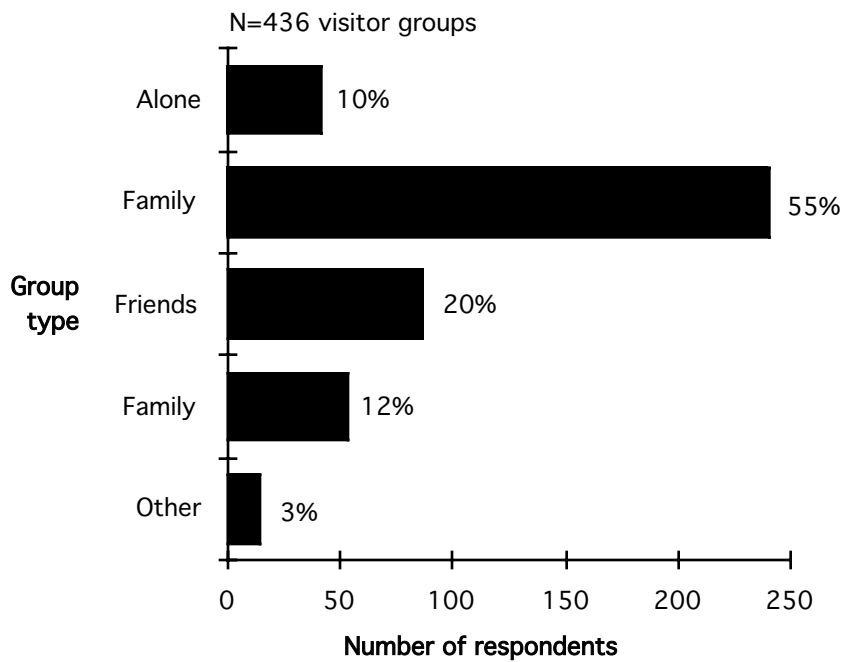
Figure 2: Visitor group types

N=420 visitor groups

With guided tour of Alaska?

No   97%

Yes   3%

0   100   200   300   400   500

Number of respondents
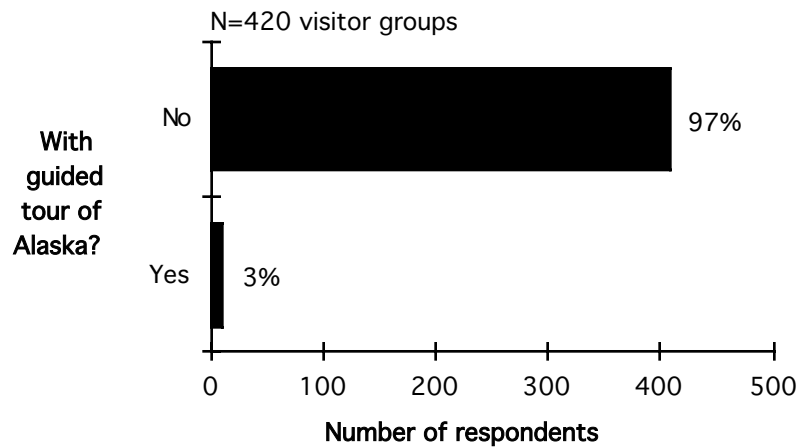
Figure 3: Traveling with guided tour of Alaska?

N=418 visitor groups

With guided tour of Wrangell-St. Elias NP & P?

No   98%

Yes   2%

0   100   200   300   400   500

Number of respondents
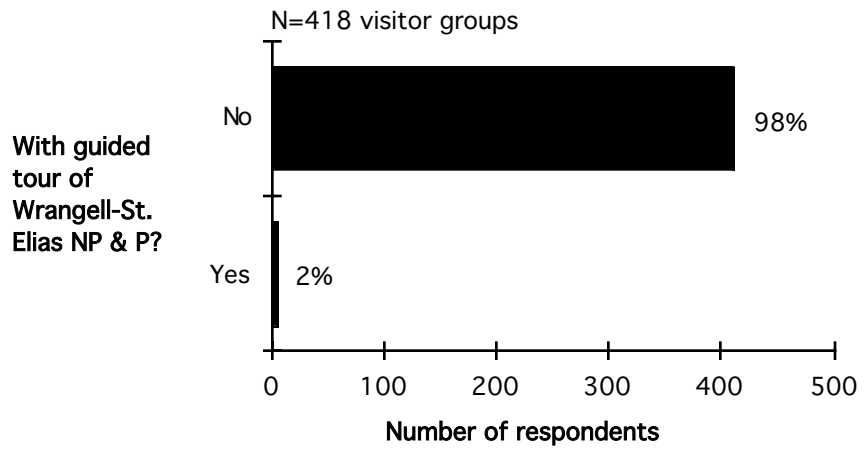
Figure 4: Traveling with guided tour of Wrangell-St. Elias?

N=417 visitor groups

With educational group?

No   99%

Yes   1%

0   100   200   300   400   500

Number of respondents
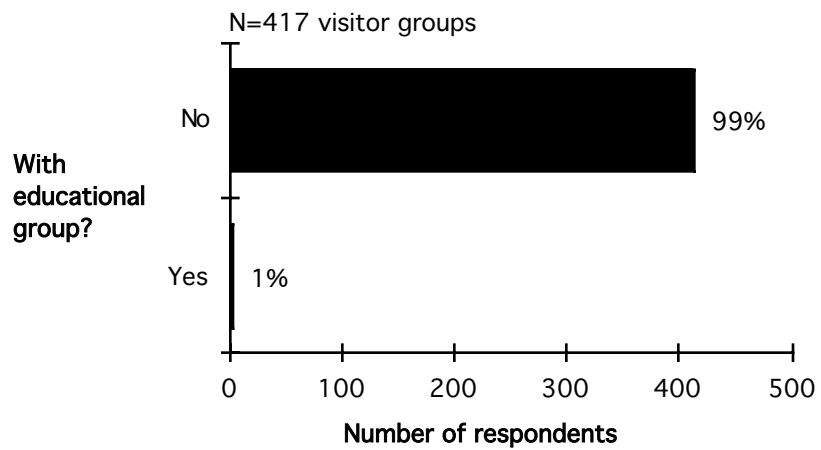
Figure 5: Traveling with educational group?

N=1263 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
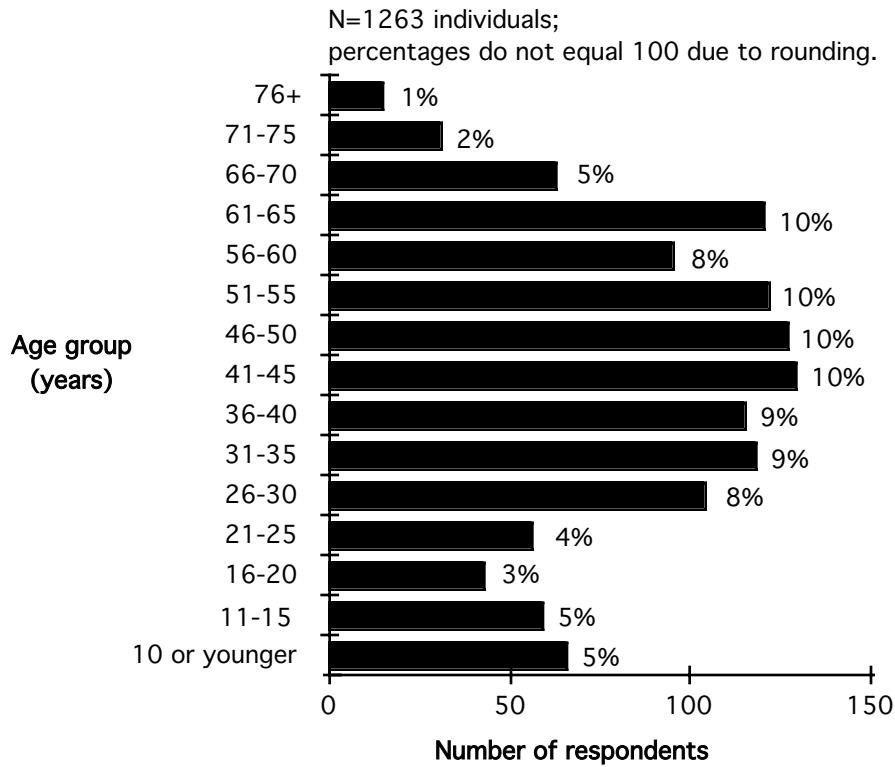
Figure 6: Visitor ages
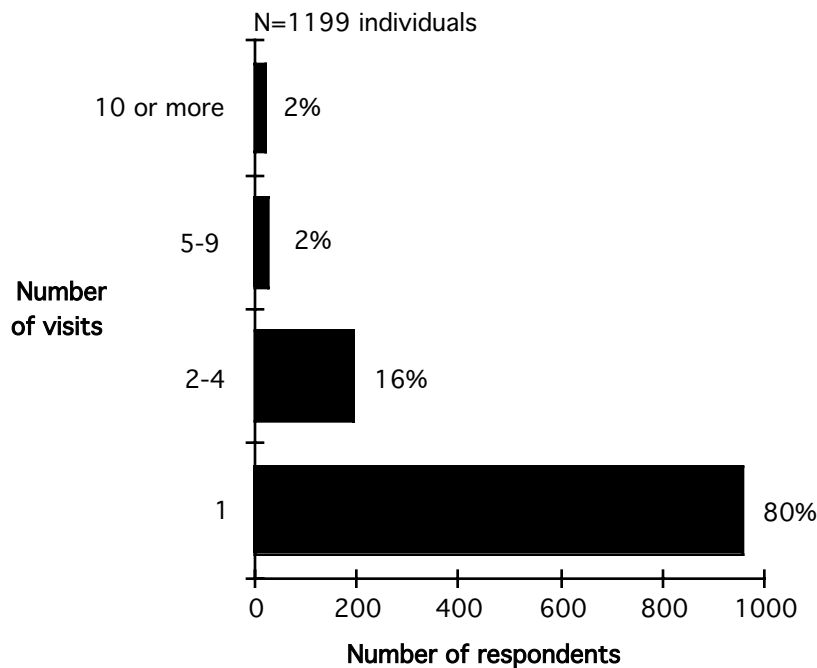
N=1199 individuals

Figure 7: Number of visits to Wrangell-St. Elias

N=129 individuals

= 15% +

= 7% to 14%

= 1% to 6%

= less than 1%
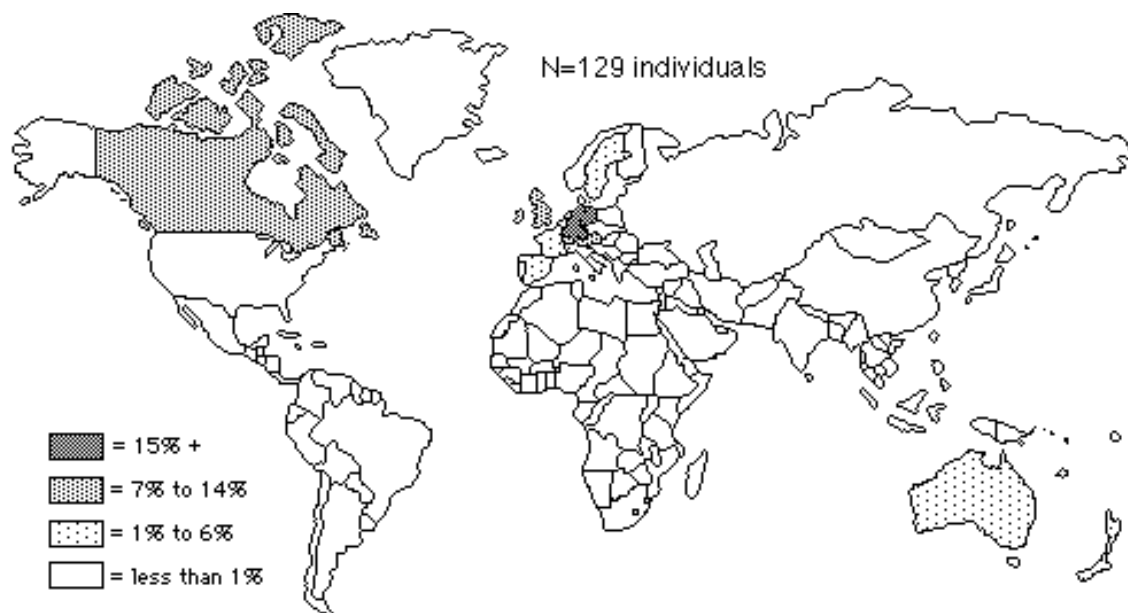
Map 1: Proportion of visitors from each foreign country

Table 2: Proportion of visitors from each foreign country
N=129 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Country	Number of individuals	% of visitors
Germany	51	40
United Kingdom	14	11
Austria	13	10
Switzerland	13	10
Canada	9	7
France	7	5
Holland	6	5
Israel	5	4
Italy	3	2
Belgium	2	2
Spain	2	2
Sweden	2	2
Australia	1	1
New Zealand	1	1

N=1091 individuals

Wrangell-St. Elias
National Park &
Preserve

= 10% +

= 4% to 9%

= 2% to 3%

= under 2%
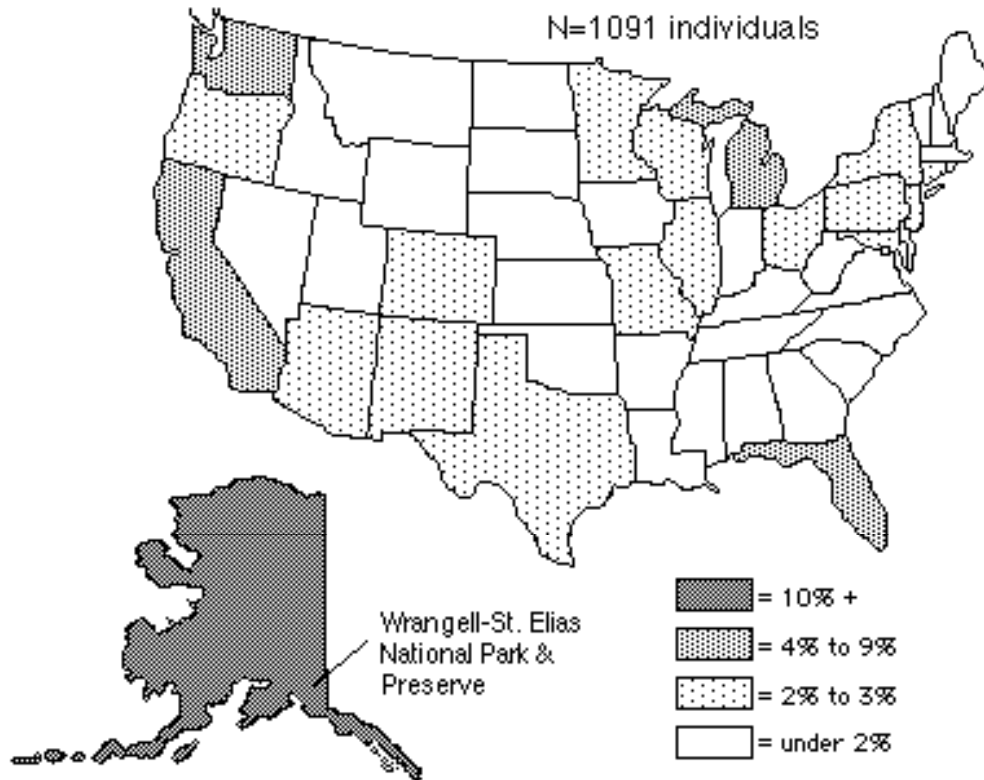
Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state

_____

Table 3: Proportion of visitors from each state
N=1091 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	% of visitors
Alaska	336	31
California	72	7
Florida	53	5
Michigan	45	4
Washington	38	4
Illinois	35	3
New York	35	3
Texas	33	3
Arizona	29	3
Ohio	29	3
Minnesota	28	3
Pennsylvania	27	3
Colorado	23	2
Wisconsin	23	2
Connecticut	22	2
New Jersey	22	2
Maryland	19	2
Missouri	19	2
New Mexico	18	2
Other states (27) + Washington D.C.	185	17

Length of stay

Over one-third (38%) of the visitors to Wrangell-St. Elias stayed less than one day (see Figure 8). Another 38% of visitors stayed two to three days. Of the visitors who stayed less than one day, 44% stayed six hours or more (see Figure 9). Twenty-one percent of the day visitors stayed one hour.

