



Little River Canyon National Preserve Visitor Study

Summer 2010

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/SSD/NRR—2011/152/106447



ON THE COVER

Little River Canyon National Preserve

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Contents

CONTENTS	III
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	V
Acknowledgements	vi
About the Authors	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
Organization of the Report	1
Presentation of the Results	2
METHODS	3
Survey Design	3
Sample size and sampling plan	3
Questionnaire design.....	3
Survey procedure	4
Data analysis	4
Limitations.....	5
Special conditions.....	5
Checking non-response bias	6
RESULTS	7
Group and Visitor Characteristics	7
Visitor group size	7
Visitor group type.....	7
Visitors with organized groups.....	8
United States visitors by state of residence.....	10
Visitors from Alabama and adjacent states by county of residence	11
International visitors by country of residence	12
Frequency of visits.....	13
Visitor age.....	14
Visitor ethnicity.....	15
Visitor race.....	15
Awareness of park management.....	16
Trip/Visit Characteristics and Preferences	17
Information sources prior to visit.....	17
Information sources for future visit	19
Primary reason for visiting park area.....	20
Services used in nearby communities	21
Communities where support services were obtained.....	22
Adequacy of directional signs.....	24
Entrance/exit points	26
Number of vehicles	27
Overnight stays.....	27
Lodging used in the area	28
Length of visit.....	29
Length of stay for non-residents	30
Sites visited in the Preserve	31
Local and regional attractions visited	32
Activities on past visits.....	33
Activities on this visit.....	34
Informational talks/programs	35
Opinions about safety.....	36
Ratings of Services, Facilities, Attributes, and Resources	38
Visitor services and facilities used.....	38
Importance ratings of visitor services and facilities	39
Quality ratings of visitor services and facilities	43
Mean scores of importance and quality ratings for visitor services and facilities	47
Importance of protecting park attributes, resources, and experiences	48

CONTENTS (continued)

Preferences for Future Visit	50
Likelihood of future visit	50
Interpretive/ranger-led program topic preferences	51
Preferred interpretive/ranger-led program length and time	52
Interest in viewing exhibits in a new museum	53
Overall Quality	54
Visitor Comments	55
What visitors liked most	55
What visitors liked least	57
Additional comments	59
VISITOR COMMENTS	61
APPENDIX 1: THE QUESTIONNAIRE	63
APPENDIX 2: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS	65
APPENDIX 3: DECISION RULES FOR CHECKING NON-RESPONSE BIAS	66
References.....	67
APPENDIX 4: VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT PUBLICATIONS	68

Executive Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Little River Canyon National Preserve during June 6-12, 2010. A total of 488 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 210 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 43% response rate.
- This report profiles a systematic random sample of Little River Canyon National Preserve visitors. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables.
- Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups were in groups of two and 34% were in groups of three or four. Sixty-one percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
- United States visitors comprised 99% of total visitation during the survey period, with 59% from Alabama, 24% came from Georgia, and smaller proportions from 17 other states. International visitors were from two countries.
- Thirty-eight percent of visitors were visiting the park for the first time and 34% visit 1 to 11 times a year.
- Thirty-one percent of visitors were ages 31-50 years, 29% were ages 51-70 years or younger, and 21% were 15 years and younger.
- Most visitor groups (75%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit. Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about the park through previous visits (51%) and friends/relatives/word of mouth (49%). Most visitor groups (92%) received the information they needed. To obtain information for a future visit, 38% of visitor groups would use the park website.
- For 59% of non-resident visitor groups, the primary reason for visiting the park area (within 40 miles) was to visit Little River Canyon National Preserve.
- Thirty percent of visitor groups stayed overnight in the area within 40 miles of the Preserve, of which 51% percent stayed three or more nights. Of the visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours in the Preserve, 25% spent five or more hours and 25% spent three hours. The average length of visit for visitor groups who visited up to one day was 3.6 hours.
- The most common activities on this visit were general sightseeing (65%) and touring/driving Little River Canyon scenic drive (59%).
- The visitor services and facilities most commonly used by visitor groups were the Canyon Center restrooms (56%) and picnic areas (44%). The service/facility that received the highest combined proportion of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings was the Canyon Center restrooms (89%, N=81). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportion of “very good” and “good” quality ratings was Preserve brochure/map (95%, N=54%).
- Most visitor groups (88%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Little River Canyon National Preserve as “very good” or “good.” Less than 1% of visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “poor.”

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-7863 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.

Acknowledgements

We thank Dr. Wayde Morse for overseeing the field work, the staff and volunteers of Little River Canyon National Preserve for assisting with the survey, and David Vollmer and Matthew Strawn for data processing.

About the Authors

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Introduction

This report describes the results of a visitor study at Little River Canyon National Preserve near Fort Payne, AL, conducted June 6-12, 2010, by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Park Studies Unit (PSU) at the University of Idaho.

The National Park Service website for Little River Canyon National Preserve describes the Preserve: “Little River is unique because it flows for most of its length atop Lookout Mountain in northeast Alabama. Forested uplands, waterfalls, canyon rims and bluffs, pools, boulders, and sandstone cliffs offer settings for a variety of recreational activities. Natural resources and cultural heritage come together to tell the story of the Preserve, a special place in the Southern Appalachians” (www.nps.gov/liri, retrieved September, 2010).

Organization of the Report

The report is organized into three sections.

Section 1: Methods. This section discusses the procedures, limitations, and special conditions that may affect the study results.

Section 2: Results. This section provides summary information for each question in the questionnaire. The presentation of the results of this study does not follow the order of questions in the questionnaire.

Section 3: Appendices

Appendix 1: The *Questionnaire*. A copy of the questionnaire distributed to visitor groups.

Appendix 2: *Additional Analysis*. A list of sample questions for cross-references and cross comparisons. Comparisons can be analyzed within park or between parks. Results of additional analyses are not included in this report.

Appendix 3: *Decision rules for checking non-response bias*. An explanation of how the non-response bias was determined.

Appendix 4: *Visitor Services Project Publications*. A complete list of publications by the VSP. Copies of these reports can be obtained by visiting the website: www.psu.uidaho.edu/vsp/reports.htm or by contacting the VSP office at (208) 885-7863.

Presentation of the Results

Results are represented in the form of graphs (see example below), scatter plots, pie charts, tables, or text.

SAMPLE ONLY

1. The figure title describes the graph's information.

2. Listed above the graph, the "N" shows the number of individuals or visitor groups responding to the question. If "N" is less than 30, "CAUTION!" is shown on the graph to indicate the results may be unreliable.