N=410 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Days stayed	
6 or more	8%
5	2%
4	6%
3	16%
2	22%
1	7%
<1	38%

Number of respondents
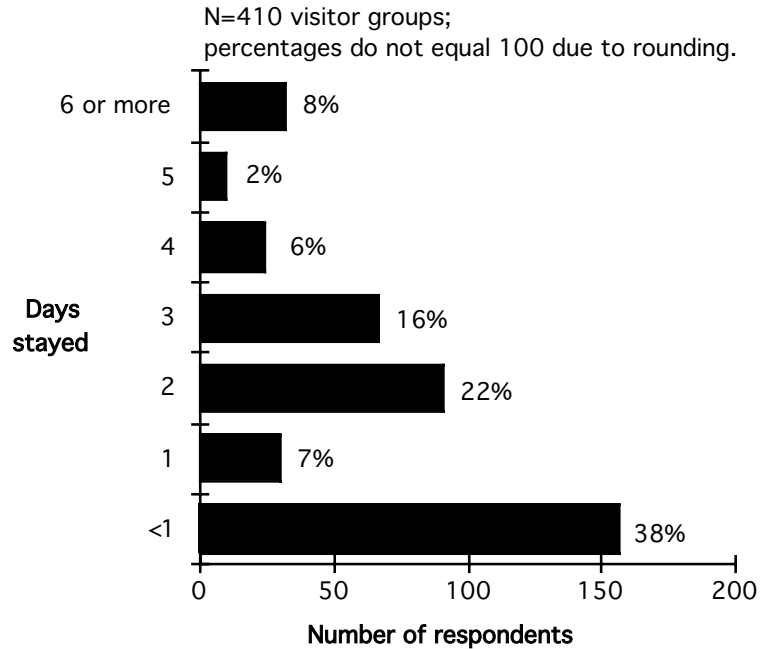
Figure 8: Length of stay (days)

N=156 visitor groups

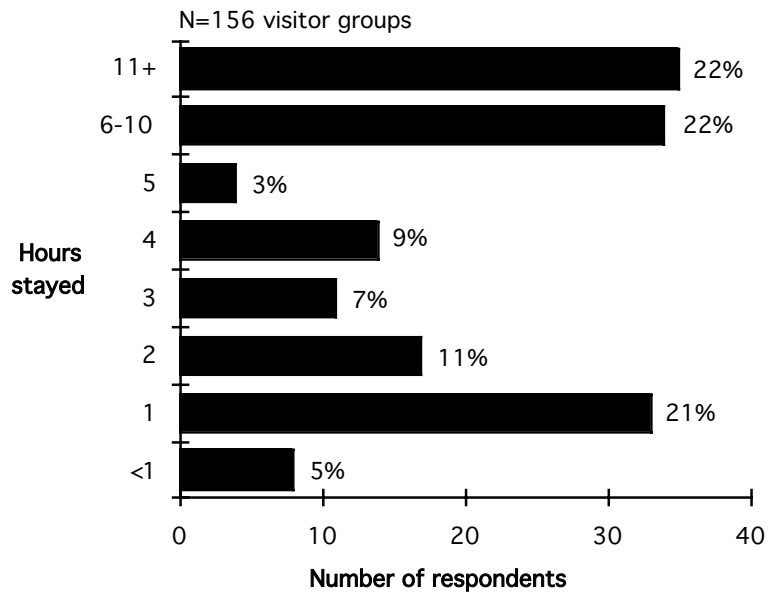| Hours stayed	
11+	22%
6-10	22%
5	3%
4	9%
3	7%
2	11%
1	21%
<1	5%

Number of respondents

Figure 9: Length of stay (hours)

Activities

Common visitor activities on this visit were taking a scenic drive (82%), viewing wildlife (57%), walking around Kennicott (51%), and going for a day hike (49%), as shown in Figure 10. The least common activity was fly-in camping (3%). Other activities mentioned by visitors included taking photographs, stopping at the visitor center, visiting friends and relatives, stopping in McCarthy, eating and camping.

N=433 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors
could do more than one activity.

Activity	
Scenic driving	82%
Wildlife viewing	57%
Walking around Kennicott	51%
Day hiking	49%
Car camping	32%
Picnicking	21%
Staying at a lodge	21%
Ice climbing/glacier hiking	17%
Flight seeing	16%
Fishing	11%
Overnight hiking	11%
Mountain biking	7%
Rafting/ river trip	6%
Fly-in camping	3%
Other	20%

Number of respondents

Figure 10: Visitor activities

Awareness of park's existence

Visitors were asked "Prior to your visit, were you aware that Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve existed?" Many visitors (77%) said they were aware of the park prior to visiting it (see Figure 11). Almost one-fourth of the visitors (21%) were not aware of the park and 2% were not sure.
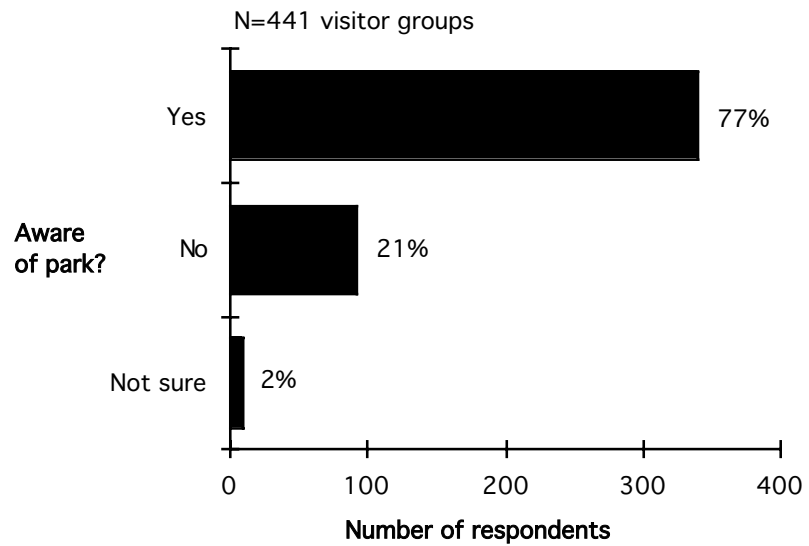
N=441 visitor groups

Figure 11: Visitor awareness of Wrangell-St. Elias

Visitors were asked how they got information about the park prior to their visit. The most often used sources of information were the *Milepost* (45%), friends/ relatives (31%) and travel guides/ tour books (27%), as shown in Figure 12. Eleven percent of the visitors said they had not received any information prior to visiting. As additional sources of information, visitors mentioned friends/ relatives, living in the area, maps, magazine articles, highway signs, the Kennicott Lodge and the Copper Center visitor center.

Sources of information

N=437 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors
could list more than one source.

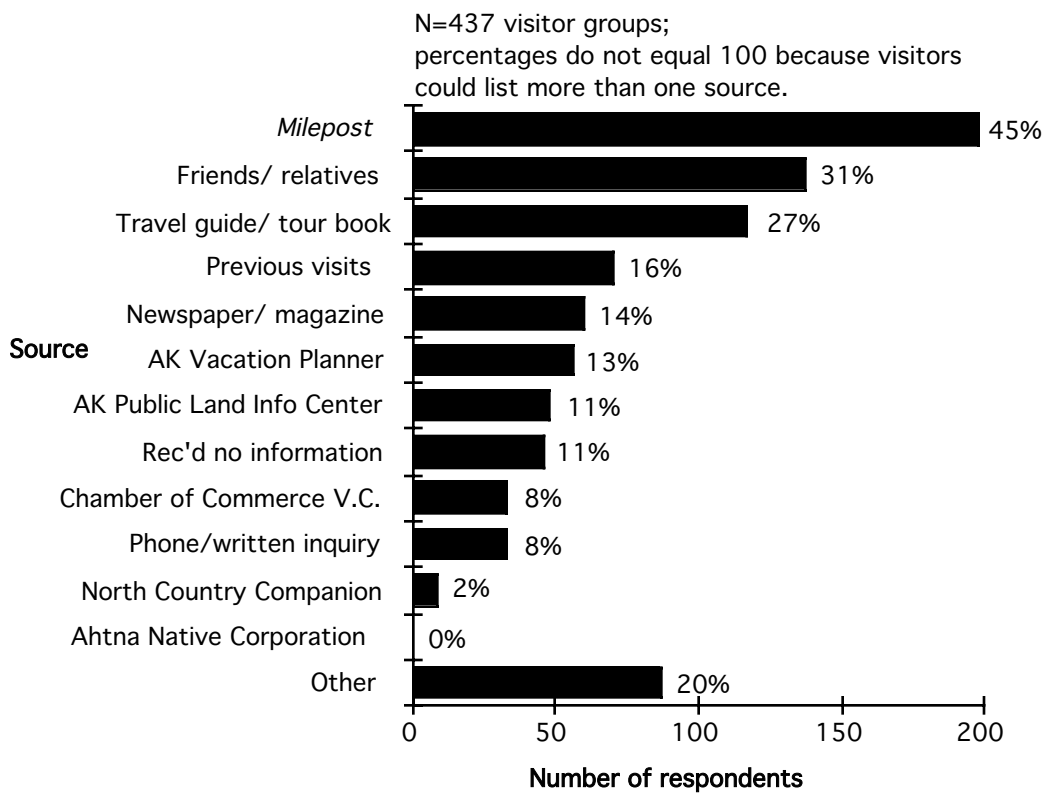| Source	
Milepost	45%
Friends/ relatives	31%
Travel guide/ tour book	27%
Previous visits	16%
Newspaper/ magazine	14%
AK Vacation Planner	13%
AK Public Land Info Center	11%
Rec'd no information	11%
Chamber of Commerce V.C.	8%
Phone/written inquiry	8%
North Country Companion	2%
Ahtna Native Corporation	0%
Other	20%

Number of respondents

Figure 12: Sources of planning information

Sites visited

The most commonly visited sites at Wrangell-St. Elias were McCarthy (58%), Kennicott (53%), the park visitor center (52%), and Kuskulana Bridge (39%), as shown in Map 3. The least visited site was Nabesna (4%).

The sites where more visitors went first were the park visitor center (35%), the Greater Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce Visitor Information Center (19%) and the Chitina Ranger Station (15%), as shown in Map 4.

N=436 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could visit more than one site.

Map 3: Sites visited

N=427 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
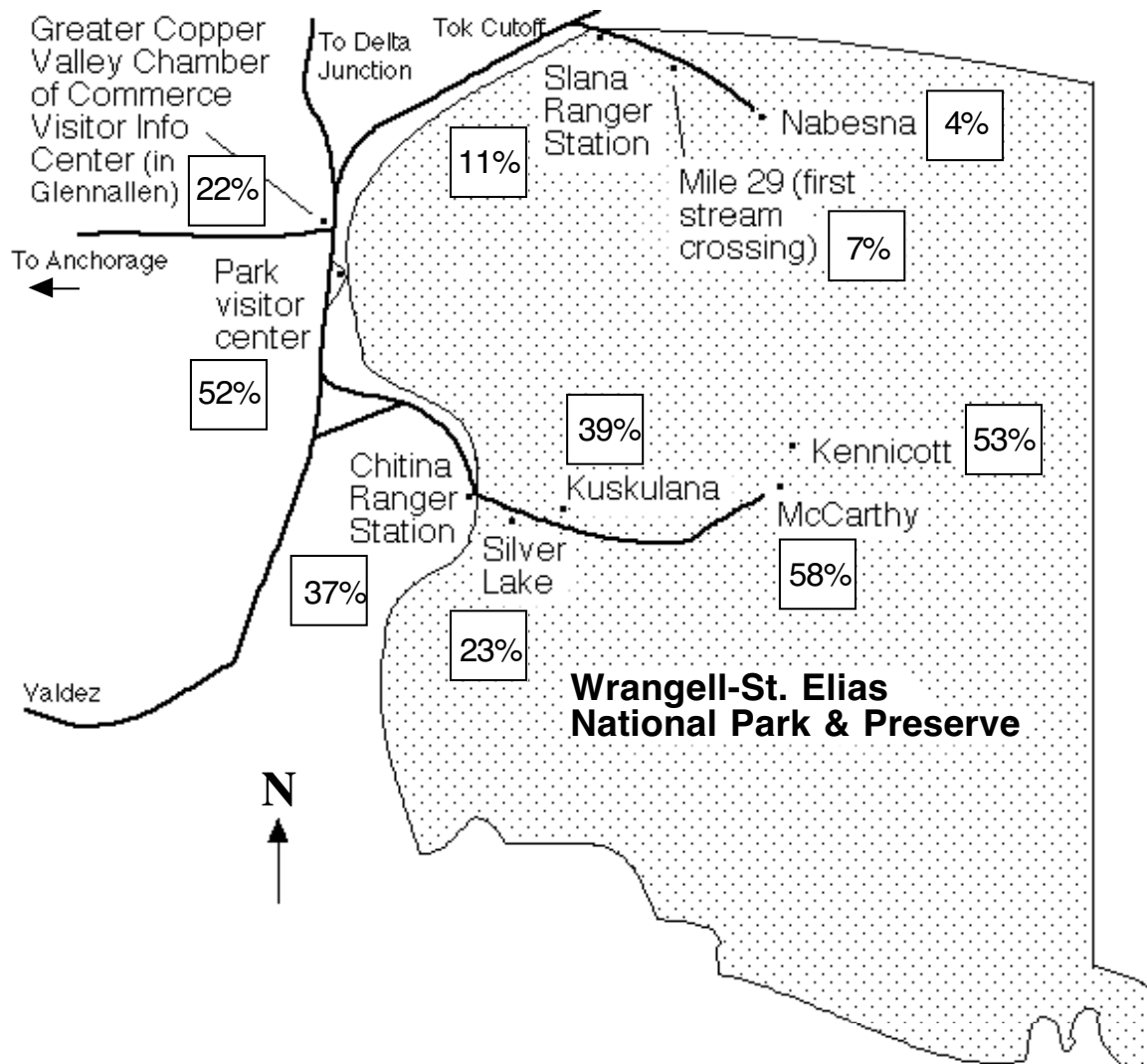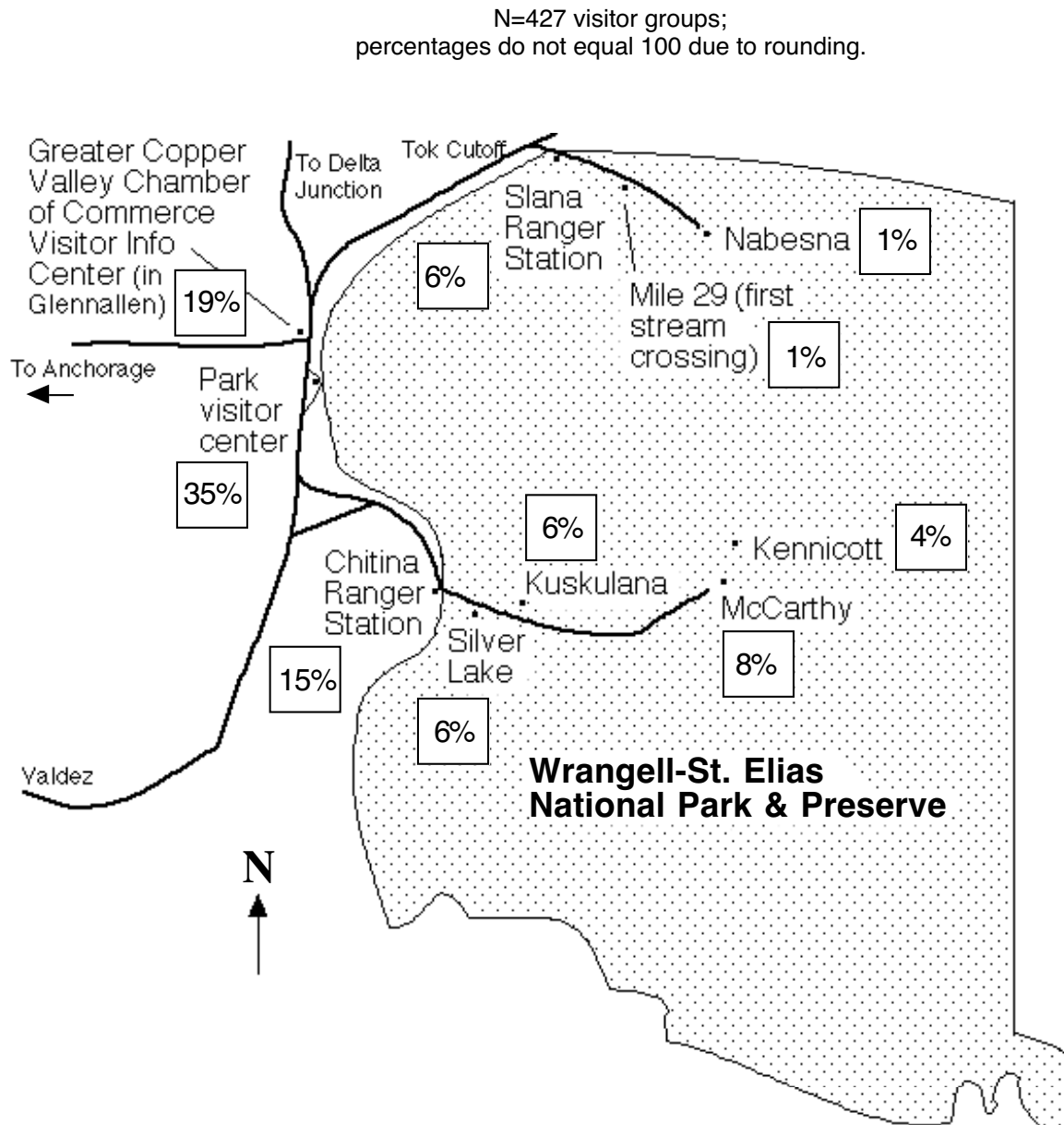
Map 4: Sites visited first

Participation in day hiking   Visitors were asked if they day hiked during their visit. Half of the visitors (50%) day hiked and the other half did not (see Figure 13). If they day hiked, they were asked where they went. The places where visitors most often day hiked were Kennecott Mine/ Kennicott, Root Glacier, McCarthy, unspecified glaciers and Bonanza Mine (see Table 4).

N=427 visitor groups
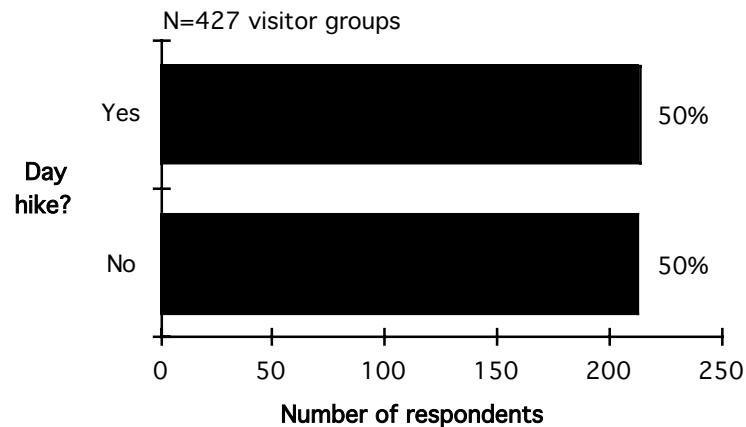
Figure 13: Visitors who day hiked

Table 4: Places where visitors day hiked
N=298 comments;
some visitors went to more than one place.

Place day hiked	Number of times mentioned
Kennecott Mine/ Kennicott	78
Root Glacier	44
McCarthy	38
Unspecified glacier	30
Bonanza Mine	22
Erie Mine	9
Bonanza Trail	5
Chitina	5
Kennicott Glacier	5
Kennicott Lodge	4
Jumbo Mine	4
Copper River	4
Bonanza Ridge	3
Icefall	3
Caribou Creek	2
Fish wheel	2
Nabesna	2

Place day hiked	Number of times mentioned
O'Brian Creek	2
Silver Lake	2
Tonsina Trail	2
Unspecified mines	2
Bluff Trail	1
Bonanza Peak	1
Carriage Road	1
Chitina River	1
Dixie Pass	1
Donoho Peak	1
Erie Tramway	1
Fireweed Mountain	1
Glacier Creek	1
Goat Trail	1
Jack River	1
Kennicott River	1
Kotsina Road	1
Kuskulana Bridge	1
Liberty Creek/Falls	1
McCarthy Creek	1
Rambler Mine	1
Ridge Run	1
Rock Lake	1
Ruth Glacier	1
Silk Stocking Row	1
Slana	1
Solo Lake	1
Strelna Lake	1
Tebay Lakes	1
The Knoll	1
Twin Lakes	1
Viking Lodge	1
Wagon Road	1
White Ice	1

Backcountry use

Most visitors (86%) did not take an overnight hike/ backpack, as shown in Figure 14. Of those groups who backpacked, the most visited places were Root Glacier, Chitistone Mountain/Pass and Dixie Pass (see Table 5). Many backpackers (65%) stayed out for one to three nights (see Figure 15). More than three-fourths of the visitors (78%) who backpacked did not use a plane to access the location where they went hiking/ backpacking (see Figure 16). Twenty-two percent of visitors used a plane to access the backcountry.
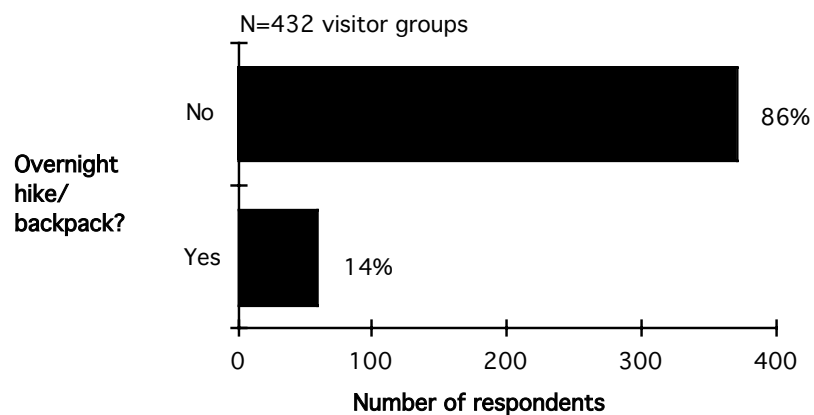
N=432 visitor groups

Figure 14: Overnight backcountry use

Table 5: Backcountry places visited
N=71 comments;
some visitors went to more than one place.

Place	Number of times mentioned
Root Glacier/ Stairway Icefall	12
Chitistone Pass/ Goat Trail	7
Dixie Pass	5
Kennicott	4
Lost Creek	4
McCarthy	3
Skolai	3
Doubtful Creek area	2
Jack Lake	2
Nikolai Pass	2
Unspecified glacier	2
Amazon Creek	1
Bald Ridge	1
Bear Bowl	1
Bonanza Ridge	1
Caribou Creek	1

Place	Number of times mentioned
Copper River	1
Donoho Mountain	1
Glacier Creek	1
Icefalls	1
Jumbo Mine	1
Kennicott Glacier	1
Kennicott River	1
Klutina River campground	1
Kuskulana Pass	1
McCarthy Creek	1
Mountain across from mine	1
Nabesna Road	1
Nugget Creek area	1
On the road	1
Sanford River Valley	1
Silk Stocking Row	1
Soda Lake	1
Solo Mountain	1
The Knoll	1
Trail Creek	1

N=56 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 15: Number of nights in backcountry

N=55 visitor groups

Use
plane to
access
hike?

No ████████████████████████████ 78%

Yes ██████ 22%

0   10   20   30   40   50
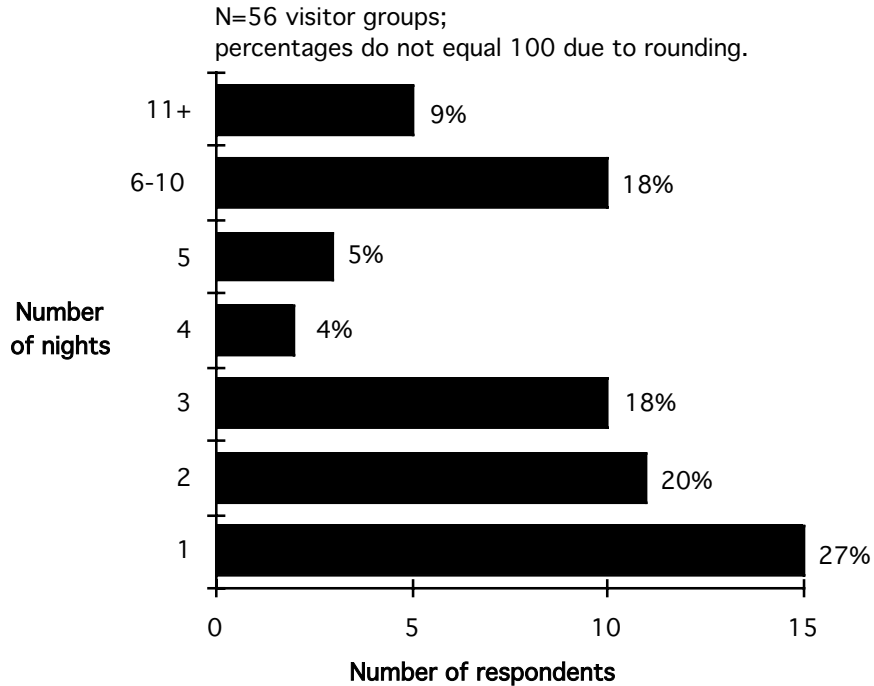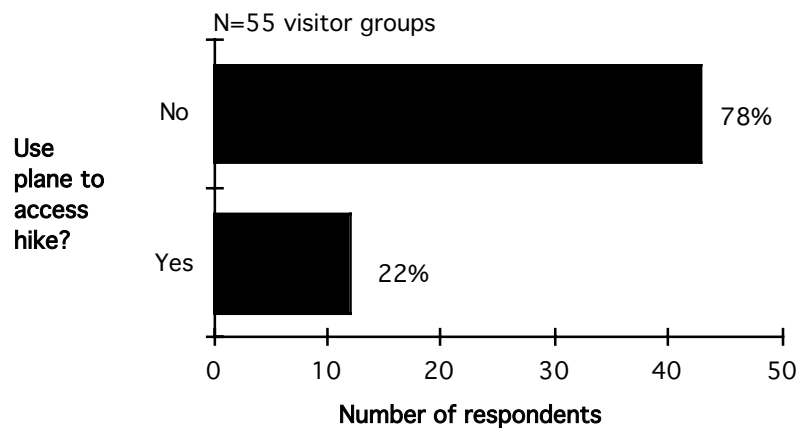
Number of respondents

Figure 16: Use of plane to access backcountry hike

The most often used form of transportation to get to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserves was a private vehicle (53%), followed by a rental car (28%) and RV (20%), as shown in Figure 17. Other forms of transportation visitors used included bicycles, hitch hiking, the Kennicott Lodge shuttle, tram, bus and van tour.
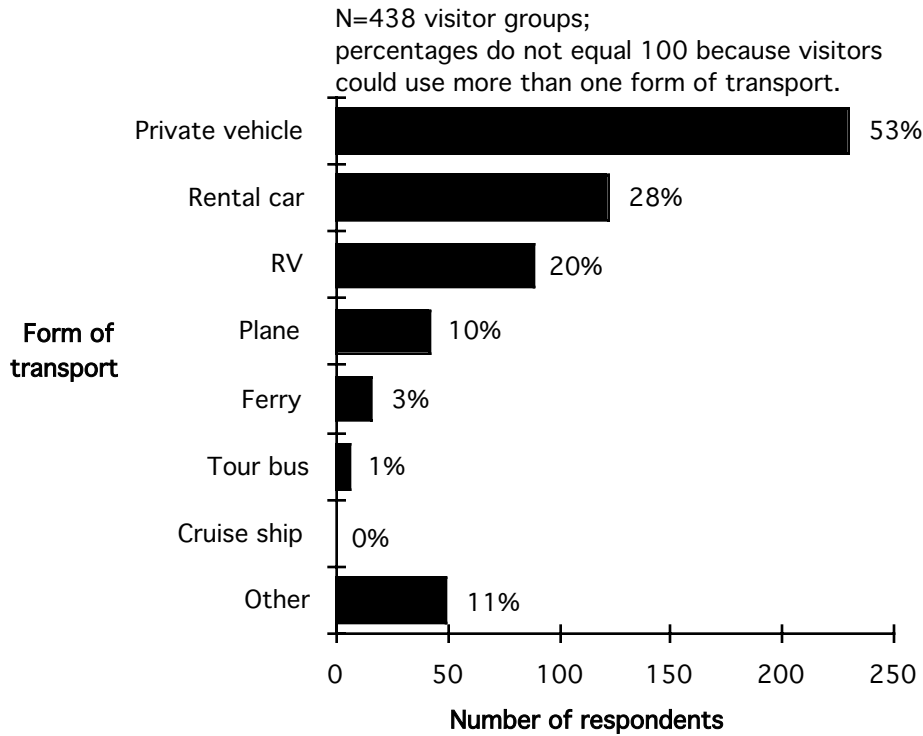
Forms of transportation used

N=438 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could use more than one form of transport.

Figure 17: Forms of transportation used to get to park

Reasons for visiting

Visitors' reasons for visiting Wrangell-St. Elias on this trip were to view glaciers/ scenery (68%), view wildlife (59%) and to visit McCarthy/ Kennicott (55%), as shown in Figure 18. The least listed reason was as part of a package tour (2%). Visitors listed other reasons for visiting including to obtain information, visit friends/ relatives, take photographs, see the park while working in the area, relax, and to ride the tram.

N=436 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one reason.

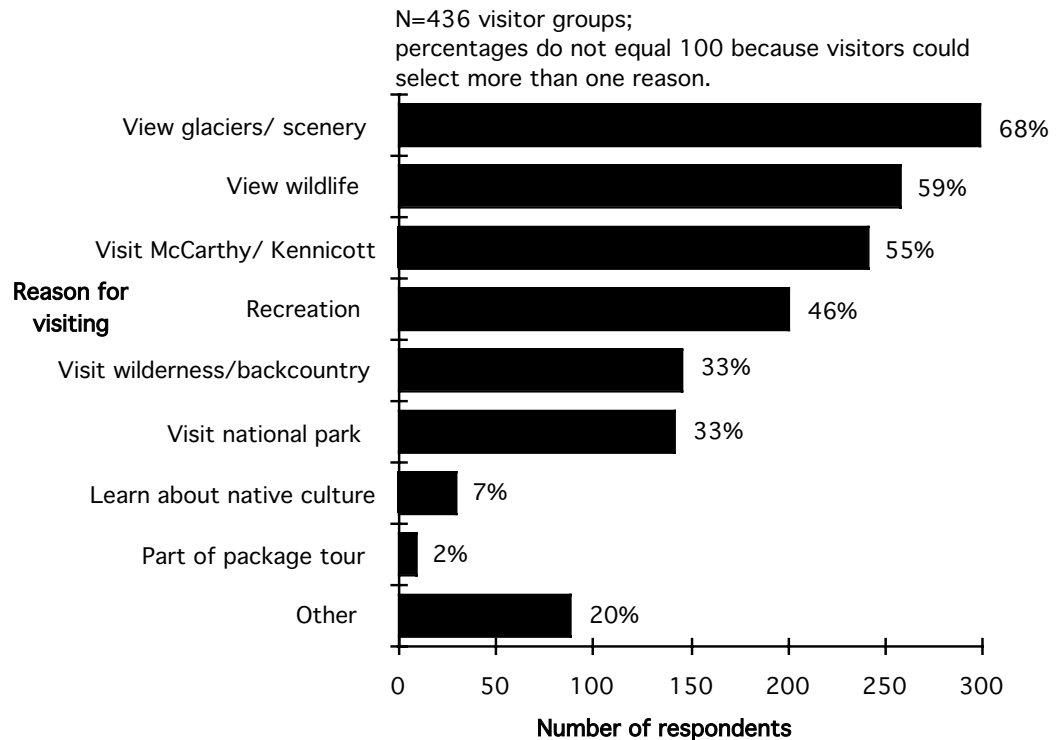| Reason for visiting	Percentage
View glaciers/ scenery	68%
View wildlife	59%
Visit McCarthy/ Kennicott	55%
Recreation	46%
Visit wilderness/backcountry	33%
Visit national park	33%
Learn about native culture	7%
Part of package tour	2%
Other	20%

Number of respondents

Figure 18: Reasons for visiting

The most commonly used visitor services and facilities by Wrangell-St. Elias visitors were the park brochure/ map (64%), restrooms/ outhouses (51%), assistance from employees (47%), road directional signs (45%) and NPS visitor center (43%), as shown in Figure 19. The least used service were the picnic facilities (7%).
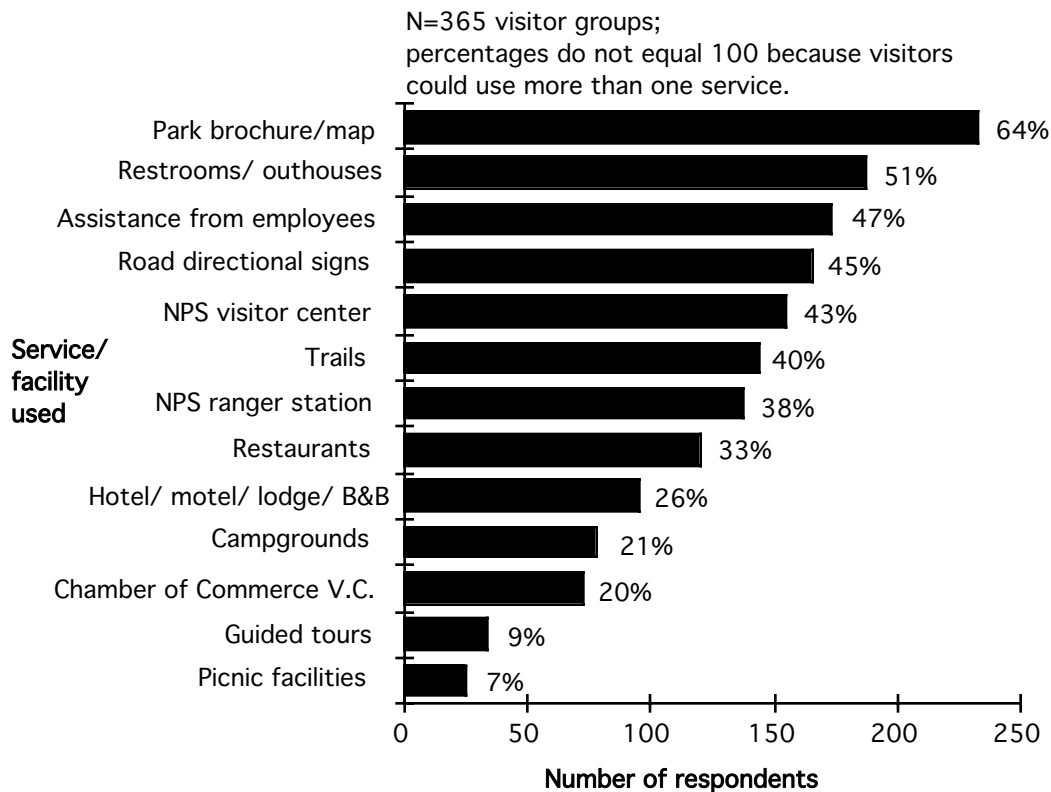
Visitor services/ facilities: use, importance and quality

N=365 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors
could use more than one service.