* appears when total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

**appears when total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer choice.

3. Vertical information describes the response categories.

4. Horizontal information shows the number or proportions of responses in each category.

5. In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.

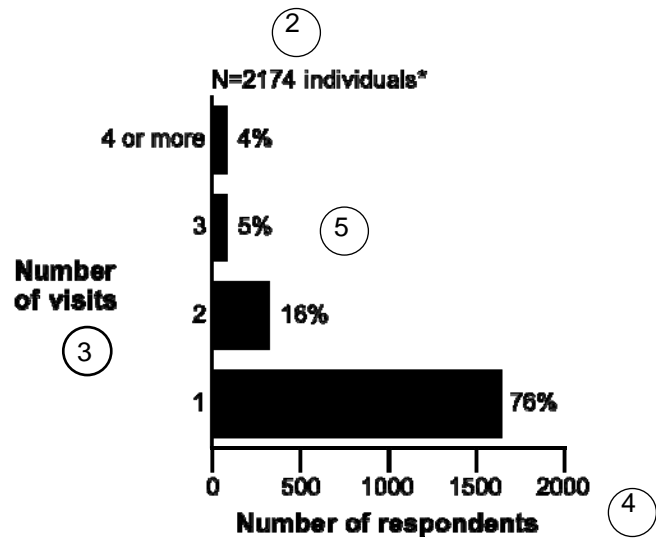


Figure 14. Number of visits to the park in past 12 months

Methods

Survey Design

Sample size and sampling plan

All VSP questionnaires follow design principles outlined in Don A. Dillman's book *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (2007). Using this methodology, the sample size was calculated based on the park visitation statistics of previous years.

Brief interviews were conducted with a systematic, random sample of visitor groups that arrived at selected locations in Little River Canyon National Preserve during June 6-12, 2010. Visitors were surveyed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Table 1 shows the five locations, number of questionnaires distributed at each location, and the response rate for each location. During this survey, 525 visitor groups were contacted and 488 of these groups (93%) accepted questionnaires (average acceptance rate for 211 VSP visitor studies conducted from 1988 through 2009 is 91.8%). Questionnaires were completed and returned by 210 visitor groups resulting in a 43% response rate for this study. The average response rate for the 211 VSP visitor studies is 73.5%.

Table 1. Questionnaire distribution

Sampling site	Distributed		Returned	
	N ₁	%	N ₂	%
Canyon Mouth Picnic Area	153	31	49	23
Eberhart Point	16	3	10	5
Falls	224	46	98	47
Falls Overlook	79	16	41	20
Canyon Center	16	3	12	6
Total	488	99*	210	101*

*Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

Questionnaire design

The Little River Canyon National Preserve questionnaire was developed at a workshop held with park staff to design and prioritize the questions. Some of the questions were comparable with VSP studies conducted at other parks while others were customized for Little River Canyon National Preserve. Many questions asked visitors to choose answers from a list of responses, often with an open-ended option, while others were completely open-ended.

No pilot study was conducted to test the Little River Canyon National Preserve questionnaire. However, all questions followed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines and/or were used in previous surveys, thus the clarity and consistency of the survey instrument have been tested and supported.

Survey procedure

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study, and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, they were asked which member (at least 16 years old) had the next birthday. The individual with the next birthday was selected to complete the questionnaire for the group. An interview, lasting approximately two minutes, was conducted with that person to determine group size, group type, and the age of the member completing the questionnaire. These individuals were asked for their names, addresses, and telephone numbers or email addresses in order to mail them a reminder/thank you postcard and follow-ups. Visitors were asked to complete the survey after their visit, and return the questionnaire by mail. The questionnaires were pre-addressed and affixed with a U.S. first class postage stamp.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder/thank you postcard was mailed to all participants who provided a valid mailing address (see Table 2). Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey. Seven weeks after the survey, a second round of replacement questionnaires was mailed to visitors who had not returned their questionnaires. Eleven weeks after the survey, a third and final round of replacement questions was mailed.

Table 2. Follow-up mailing distribution

Mailing	Date	U.S.	International	Total
Postcards	June 28, 2010	446	0	446
1 st Replacement	July 13, 2010	324	0	324
2 nd Replacement	August 2, 2010	304	0	304
3 rd Replacement	August 23, 2010	293	0	293

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the visitor responses were processed using custom and standard statistical software applications—Statistical Analysis Software® (SAS), and a custom designed FileMaker Pro® application. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were calculated for the coded data and responses to open-ended questions were categorized and summarized. Double-key data entry validation was performed on numeric and text entry variables and the remaining checkbox (bubble) variables were read by optical mark recognition (OMR) software.

Limitations

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

1. This was a self-administered survey. Respondents completed the questionnaire after the visit, which may have resulted in poor recall. Thus, it is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflected actual behavior.
2. The data reflect visitor use patterns to the selected sites during the study period of June 6-12, 2010. The results present a 'snapshot-in-time' and 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, table, or text.
4. Occasionally, there may be inconsistencies in the results. Inconsistencies arise from missing data or incorrect answers (due to misunderstood directions, carelessness, or poor recall of information). Therefore, refer to both the percentage and N (number of individuals or visitor groups) when interpreting the results.

Special conditions

The weather during the survey period was generally sunny, hot, and humid. Temperatures varied from the 80s to the 90s, with variable winds and occasional severe thunderstorms, which may have affected visitor's activities. No special events occurred in the area that would have affected the type and the amount of visitation to the park.

Checking non-response bias

Three variables were used to check non-response bias: respondents' age, group size, overall quality rating score. There were significant differences in average age and group size between respondents and nonrespondents (see Table 3). However, there was no significant difference between early and late responders in term of overall quality rating (see Table 4). There is a potential bias in the results due to non-response error. Results should be interpreted with caution. See Appendix 3 for more details of the non-response bias checking procedures.

Table 3. Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents

Variable	Respondents	Nonrespondents	p-value (t-test)
Age (years)	48.54 (N=210)	34.03 (N=268)	<0.001
Group size	3.48 (N=206)	4.18 (N=272)	0.002

Table 4. Comparison of respondents at different mailing waves (ANOVA)

	Before postcard	Between postcard and 1st replacement	After 1st replacement	p-value
Overall quality rating	4.33	4.43	4.30	0.819

RESULTS

Group and Visitor Characteristics

Visitor group size

Question 21b

On this visit, how many people were in your personal group, including yourself?

Results

- 39% of visitors were in groups of two (see Figure 1).
- 34% were in groups of three or four.
- 21% were in groups of five or more.