Service/ facility used	Percentage
Park brochure/map	64%
Restrooms/ outhouses	51%
Assistance from employees	47%
Road directional signs	45%
NPS visitor center	43%
Trails	40%
NPS ranger station	38%
Restaurants	33%
Hotel/ motel/ lodge/ B&B	26%
Campgrounds	21%
Chamber of Commerce V.C.	20%
Guided tours	9%
Picnic facilities	7%

Number of respondents

Figure 19: Use of visitor services and facilities

Visitors rated the importance and quality of each of the visitor services and facilities 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 20 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 20. All services were rated above average in importance and quality.

Figures 21-33 show that several services/ facilities received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: restrooms/ outhouses (79%), trails (76%), guided tours (75%) and national park visitor center (75%). The highest "not important" ratings were for Chamber of Commerce visitor center (13%) and road directional signs (11%).

Figures 34-46 show that several services/ facilities were given high "good" to "very good" quality ratings: hotel/ motel/ lodge/ bed and breakfast (86%), assistance from park employees (82%), guided tours (77%), and national park visitor center (77%). The services which received the highest "very poor" quality rating were the trails (20%), campgrounds (16%) and restrooms/ outhouses (15%).
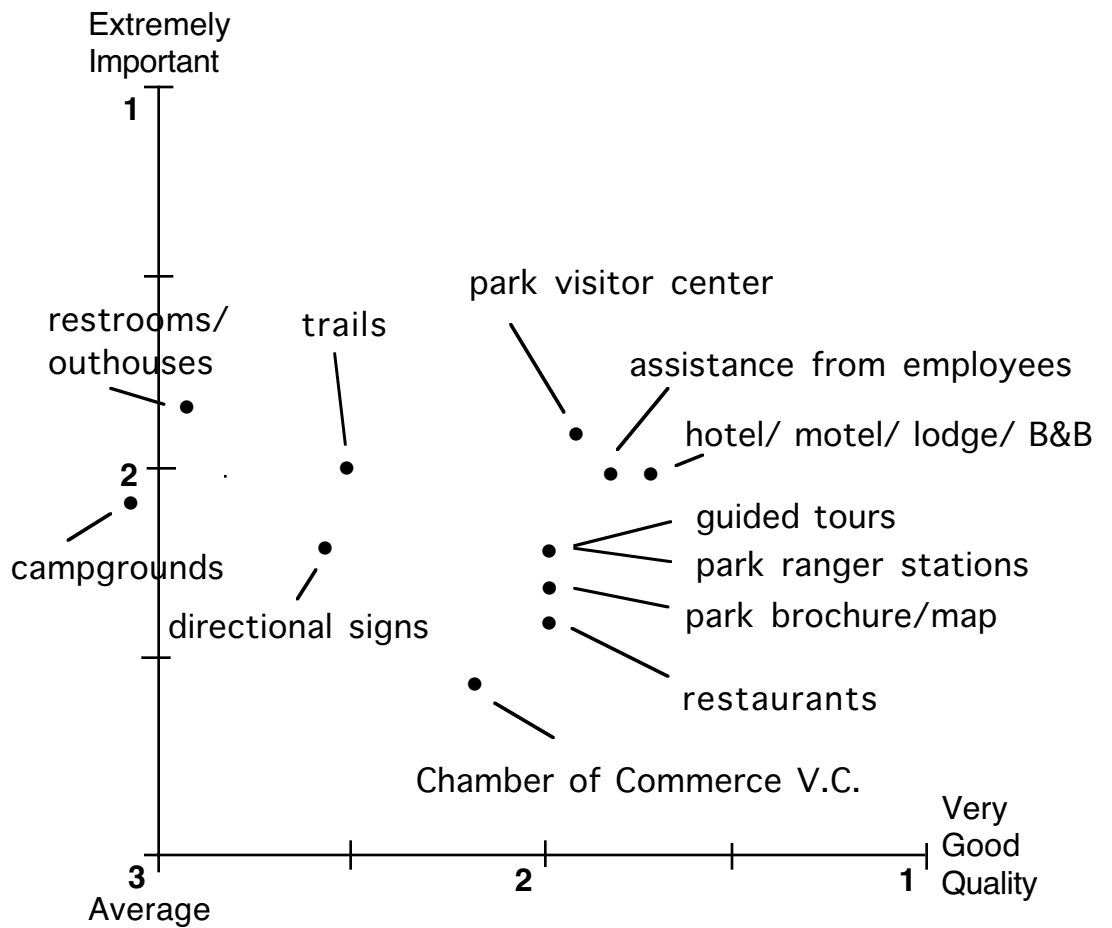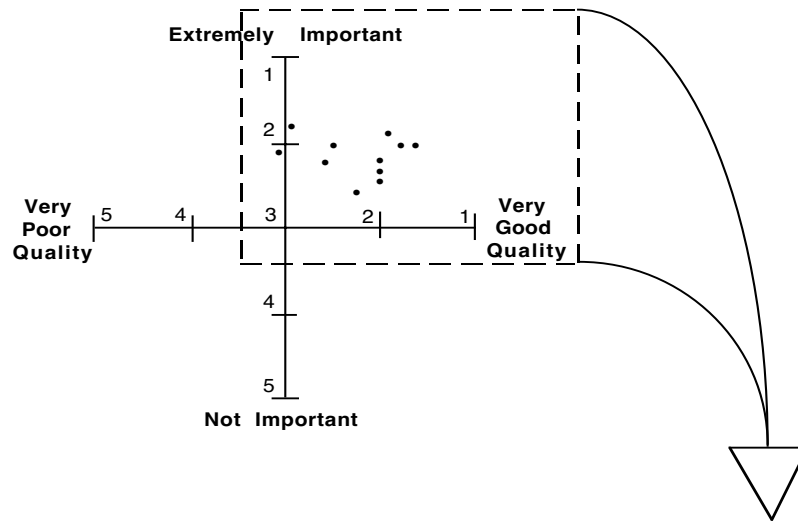
Extremely   Important
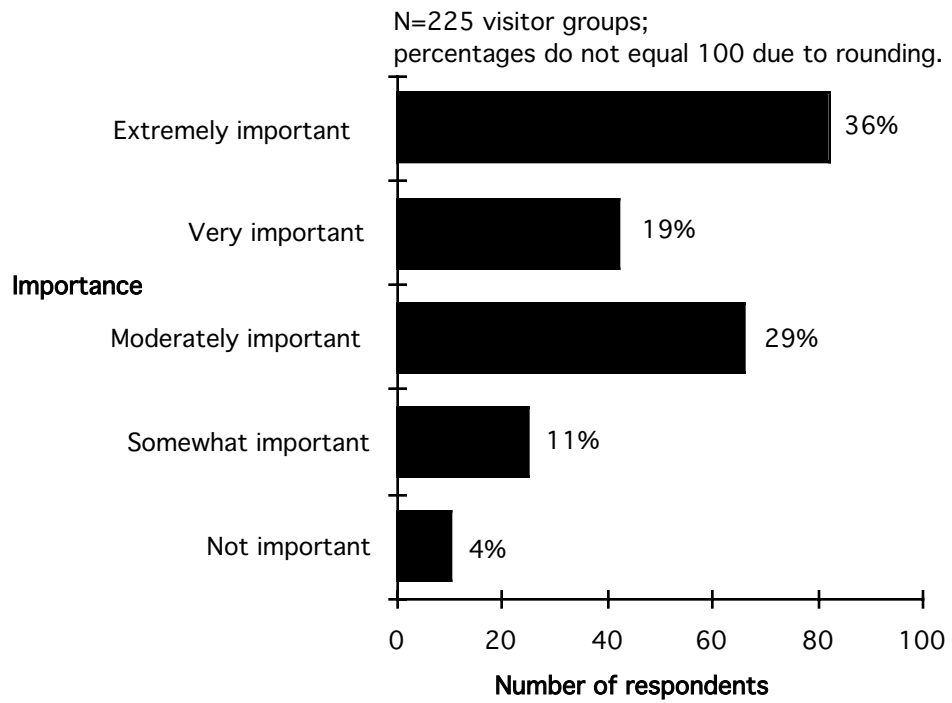
Very Poor Quality | 5   4   3   2   1 | Very Good Quality

Not Important

Extremely
Important

1

restrooms/
outhouses

trails

park visitor center

assistance from employees

hotel/ motel/ lodge/ B&B

2

campgrounds

guided tours

park ranger stations

directional signs

park brochure/map

restaurants

Chamber of Commerce V.C.

Very
Good
Quality

3   **2**   **1**
Average

Figure 20 : Detail

N=225 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 21: Importance of park brochure/map

N=33 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 22: Importance of guided tours

N=171 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Importance

Category	Percentage
Extremely important	47%
Very important	25%
Moderately important	18%
Somewhat important	6%
Not important	5%
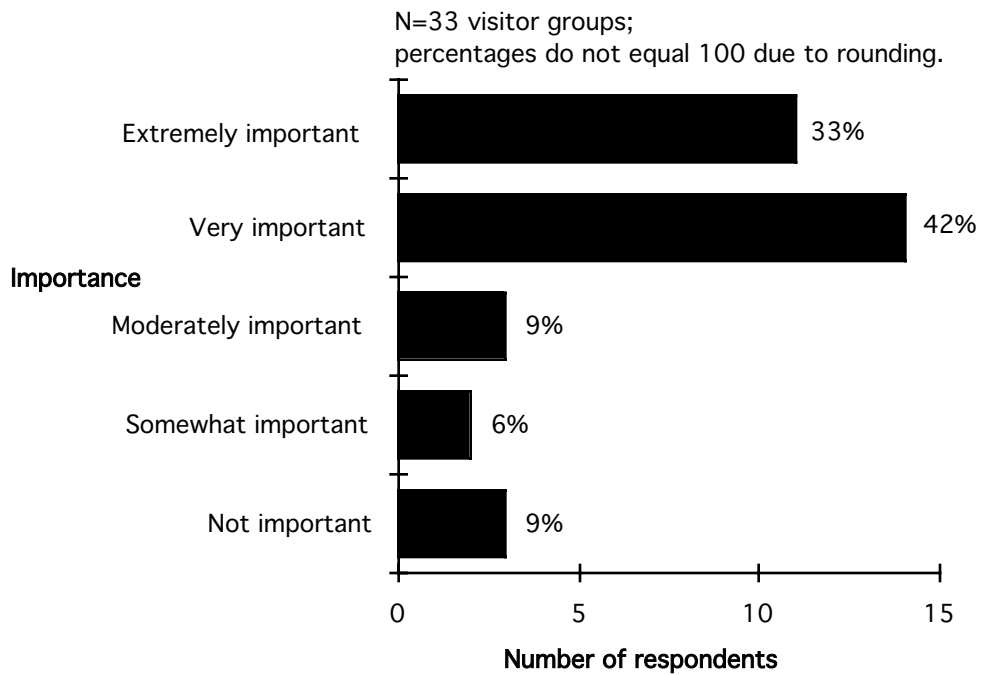
Number of respondents
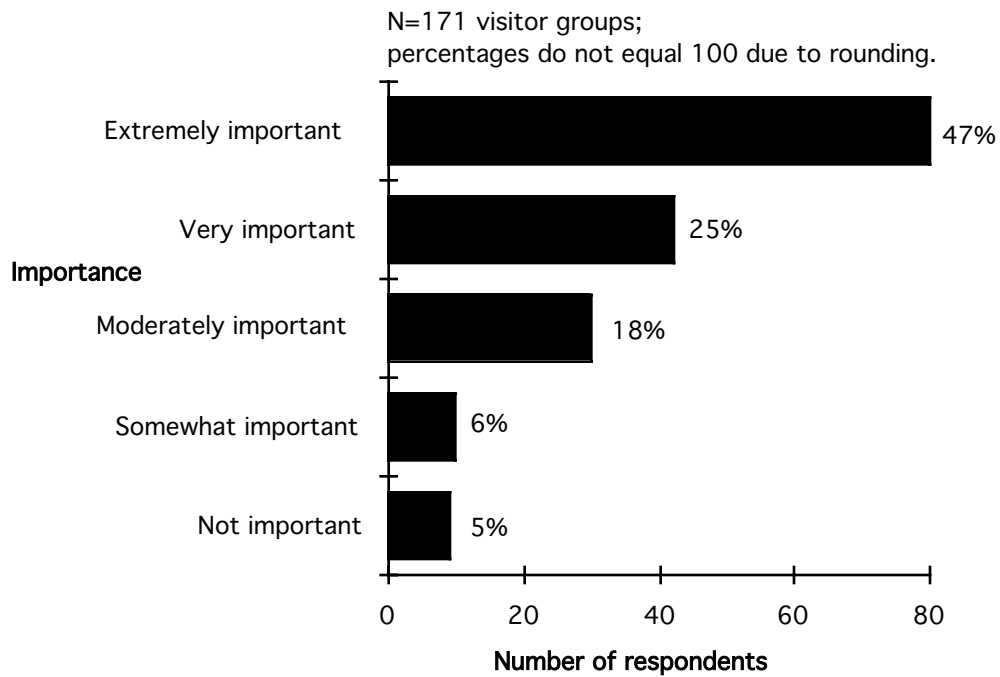
Figure 23: Importance of assistance from park employees

N=155 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Importance

Category	Percentage
Extremely important	47%
Very important	28%
Moderately important	16%
Somewhat important	5%
Not important	5%

Number of respondents
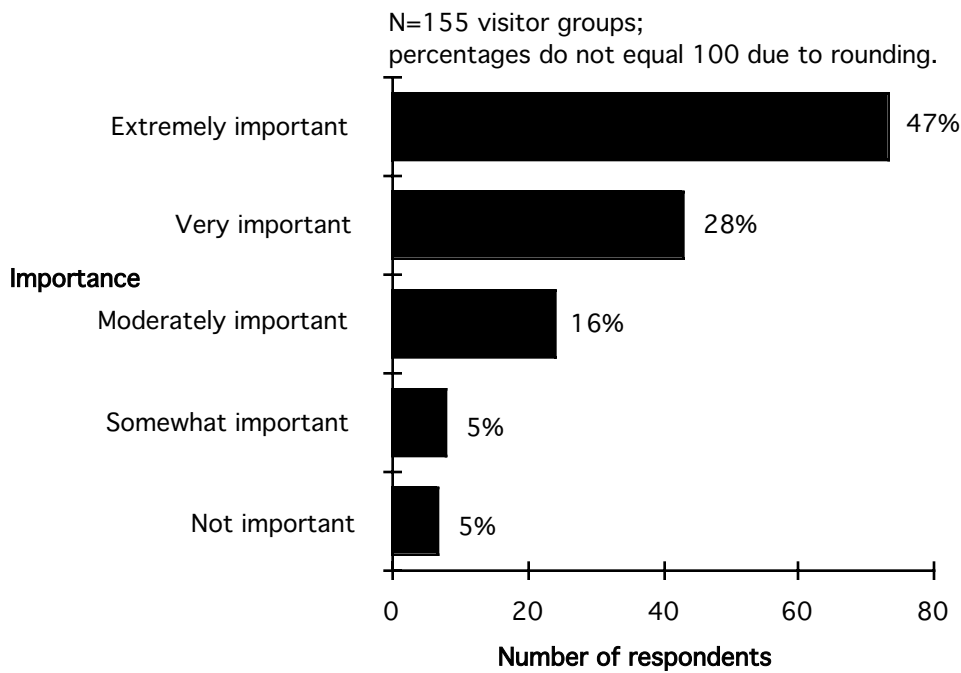
Figure 24: Importance of national park visitor center