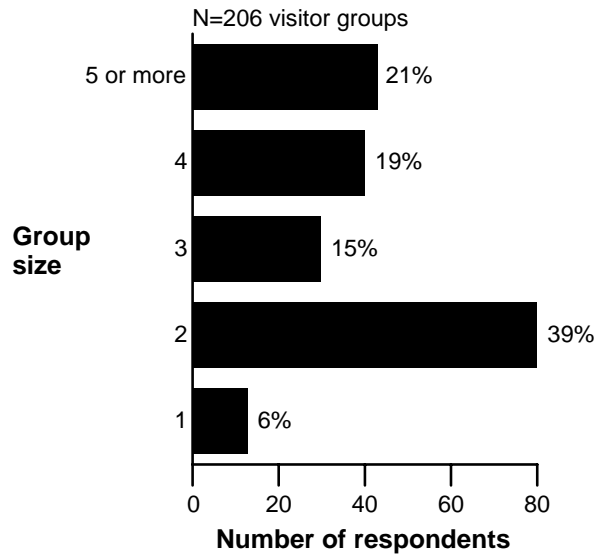


Figure 1. Visitor group size

Visitor group type

Question 21a

On this visit, what kind of personal group (not guided tour/school/other organized group) were you with?

Results

- 61% of visitor groups were made up of family members (see Figure 2).
- 16% were with family and friends.
- “Other” group type (<1%) was:
Business associates

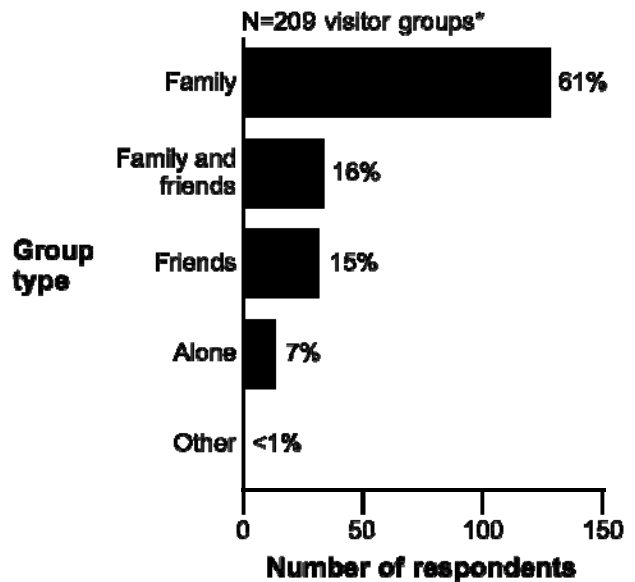


Figure 2. Visitor group type

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitors with organized groups

Question 20a

On this visit, were you and your personal group part of a commercial guided tour group?

Results

- 1% of visitor groups were part of a commercial guided tour group (see Figure 3).

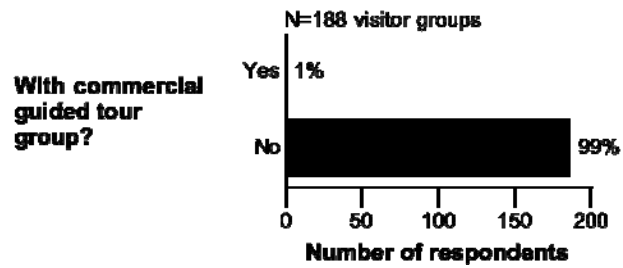


Figure 3. Visitors with a commercial guided tour group

Question 20b

On this visit, were you and your personal group part of a school/educational group?

Results

- 2% of visitor groups were part of a school/educational group (see Figure 4).

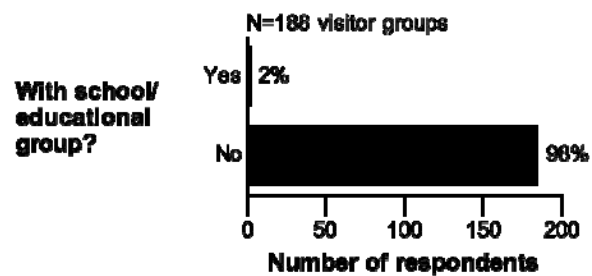


Figure 4. Visitors with a school/educational group

Question 20c

On this visit, were you and your personal group part of an "other" organized group (business, church, scout, etc.)?

Results

- 6% of visitor groups were part of an "other" organized group (see Figure 5).

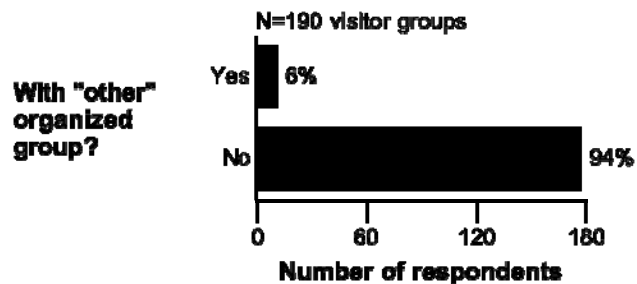


Figure 5. Visitors with an "other" organized group

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Question 20d

If you were with one of these organized groups, how many people, including yourself, were in this organized group?

Results - Interpret with **CAUTION!**

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Figure 6).

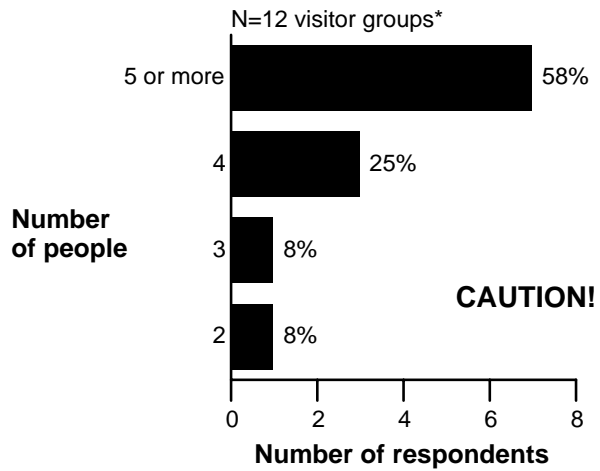


Figure 6. Organized group size

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

United States visitors by state of residence

Question 22b

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is your state of residence?

Note: Response was limited to seven members from each visitor group.

Results

- U.S. visitors were from 19 states and comprised 99% of total visitation to the park during the survey period.
- 59% of U.S. visitors came from Alabama (see Table 5 and Figure 7).
- 24% came from Georgia.
- Smaller proportions of U.S. visitors came from 17 other states.

Table 5. United States visitors by state of residence*

State	Number of visitors	Percent of U.S. visitors N=595 individuals	Percent of total visitors N=599 individuals
Alabama	352	59	59
Georgia	141	24	24
Texas	25	4	4
Florida	21	4	4
Tennessee	18	3	3
Mississippi	7	1	1
Louisiana	6	1	1
North Carolina	5	1	1
Utah	4	1	1
Arkansas	3	1	1
Missouri	3	1	1
8 other states	10	17	17

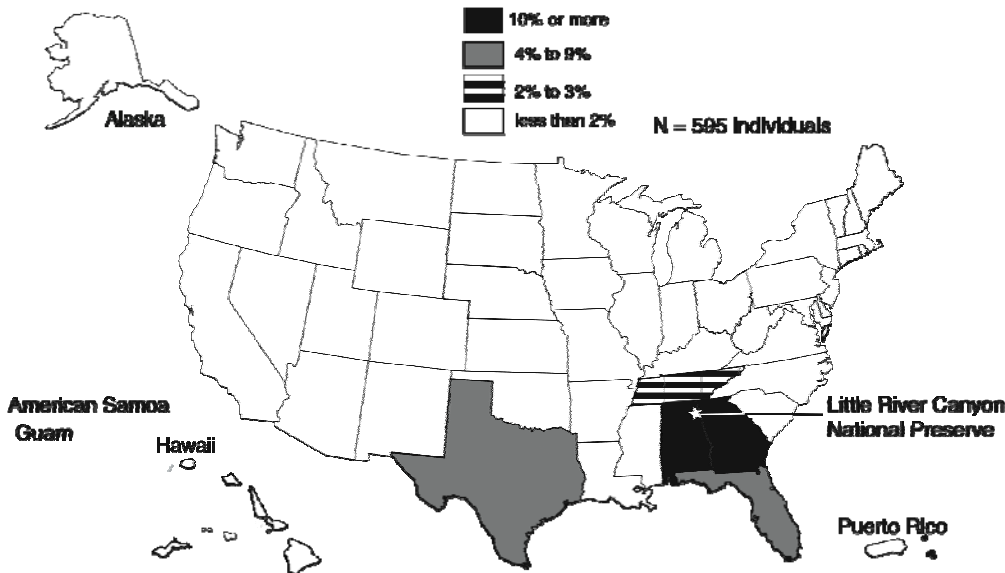


Figure 7. Proportions of United States visitors by state of residence

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitors from Alabama and adjacent states by county of residence

- Visitors from Alabama and adjacent states were from 71 counties and comprised 91% of the total U.S. visitation to the park during the survey period.
- 13% came from DeKalb County, AL (see Table 6).
- 7% came from Cherokee County, AL.
- 7% came from Etowah County, AL.
- Smaller proportions of visitor groups from adjacent states came from 68 other counties.

Table 6. Visitors from Alabama and adjacent states county of residence*

County, State	Number of adjacent state visitors	
	N=539 individuals	Percent
DeKalb, AL	72	13
Cherokee, AL	37	7
Etowah, AL	36	7
Floyd, GA	32	6
Jefferson, AL	29	5
Madison, AL	29	5
Calhoun, AL	22	4
Cobb, GA	17	3
Fulton, GA	14	3
Limestone, AL	13	2
Marshall, AL	9	2
Whitfield, GA	9	2
Chattooga, GA	8	1
Bartow, GA	7	1
Colbert, AL	7	1
DeKalb, GA	7	1
Escambia, AL	7	1
Jackson, AL	7	1
Lauderdale, AL	7	1
Blount, AL	6	1
Cleburne, AL	6	1
Early, GA	6	1
Montgomery, AL	6	1
Talladega, AL	6	1
Tuscaloosa, AL	6	1
Walker, GA	6	1
Covington, AL	5	1
Lauderdale, MS	5	1
Murray, GA	5	1
Shelby, AL	5	1
Bay, FL	4	1
Carroll, GA	4	1
Chilton, AL	4	1
Clay, AL	4	1
Forsyth, GA	4	1
Lawrence, AL	4	1
Lee, AL	4	1
Polk, GA	4	1
Putnam, FL	4	1
St. Clair, AL	4	1
31 other counties	68	13

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

International visitors by country of residence

Question 22b

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is your country of residence?

Note: Response was limited to seven members from each visitor group.

Results - Interpret with CAUTION!

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Table 7).

Table 7. International visitors by country of residence

CAUTION!

Country	Number of visitors	Percent of international visitors N=4 individuals	Percent of total visitors N=599 individuals
Czech Republic	3	75	1
Australia	1	25	<1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Frequency of visits

Question 22c

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is the frequency of your visits to the Preserve (including this visit)?

Note: Response was limited to seven members from each visitor group.

Results

- 38% of visitors were visiting the Preserve for the first time (see Figure 8).
- 34% visit 1 to 11 times per year.

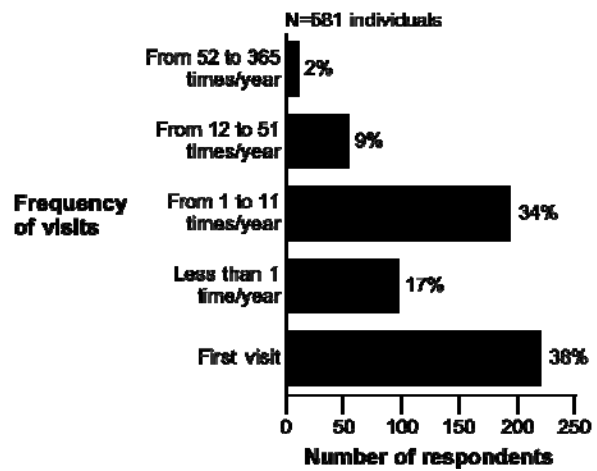


Figure 8. Frequency of visits to Preserve

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor age

Question 22a

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is your current age?

Note: Response was limited to seven members from each visitor group.

Results

- Visitor ages ranged from 1 to 85 years.
- 31% of visitors were in the 31-50 years age group (see Figure 9).
- 29% of visitors were in the 51-70 years age group.
- 21% were 15 years or younger.
- 3% were 71 or older.

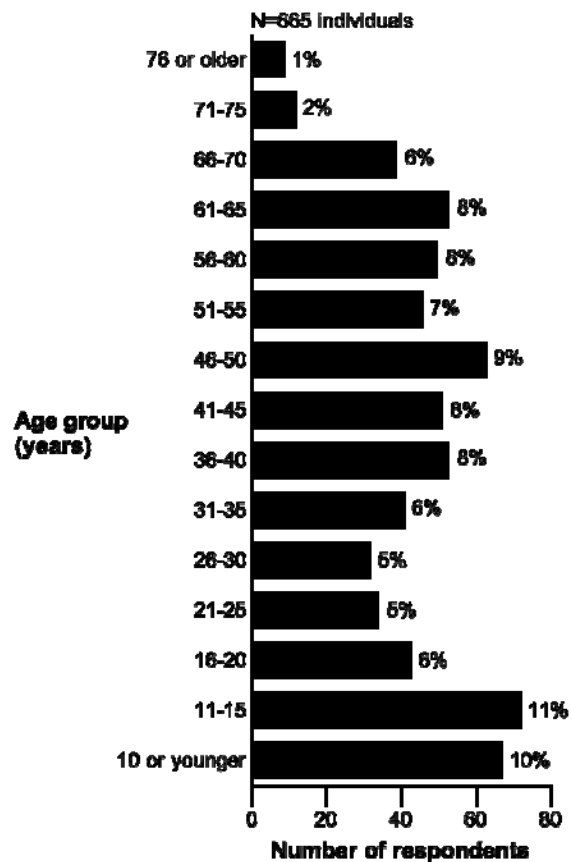


Figure 9. Visitor age

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor ethnicity

Question 23a

Are you or members of your personal group Hispanic or Latino?