N=133 visitor groups

Importance

Extremely important	42%
Very important	20%
Moderately important	23%
Somewhat important	8%
Not important	7%

Number of respondents
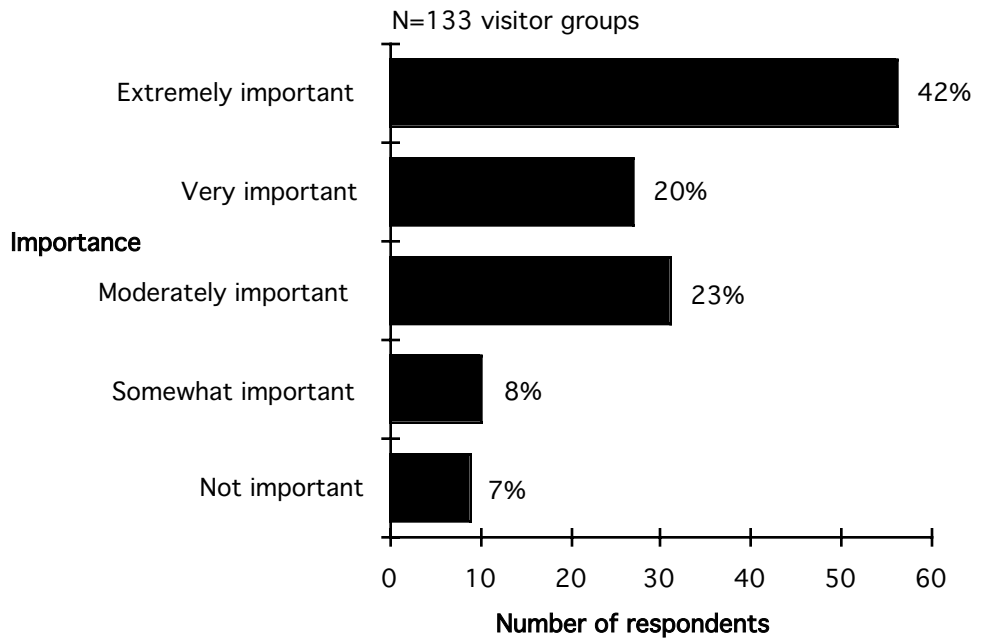
Figure 25: Importance of national park ranger stations

N=158 visitor groups

Importance

Extremely important	46%
Very important	18%
Moderately important	18%
Somewhat important	7%
Not important	11%

Number of respondents
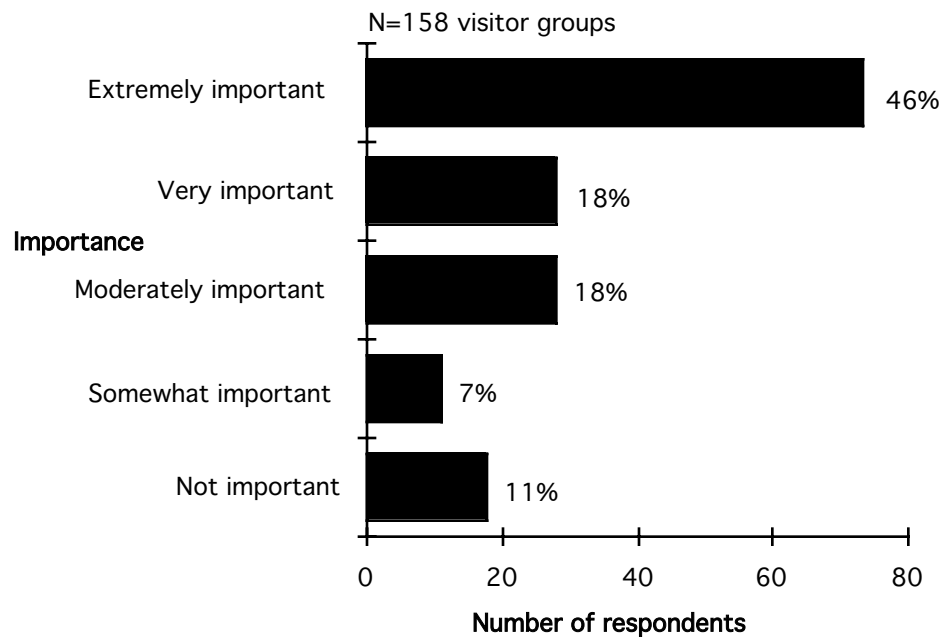
Figure 26: Importance of road directional signs

N=141 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Extremely important — 45%

Very important — 31%

Importance

Moderately important — 14%

Somewhat important — 5%

Not important — 6%

0   20   40   60   80

Number of respondents
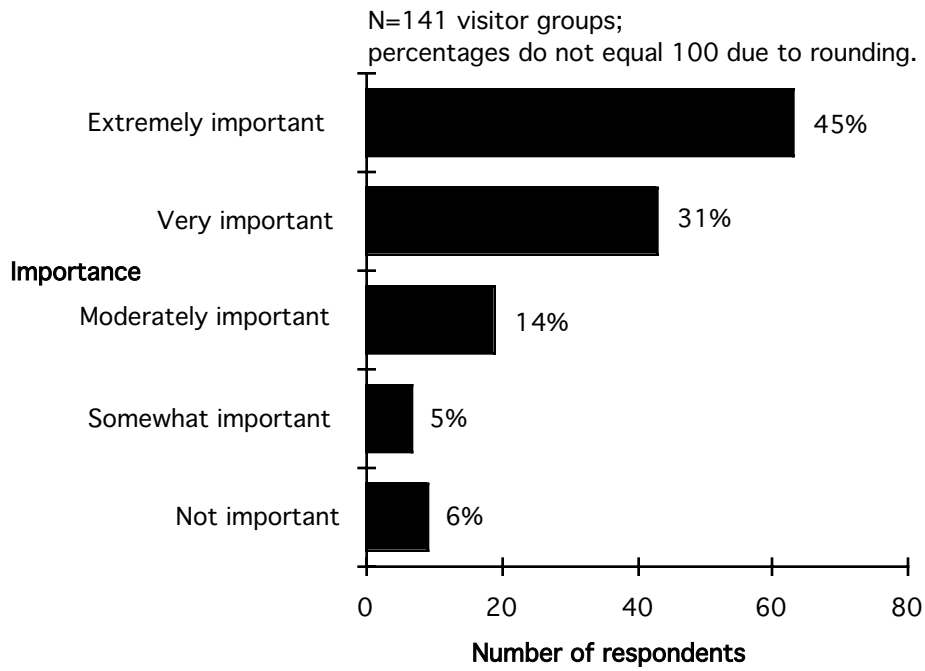
Figure 27: Importance of trails

N=25 visitor groups

Extremely important — 28%

Very important — 20%

Importance

Moderately important — 40%

Somewhat important — 8%   CAUTION! -
                                 small number of
Not important — 4%   respondents

0   2   4   6   8   10

Number of respondents
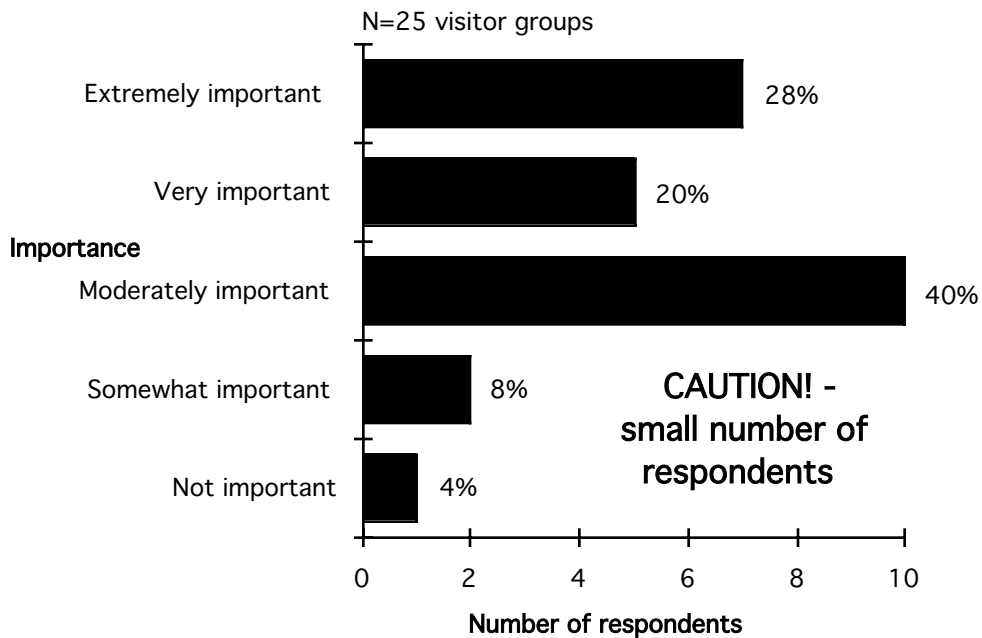
Figure 28: Importance of picnic facilities

N=75 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Importance

Extremely important	44%
Very important	21%
Moderately important	25%
Somewhat important	1%
Not important	8%

Number of respondents
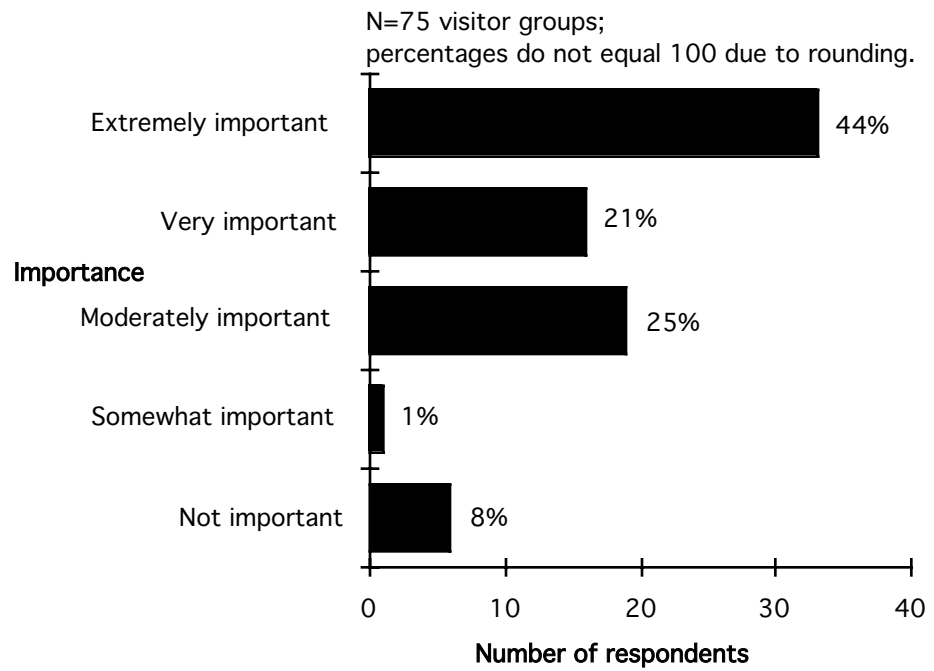
Figure 29: Importance of campgrounds

N=182 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Importance

Extremely important	60%
Very important	19%
Moderately important	10%
Somewhat important	4%
Not important	7%

Number of respondents

Figure 30: Importance of restrooms/ outhouses

N=72 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 31: Importance of Chamber of Commerce visitor information center (Glennallen)

N=116 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 32: Importance of restaurants

N=93 visitor groups

Importance

Category	Percentage
Extremely important	44%
Very important	28%
Moderately important	18%
Somewhat important	3%
Not important	7%

Number of respondents
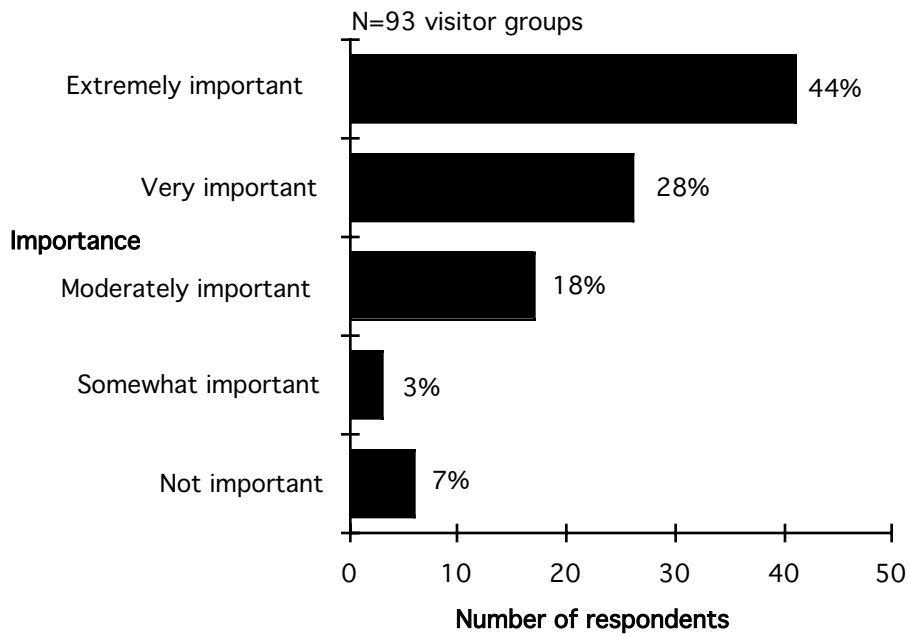
Figure 33: Importance of hotel/ motel/ lodge/ bed & breakfast

N=213 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Quality

Category	Percentage
Very good	39%
Good	31%
Average	22%
Poor	5%
Very poor	4%

Number of respondents
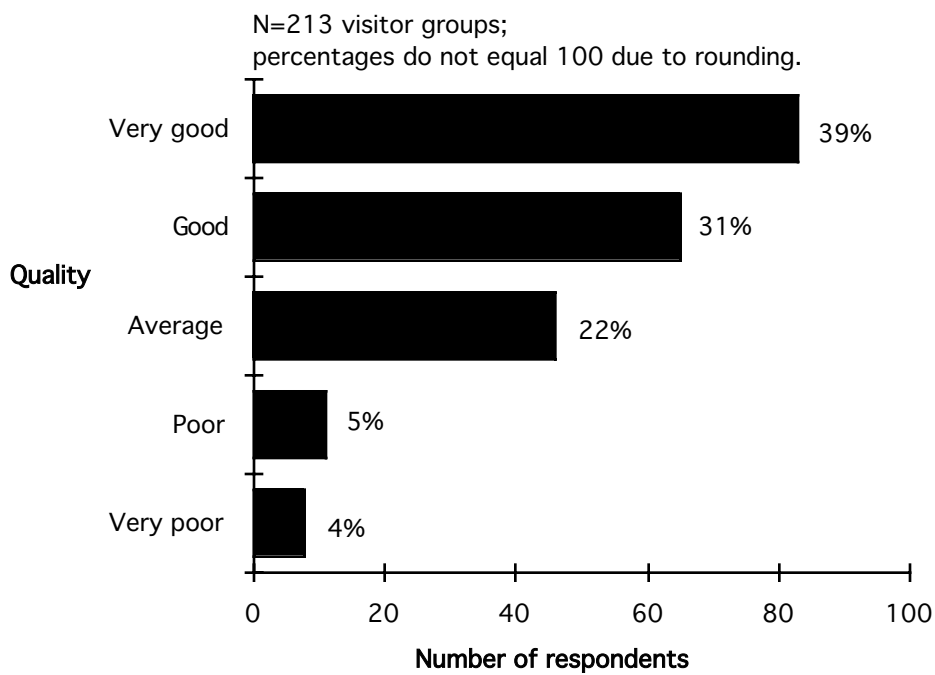
Figure 34: Quality of park brochure/map