Note: Response was limited to seven members from each visitor group.

Results

- 4% of visitors were Hispanic or Latino (see Figure 10).

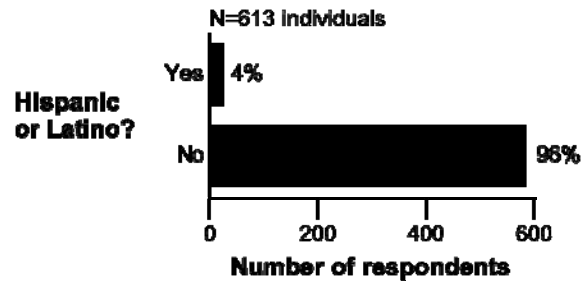


Figure 10. Visitors who were Hispanic or Latino

Visitor race

Question 23b

What is your race? What is the race of each member of your personal group?

Note: Response was limited to seven members from each visitor group.

Results

- 97% of visitors were White (see Figure 11).
- 2% were American Indian or Alaska Native.

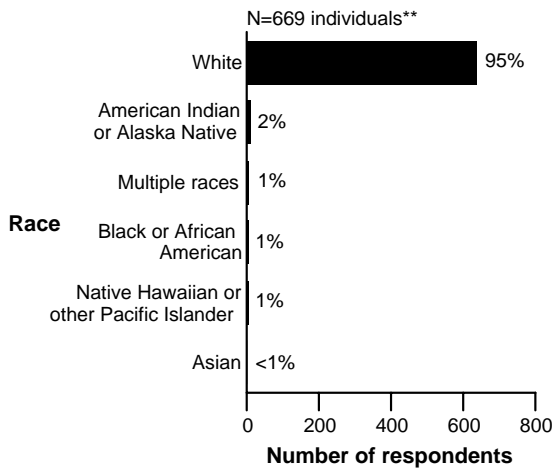


Figure 11. Visitor race

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Trip/Visit Characteristics and Preferences

Information sources prior to visit

Question 1a

Prior to this visit, how did you and your personal group obtain information about Little River Canyon Preserve?

Results

- 75% of visitor groups obtained information about Little River Canyon Preserve prior to their visit (see Figure 14).
- As shown in Figure 15, among those visitor groups that obtained information about Little River Canyon Preserve prior to their visit, the most common sources were:

51% Previous visits
49% Friends/relatives/word of mouth

- “Other” sources (5%) were:
DeSoto State Park
Highway/road signs
Live locally
National Parks Passport
Reader's Digest Scenic Drives

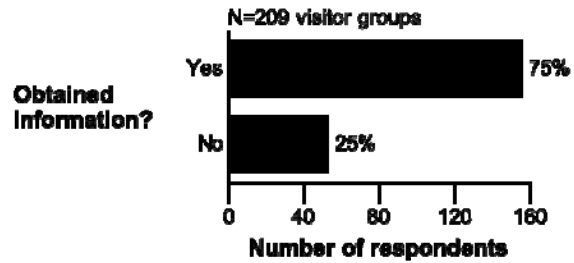


Figure 14. Visitor groups that obtained information about Little River Canyon National Preserve

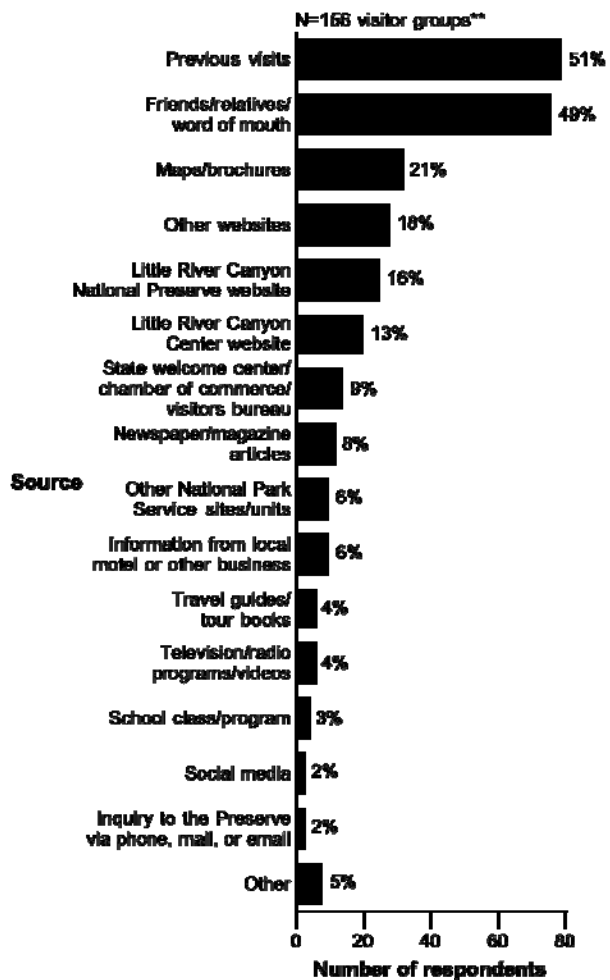


Figure 15. Sources of information used prior to visit

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Question 1c

From the sources you used prior to this visit, did you and your personal group receive the type of information about the Preserve that you needed?

Results

- 92% of visitor groups received needed information prior to their visit (see Figure 16).

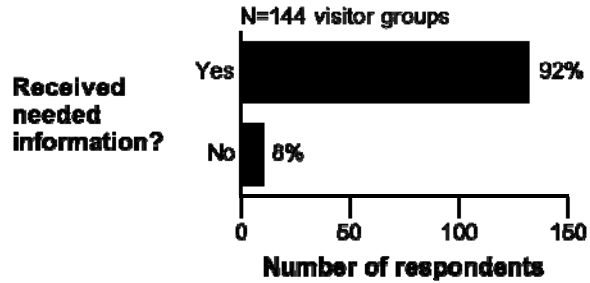


Figure 16. Visitor groups that received needed information prior to their visit

Question 1d

If NO, what type of Preserve information did you and your personal group need that was not available? (open-ended)

Results – Interpret with CAUTION!

- 10 visitor groups listed information they needed but was not available (see Table 8).

Table 8. Needed information (N=10 comments) **CAUTION!**

Type of information	Number of times mentioned
Directions	1
East and west routes around canyon	1
Fee for Mouth of the Canyon	1
Fishing information	1
Historical information	1
Level of difficulty going to/from swimming areas	1
Lodging information	1
Maps	1
Trail information (location and length)	1
Trail maps with location of trailheads	1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Information sources for future visit

Question 1b

If you were to visit Little River Canyon National Preserve in the future, how would you and your personal group prefer to obtain information about the park?

Results

- As shown in Figure 17, the most common sources of information that visitor groups preferred for a future visit were:
 - 38% Preserve website
 - 33% Previous visits
 - 33% Maps/brochures
- No "other" sources of information (2%) were specified.

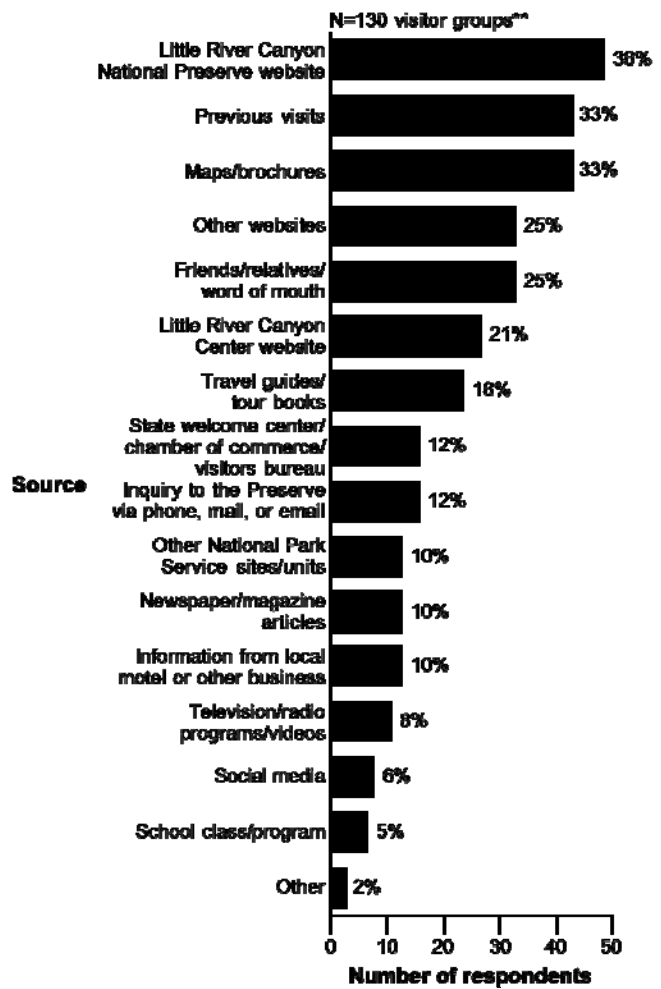


Figure 17. Sources of information to use for a future visit

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Primary reason for visiting park area

Question 7

On this trip, what was the primary reason that you and your personal group came to Little River Canyon National Preserve area?

Results

- 26% of visitor groups were residents of the area (see Figure 18).
- As shown in Figure 19, the primary reason for visiting the area (within 40 miles) of Little River Canyon Preserve among visitor groups that were not residents was:

59% Visit the Preserve

- “Other” primary reasons (3%) were:

Family reunion
On vacation



Figure 18. Residents of the area (within 40 miles) of Little River Canyon National Preserve

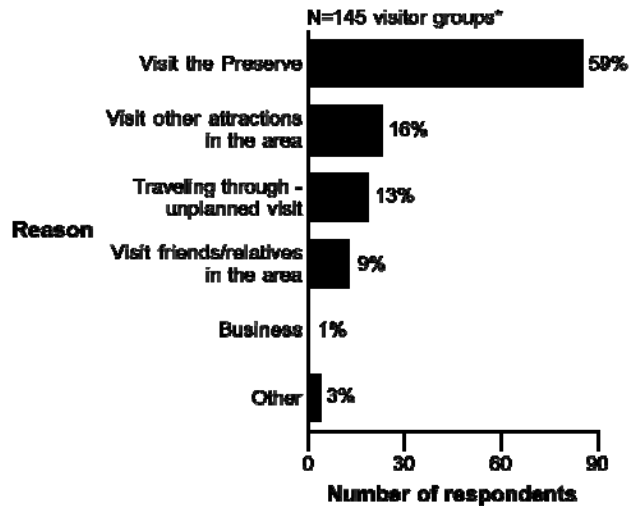


Figure 19. Primary reason for visiting the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (within 40 miles)

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Services used in nearby communities

Question 6a

Please indicate all the services in the nearby communities of Fort Payne, Centre, Scottboro, and other cities within 40 miles of the Preserve that you and your personal group used that were specifically related to this Preserve visit.

Results

- 63% of visitor groups used services in communities within 40 miles of the Preserve (see Figure 20).
- As shown in Figure 21, the services most commonly used were:
 - 67% Ate meals in restaurants
 - 58% Bought gasoline
- “Other” (7%) services included:
 - Worked out at health club
 - Stayed on Lake Weiss

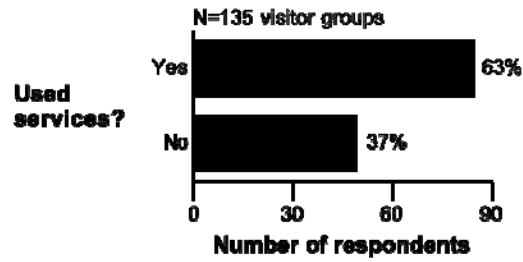


Figure 20. Visitor groups that used services in nearby communities

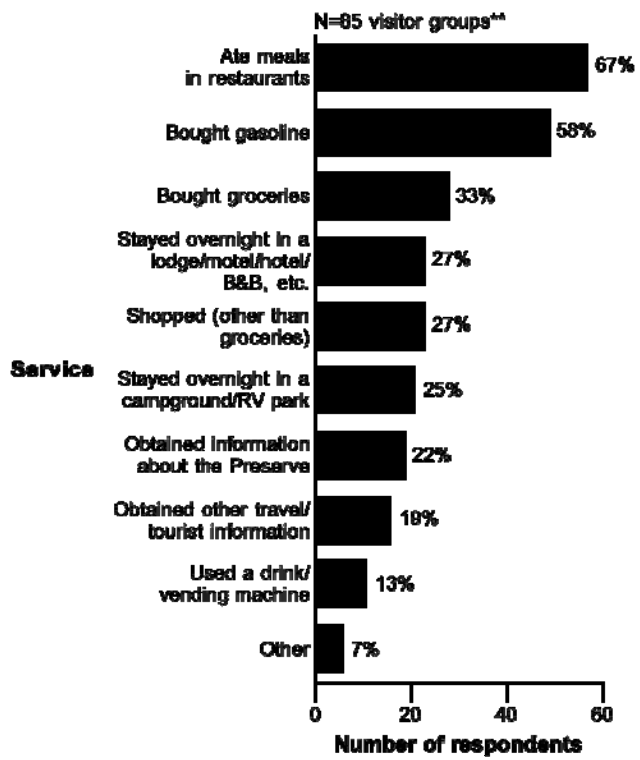


Figure 21. Services visitor groups used on this visit

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Communities where support services were obtained

Question 6b

In which communities did you and your personal group obtain these support services?