N=31 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Quality

- Very good — 45%
- Good — 32%
- Average — 7%
- Poor — 7%
- Very poor — 10%

Number of respondents
(0, 5, 10, 15)
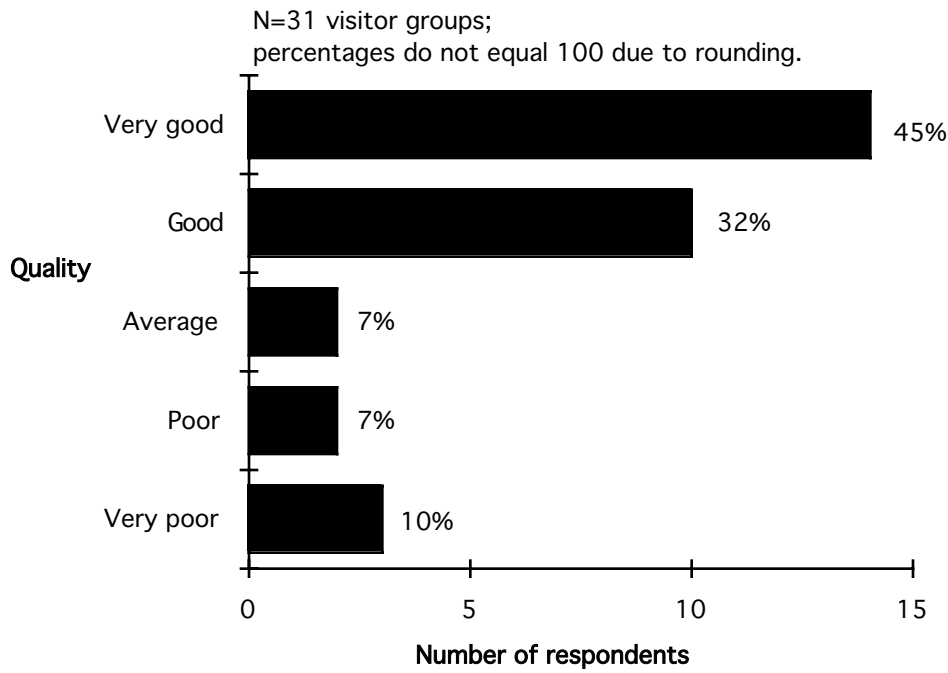
Figure 35: Quality of guided tours

N=162 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Quality

- Very good — 55%
- Good — 27%
- Average — 9%
- Poor — 3%
- Very poor — 7%

Number of respondents
(0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)
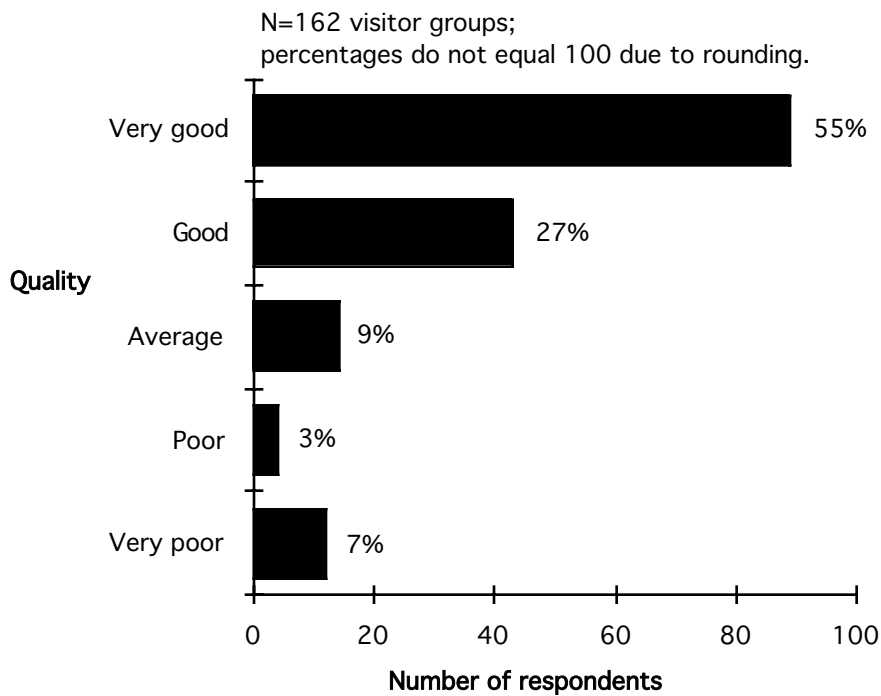
Figure 36: Quality of assistance from park employees

N=147 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
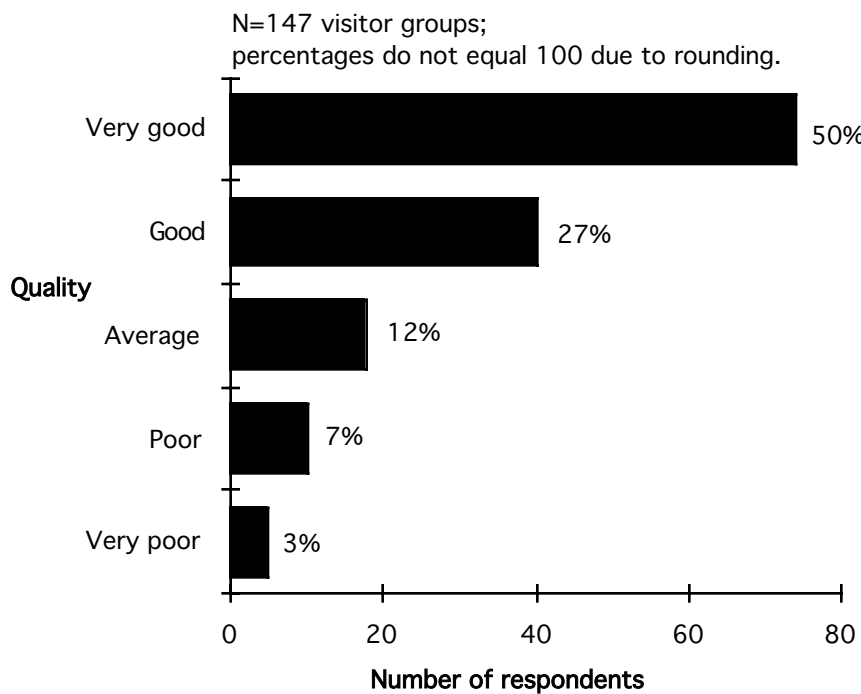
Figure 37: Quality of national park visitor center

N=129 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
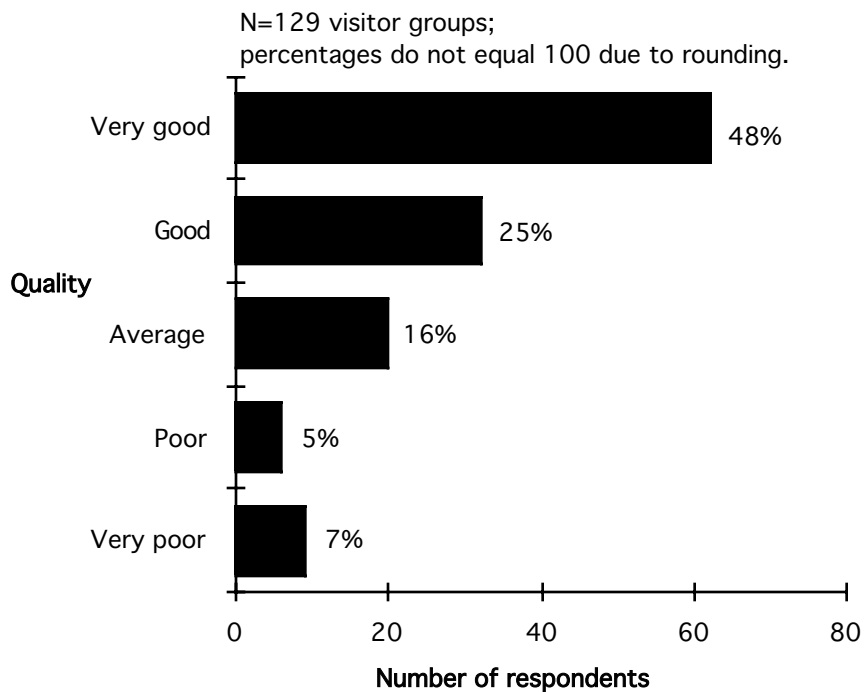
Figure 38: Quality of national park ranger stations

N=151 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Quality

Very good	23%
Good	25%
Average	34%
Poor	13%
Very poor	6%

Number of respondents
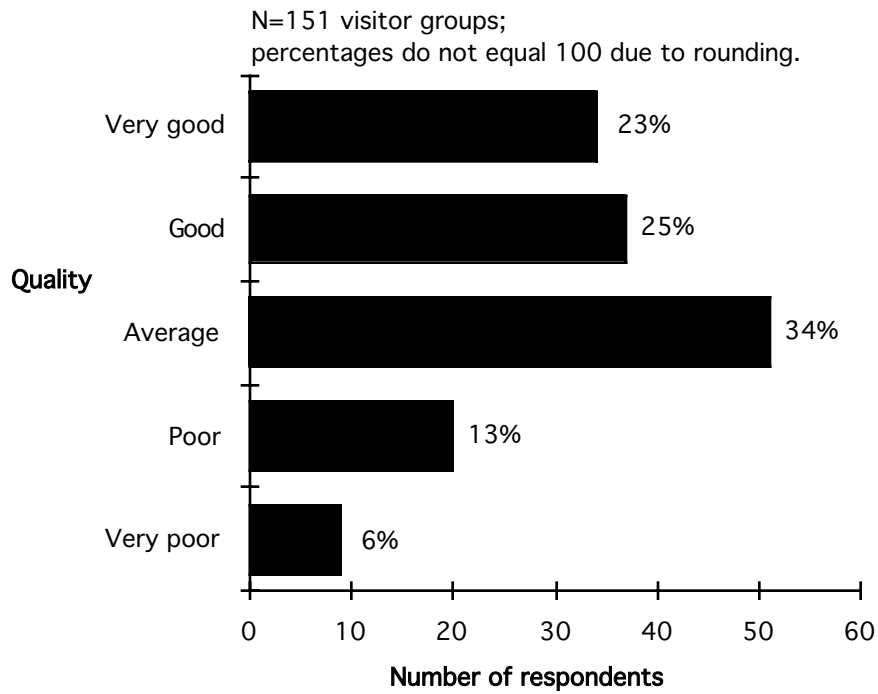
Figure 39: Quality of road directional signs

N=133 visitor groups

Quality

Very good	23%
Good	29%
Average	28%
Poor	12%
Very poor	8%

Number of respondents
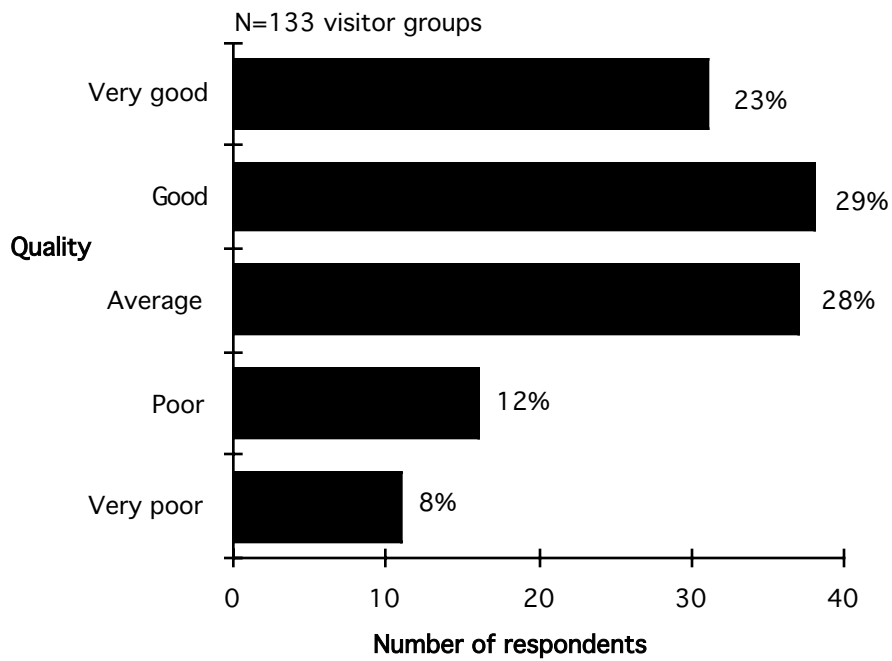
Figure 40: Quality of trails

N=25 visitor groups
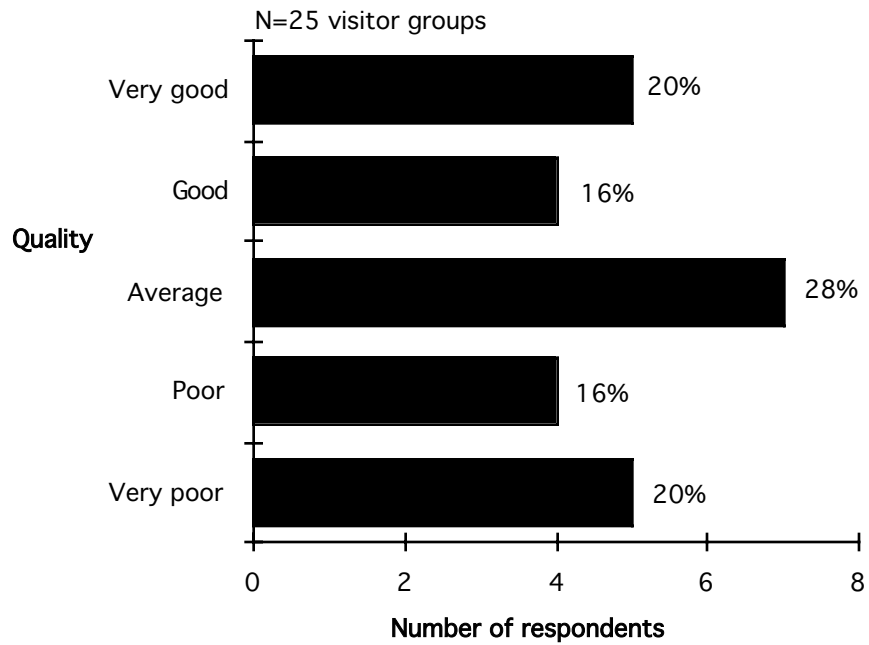
Figure 41: Quality of picnic facilities

N=71 visitor groups
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
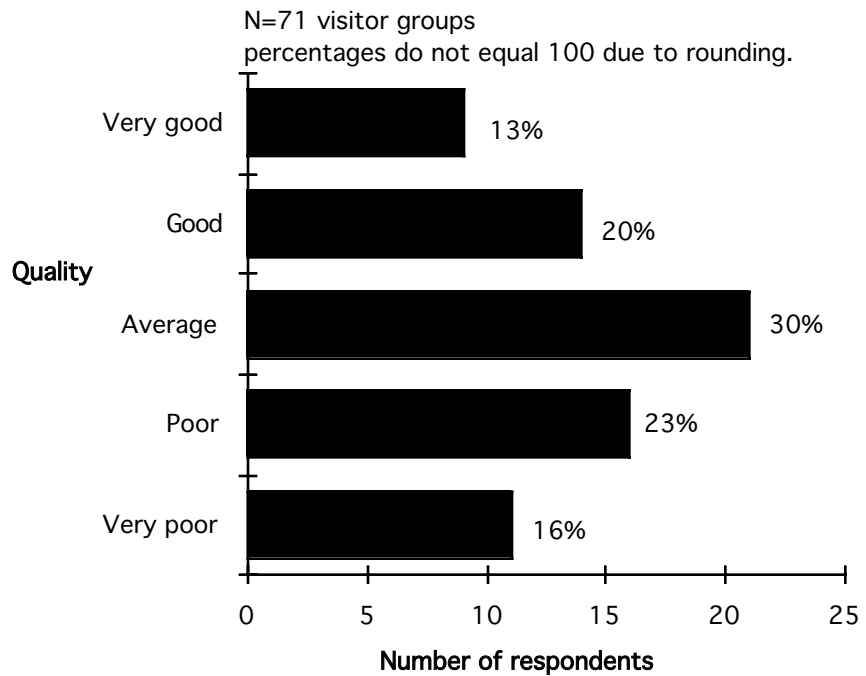
Figure 42: Quality of campgrounds

N=177 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
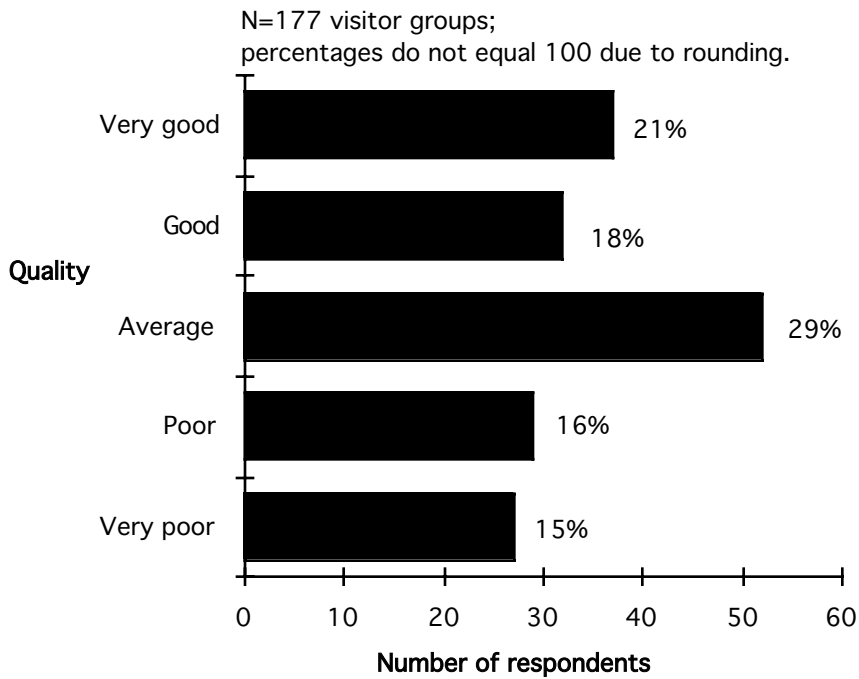
Figure 43: Quality of restrooms/ outhouses

N=70 visitor groups
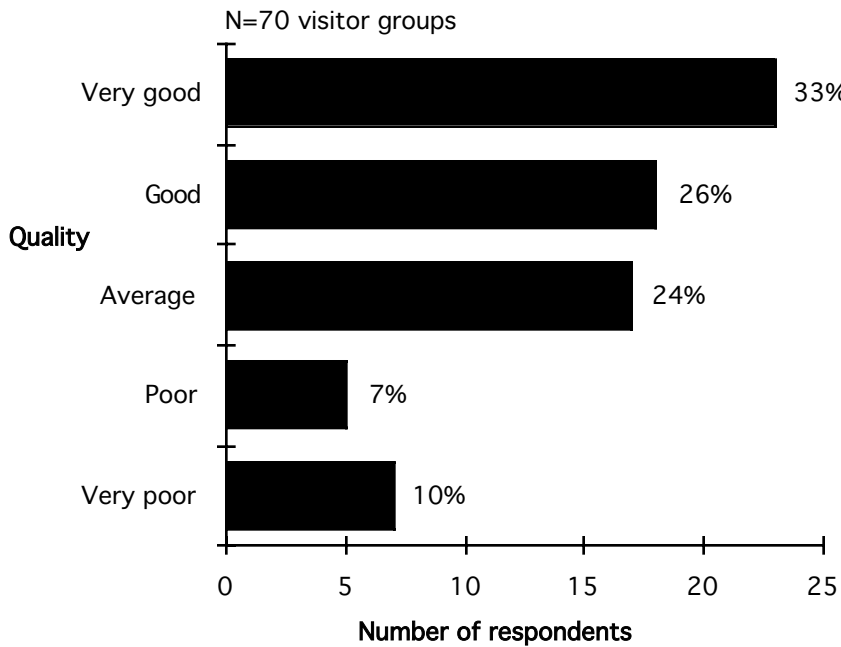
**Figure 44: Quality of Chamber of Commerce visitor
information center (Glennallen)**

N=112 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
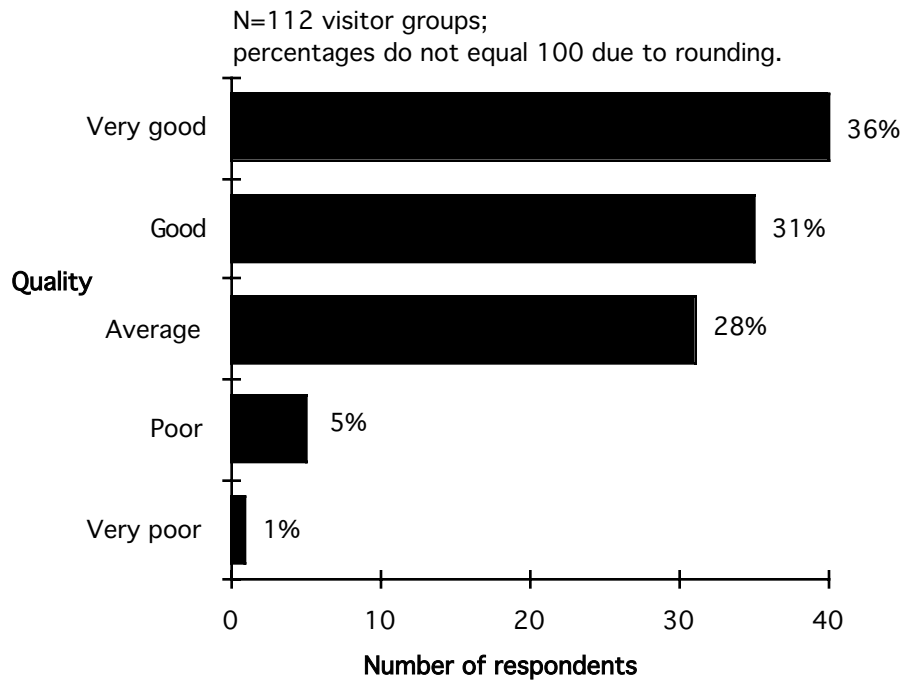

Figure 45: Quality of restaurants
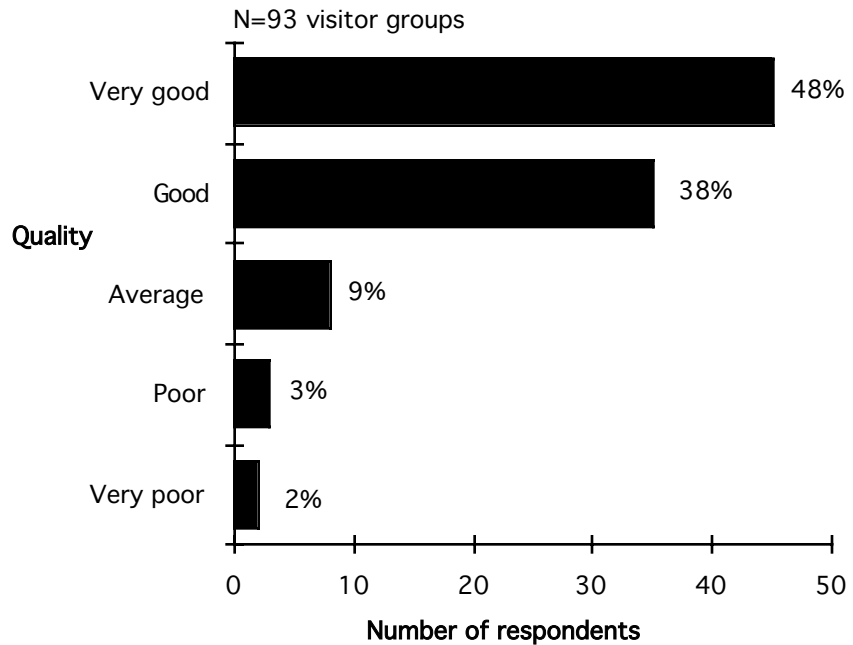
N=93 visitor groups

Figure 46: Quality of hotel/ motel/ lodge/ bed & breakfast

Expenditures

Visitors were asked to list their expenditures in the park area during their visit. They were asked how much money they spent for lodging (motel, camping, etc.), travel (gas, bus fare, rental car, etc.), food (restaurant, groceries, etc.), and "other" items (recreation, film, gifts, etc.).

Many visitor groups (29%) spent up to $50 in total expenditures in the park area during this visit (see Figure 47). Another 22% spent $351 or more during their visit.

The largest proportion of visitors' money was spent for lodging (36%) and travel, food (each 23%) in the park area, as shown in Figure 48.

Over half of the visitors (52%) spent no money in the park area for lodging (see Figure 49). For travel, 55% of the visitor groups spent up to $50 (see Figure 50). For food, 44% of the groups spent up to $50 (see Figure 51). Thirty-nine percent of the groups spent no money for "other" items (see Figure 52).

The average <u>visitor</u> <u>group</u> expenditure in the park area during this visit was $241. The average <u>per</u> <u>capita</u> expenditure was $84.

N=426 visitor groups;
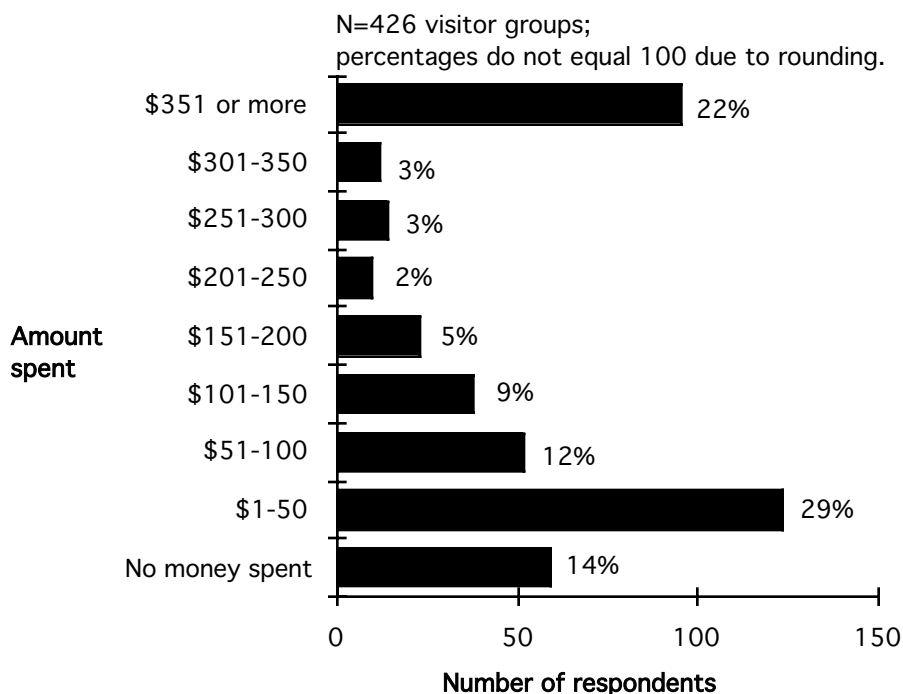percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Figure 47: Total expenditures in the Wrangell-St. Elias area

N=426 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
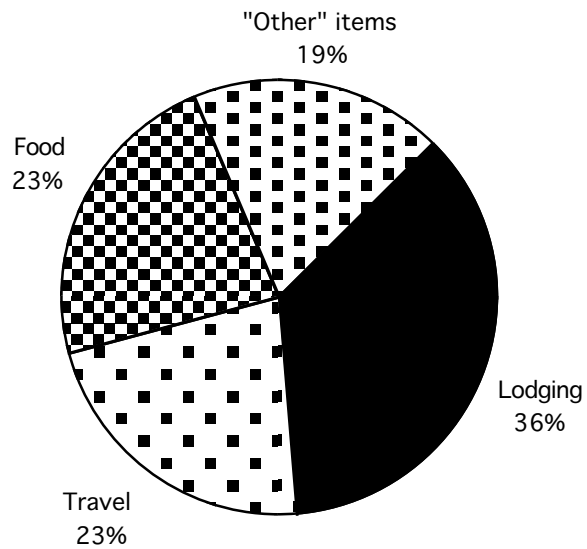
Figure 48: Expenditures by category
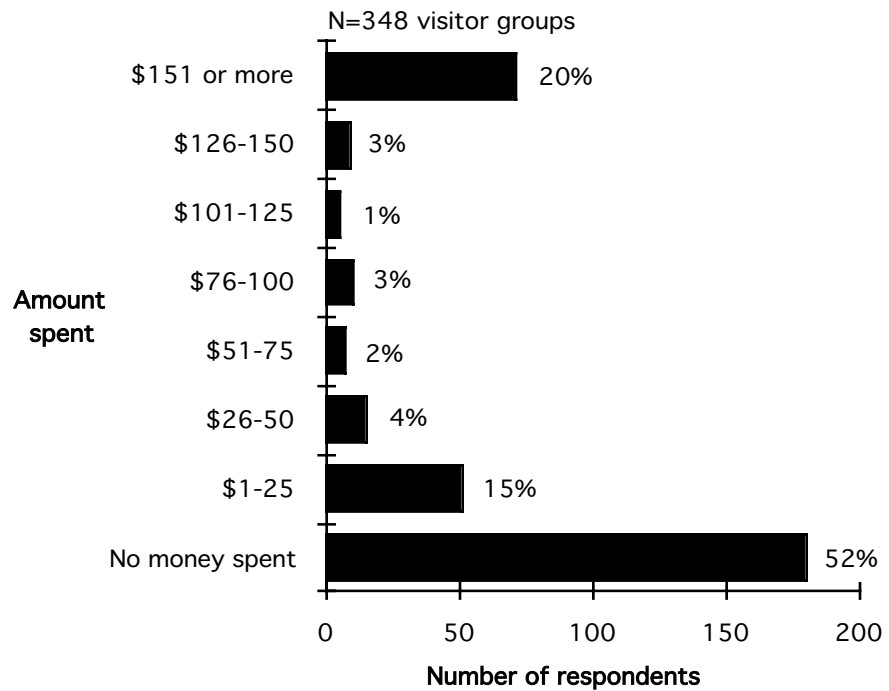
Figure 49: Lodging expenditures

N=374 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
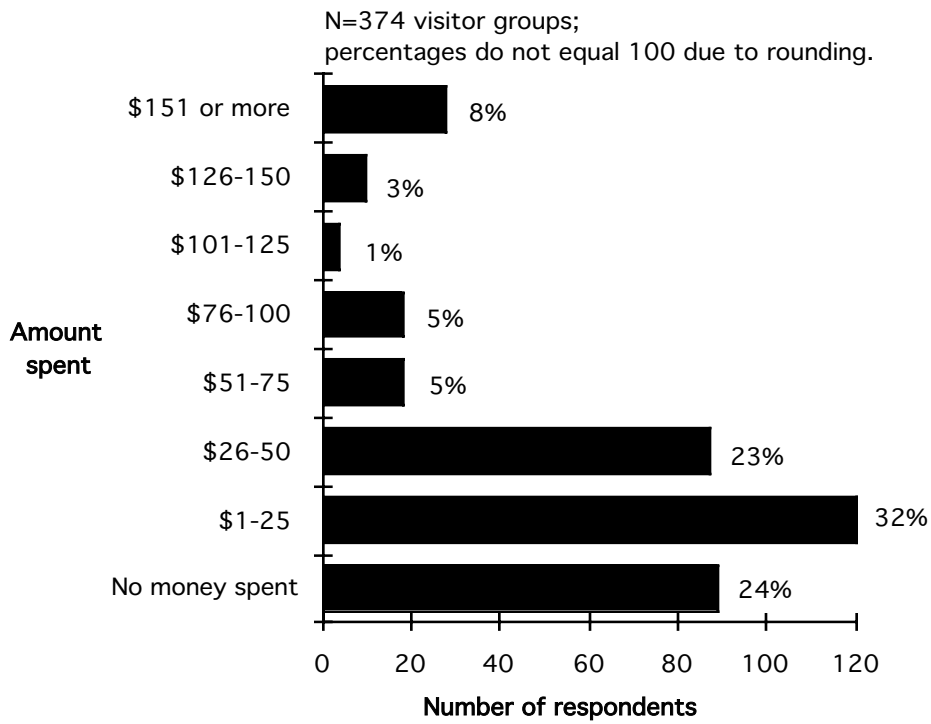
Figure 50: Travel expenditures

N=373 visitor groups
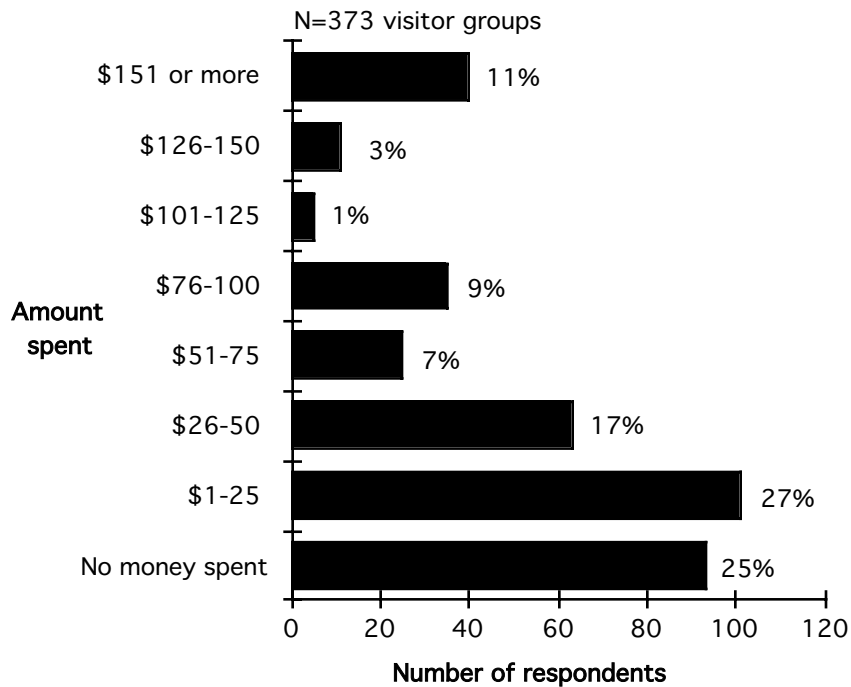
Figure 51: Food expenditures