Results

Fort Payne

- As shown in Figure 22, the services most commonly obtained in Fort Payne were:
 - 64% Ate meals in restaurants
 - 49% Bought gasoline
- “Other” support services (1%) were not specified.

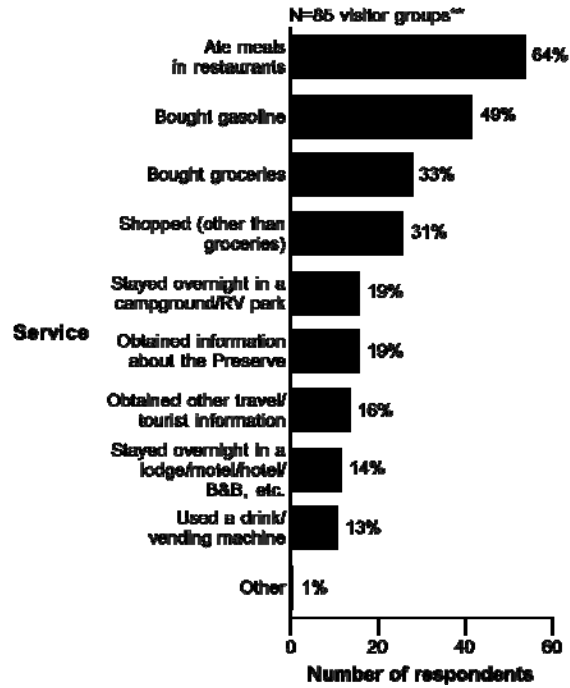


Figure 22. Services obtained in Fort Payne

Centre

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Figure 23).

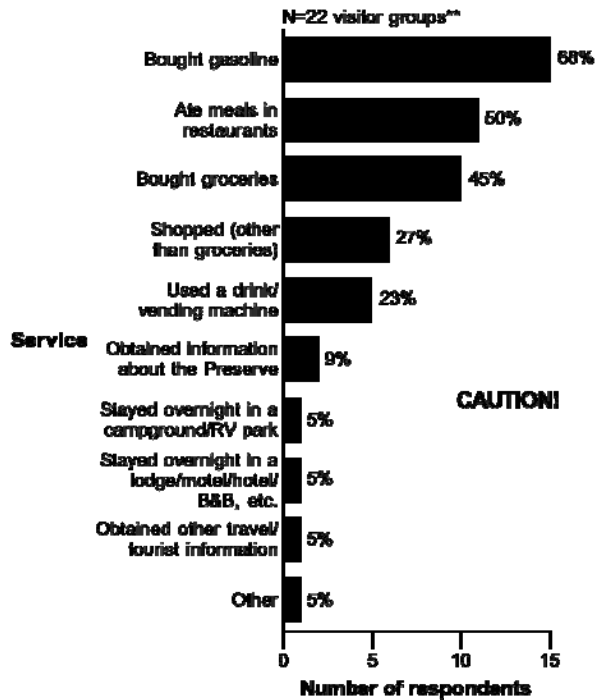


Figure 23. Services obtained in Centre

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Scottsboro

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Figure 24).

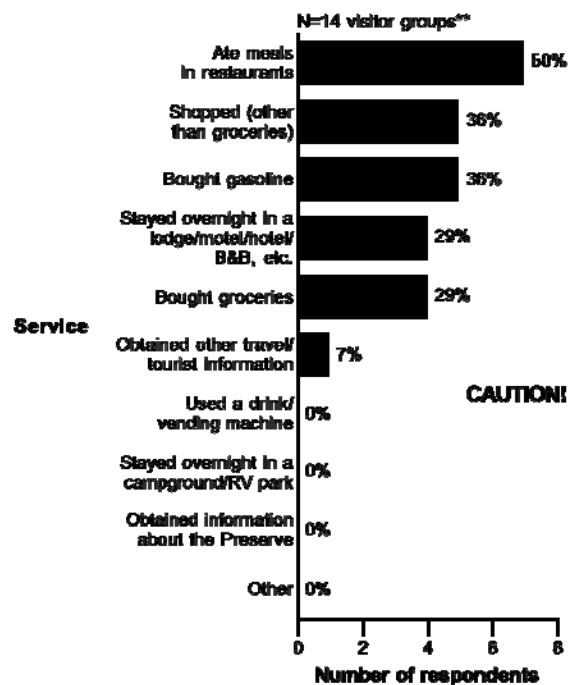


Figure 24. Services obtained in Scottsboro

Other cities

- As shown in Figure 25, the services most commonly obtained in other cities were:
 52% Ate meals in restaurants
 48% Bought gasoline
- No “other” support services (2%) were specified.

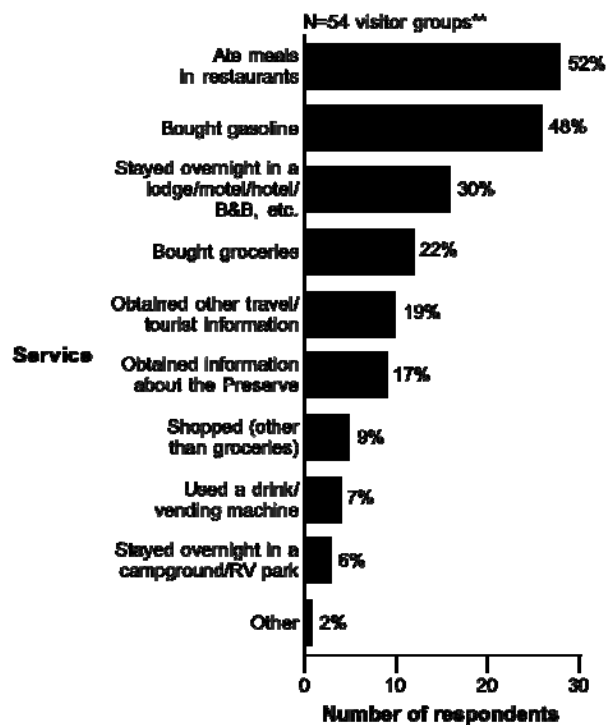


Figure 25. Services obtained in other cities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Adequacy of directional signs

Question 4

On this visit, were the signs directing you and your personal group to Little River Canyon National Preserve adequate?