N=328 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
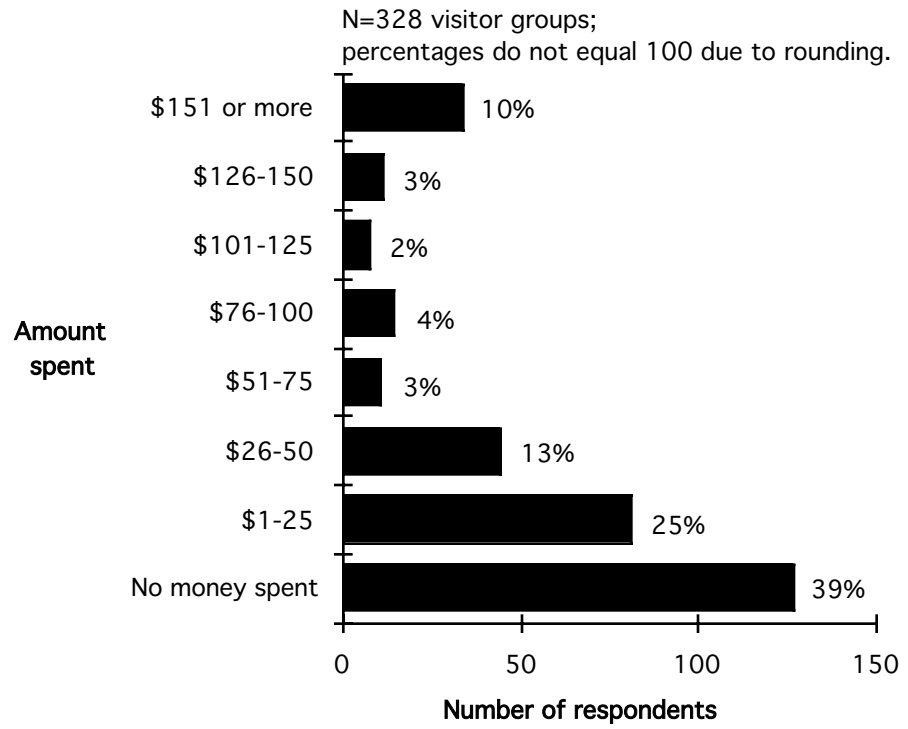
Figure 52: "Other" expenditures

Visitors were asked "Which direction/ town did you come from to arrive at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve?" Many visitors (40%) said they came from Palmer/ Mat-Su Valley on Highway 4 (see Figure 53). The next most used route was from Valdez on Highway 4. The least used route was from Cantwell via the Denali Highway.

Routes used to arrive at park

N=419 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
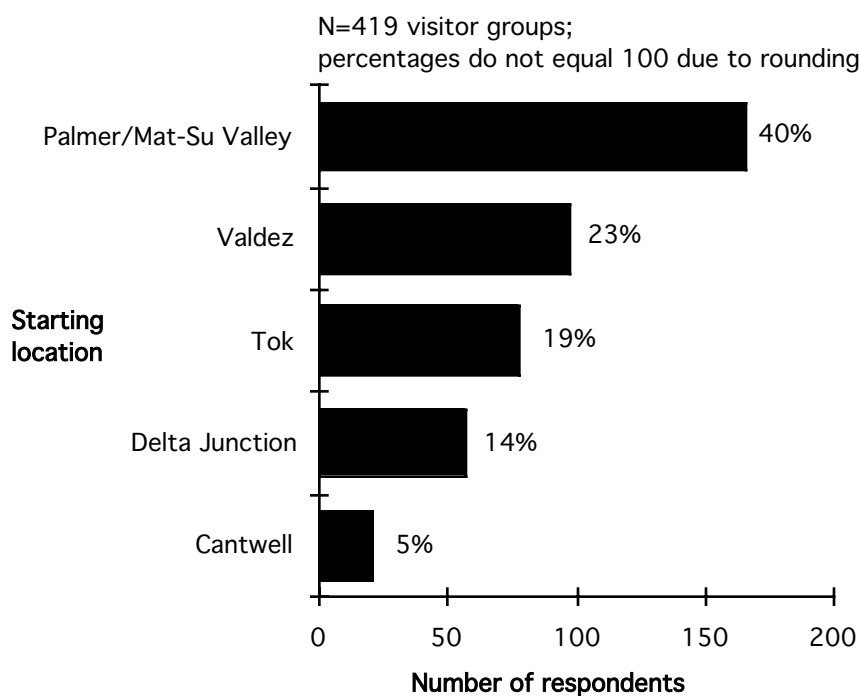
Figure 53: Direction/ town traveled from to Wrangell-St. Elias

Overall rating of service quality

Visitors were asked to rate the overall quality of the visitor services provided at Wrangell-St. Elias during this visit. Many visitors (76%) said services were "good" or "very good" (see Figure 54). Two percent of visitors said the services were "very poor."

N=409 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Quality

Rating	Percentage
Very good	34%
Good	42%
Average	16%
Poor	5%
Very poor	2%

Number of respondents
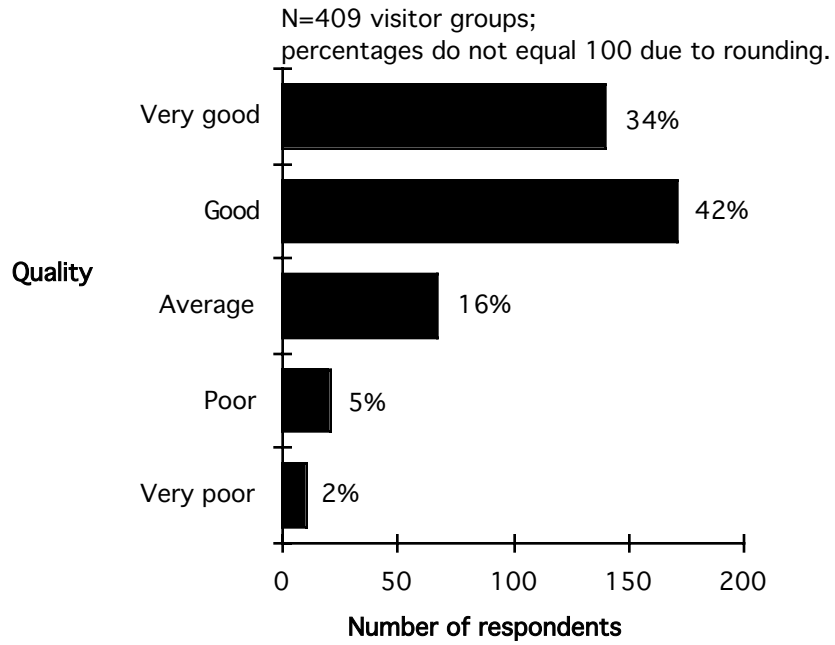
Figure 54: Overall quality rating of services

Visitors were asked what visitor center services/ facilities they would use on a future visit. Exhibits were highest (72%) on the list of services visitors would use (see Figure 55), followed by a park movie (64%), trails (62%) and interpretive programs (53%). Other services visitors requested included more restrooms, general information, camping, and maps.

Future visitor center services preferred

N=408 visitor groups;
percentages do not equal 100 because visitors
could select more than one service.

Exhibits   72%

Park movie   64%

Future V.C. service preferred   Trails   62%

Interp. programs   53%

Other   20%

0   100   200   300

Number of respondents

Figure 55: Future visitor center services preferred

**Future
McCarthy road
services
preferred**

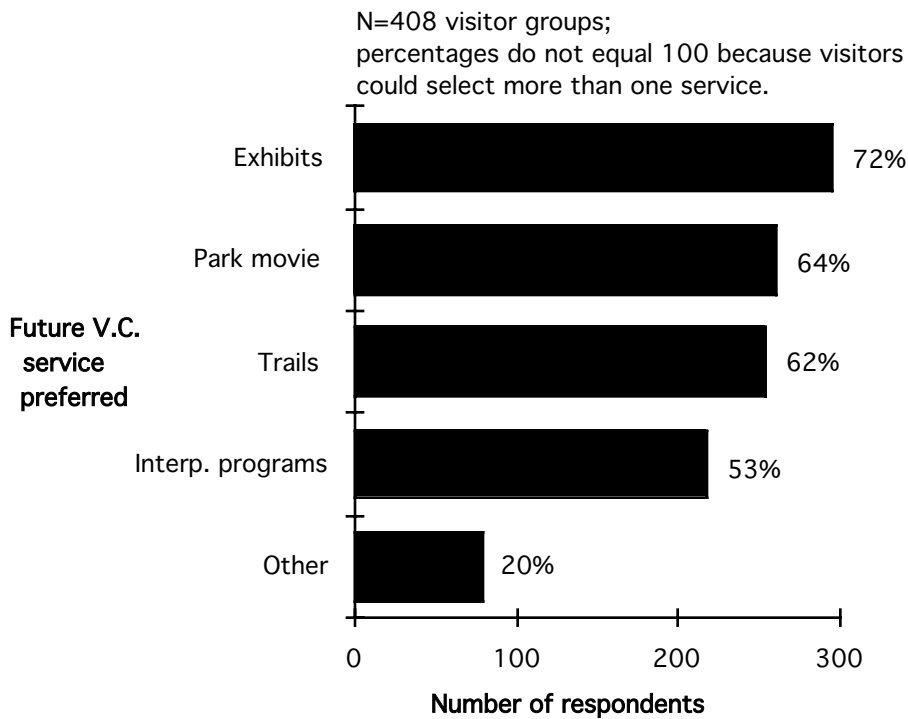Visitors were asked, "On a future visit, what services would you like to see provided along the road to McCarthy?" A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix.

Future McCarthy road services preferred
N=488 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Improve road conditions	89
More restrooms	64
No changes	64
Pave road	20
More turn-out areas	20
Improve road with gravel	15
More campgrounds	15
Better directional signs	14
Drinking water	12
Picnic areas	10
Did not use road	9
Food services	9
Emergency phones	9
More interpretive signs	9
Mile post numbers	9
Do not change road conditions	8
General/grocery store	7
Gas services	7
Do not pave the road	7
More viewpoints	7
More general information	6
Improve campgrounds	6
NPS campgrounds	6
RV campgrounds	5
Tire repair	5
More trails	5
General services	4
NPS services, not private	4
Provide bridge to McCarthy	4
Clean up trash	3
Ban RVs	3
Dump stations	3
Widen road	2
Trash receptacles	2
Shuttle bus system	2
Lodging	2
More parking areas	2
Ranger-led walks	2
Other comments	18

Visitors were asked, "On a future visit, what services would you like to see provided along the road to Nabesna?" A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix.

Future Nabesna road services preferred

Future Nabesna road services preferred
N=128 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Did not go to Nabesna	31
Do not change anything	26
Campgrounds	13
Improve road conditions	9
More restrooms	9
Better marked trails	4
Better directional signs	3
Hiking trails	3
Interpretive signs	3
RV campgrounds	3
Picnic areas	2
Mile post signs	2
Turn-out areas	2
Food services	2
General services	2
Small store	2
Dump stations	2
Other comments	10

Planning for the future

Visitors were asked "What advice would you give a manager planning for the future of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve? Please be specific." A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

_____

Planning for the future
N=442 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Improve employee service	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
More interpretive signs on the trail	10
Offer more maps	7
More video presentations at visitor center	7
More history information	5
More backcountry information	4
More ranger-led tours/programs	4
More general information	2
Build visitor center at Chitina	2
Other comments	3
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Improve road conditions	45
Do not pave roads	25
Improve campgrounds	15
More trails	12
Open/restore Kennicott mines	8
More restrooms	8
More RV campgrounds	7
Better directional signs	5
More campgrounds	4
Improve restrooms	4
Build footbridge to McCarthy	3
More turn-outs/viewpoints	3
More access for disabled people	3
Provide drinking water	2
Improve showers	2
Re-open railway	2
Restore old buildings	2
Other comments	10

POLICIES

Limit visitation	7
Limit access	5
Limit RV use	5
More publicity	6
Stress better relations with locals	6
Other comments	7

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Limit commercialism	42
Stress preservation	32
Keep it wilderness	13
Reduce logging activities	7
Cut more trees to see scenery	4
Use Denali as example of shuttle system	4
Everyone has right to park access	3
Improve wildlife management	2
Other comments	3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Don't change anything	23
Provide more access to park	19
Don't let park be like Denali NP	14
Less private concession services	8
Keep the tram	6
Provide more shuttle services	5
More food services	4
Don't let park be like Yosemite	3
Other comments	8

Comment summary

Many visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments about Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve 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 about their visit.

Visitor Comment Summary
N=336 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Staff/rangers helpful, friendly	22
Unhelpful staff/rangers	5
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
We saw no services	3
Need more interpretive signs	2
Enjoyed visitor center	2
Enjoyed mill tour	2
More backcountry information	2
More general information	2
Other comments	8
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Improve road conditions	9
Open/restore buildings at Kennicott	9
Do not restore Kennicott	3
More restrooms	2
Do not pave roads	2
Need more facilities	2
Prefer NPS campgrounds over private	2
Other comments	9
POLICIES	
Provide free parking	2
More publicity	2
Comments	6

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Stress preservation	13
Keep park wilderness	13
Limit commercialism	9
Other comments	3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Enjoyed visit	38
Beautiful	32
Special place	12
We'll be back	12
Road conditions are awful	10
Do not change anything	9
Wish we had more time	9
Enjoyed scenery	7
Enjoyed the tram	6
Preserve the tram	6
Thank you	6
Do not let park be like Denali NP	5
Park was too inaccessible	5
Disliked logging practices in park	4
Good luck	4
Enjoyed solitude	4
Keep up the good work	4
Disturbed by landowner/NPS conflicts	3
Enjoyed wildlife	3
Mountains were beautiful	3
Make park accessible to all	2
Other comments	18

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
Additional Analysis

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) staff offer the opportunity to learn more from VSP visitor study data.

Additional Analysis:
Additional analysis can be done using the park's VSP visitor study data that was collected and entered into the computer. Two-way and three-way cross tabulations can be made of any of the characteristics listed below. Be as specific as possible--you may select a single program/ service/ facility instead of all that were listed in the questionnaire. Include your name, address and phone number in the request.

- Aware of park's existence
- Source of information
- Length of stay
- Order of places visited
- Activities
- Day hiking participation
* Overnight backpacking
- Number of nights in backcountry
- Plane to access backcountry
- Forms of transportation used

- Reasons for visiting
- Group size
- Guided tour of Alaska
- Guided tour of Wrangell-St. Elias
- Educational group
- Age
- State of residence
- Country of residence
- Number of visits
- Service/ facility used

- Service/ facility importance
- Service/ facility quality
- Total expenditures
- Lodging expenditures
- Travel expenditures
- Food expenditures
- "Other" expenditures
- Direction/ town traveled from
- Future V.C. services
- Overall quality rating

Database
A database is being created containing all the VSP visitor studies results from 1988 through the present. The database will be operational in April 1996. In order to use the database it will be necessary to have a database catalog, which lists the information contained in the database. Queries to the database will be accepted by phone, mail, cc:mail, e:mail or fax and the same forms of media will be used to return the answer to you. Through the database, you can learn how the results of this VSP visitor study compare with those across the nation, or within a specific region, with other natural areas, or sorted in many other ways.

Phone/ send requests to:

Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133
208-885-7863
FAX: 208-885-6226

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 (summer)
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 (spring)
41. Natchez Trace Parkway

1991 (continued)
42. Stehekin-North Cascades NP/ Lake Chelan NRA
43. City of Rocks National Reserve
44. The White House Tours, President's Park (fall)

1992
45. Big Bend National Park
46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
47. Glen Echo Park
48. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
49. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
50. Zion National Park
51. New River Gorge National River
52. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
53. Arlington House-The Robert E. Lee Memorial

1993
54. Belle Haven Park/Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
55. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
56. Whitman Mission National Historic Site
57. Sitka National Historical Park
58. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (summer)
59. Redwood National Park
60. Channel Islands National Park
61. Pecos National Historical Park
62. Canyon de Chelly National Monument
63. Bryce Canyon National Park

1994
64. Death Valley National Monument Backcountry
65. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
66. Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center
67. Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts
68. Nez Perce National Historical Park
69. Edison National Historic Site
70. San Juan Island National Historical Park
71. Canaveral National Seashore
72. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (fall)
73. Gettysburg National Military Park/Eisenhower National
        Historic Site

1995
74. Grand Teton National Park (winter)
75. Yellowstone National Park (winter)
76. Bandelier National Monument
77. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

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