Results

a. Signs on interstates

- 34% of visitor groups found the interstate signs directing them to the Preserve adequate (see Figure 26).

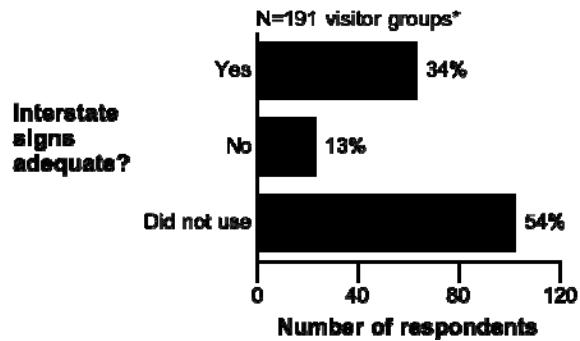


Figure 26. Visitor groups' opinions on adequacy of interstate signs

b. Signs on state highways

- 66% of visitor groups found the state highway signs directing them to the Preserve adequate (see Figure 27).

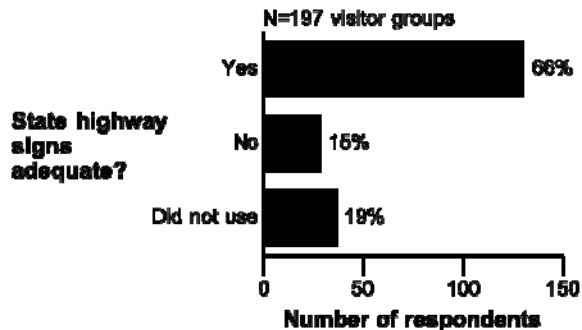


Figure 27. Visitor groups' opinions on adequacy of state highway signs

c. City street signs in communities

- 47% of visitor groups found the city street signs in communities directing them to the Preserve adequate (see Figure 28).

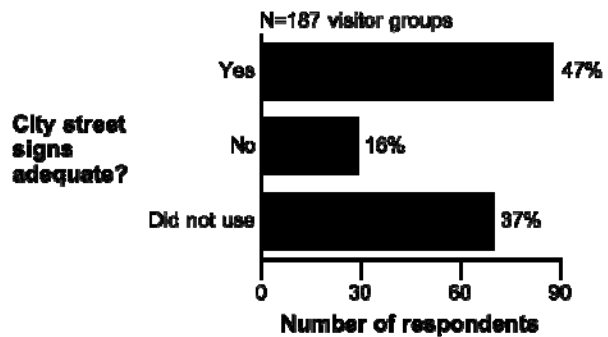


Figure 28. Visitor groups' opinions on adequacy of city street signs in communities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Question 4d

If you answered NO to any of the above, please explain.

Results

- 36 visitor groups commented on problems with directional signs (see Table 9).

Table 9. Comments on directional signs (N=58 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment.)

Sign type	Comment	Number of times mentioned
Interstates	Didn't see any signs	11
	Closed/detours	1
	Had to use GPS	1
	Need more signs	1
State highways	Didn't see any signs	8
	Construction made signage confusing	2
	Signs too small and hard to see	2
	Didn't see Canyon Center sign until we were right at it	1
	Had hard time finding 4-wheeler parking	1
	Had to use GPS	1
	Need more signs	1
	Signs didn't indicate turns	1
	Signs need more information about what Preserve is	1
	There are signs, but are not clear what attraction is in which direction	1
	We got lost	1
	We have noticed some signs on highways but still had problems finding it	1
You can wander forever	1	
Communities	Didn't see any signs	12
	Had to ask for directions	1
	Had to use GPS	1
	More signs needed	1
	No sign for Beaver Pond Trail	1
	Office moved - did not tell you where	1
	Only one sign directing to the park	1
	Signs to the smaller swimming area were small	1
	Saw signs, but are not clear what attraction was in which direction	1
	Unclear which turns to take	1
	You can wander forever	1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Entrance/exit points

Question 5a

On this visit, which entrance point did you and your personal group use to first enter Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- 54% of visitor groups first entered Little River Canyon National Preserve via Route 35 East (see Figure 29).
- 22% first entered via Route 35 West.

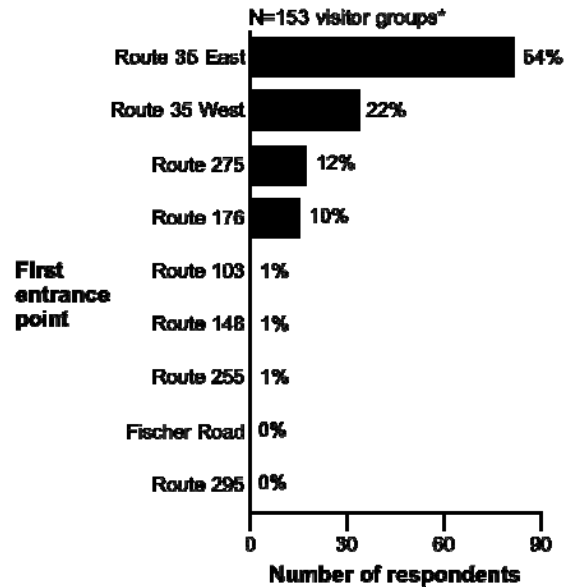


Figure 29. Entrance point first used by visitor groups

Question 5b

On this visit, which exit point did you and your personal group use to last exit Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- 30% of visitor groups last exited Little River Canyon National Preserve via Route 35 East (see Figure 30).
- 27% last exited via Route 35 West.

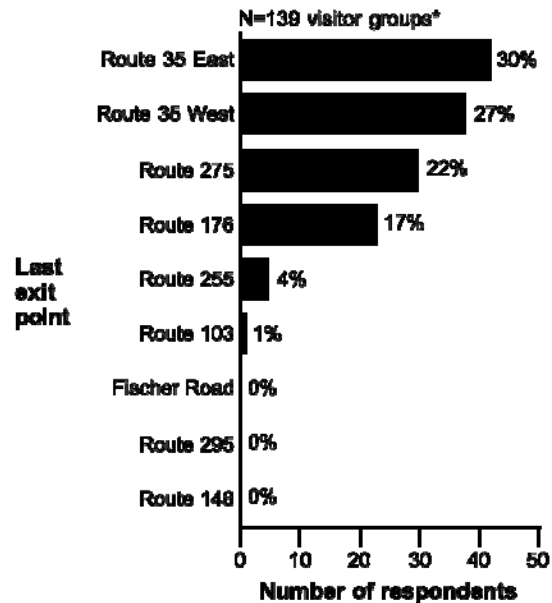


Figure 30. Exit point last used by visitor groups

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Number of vehicles

Question 10

On this visit, how many vehicles did you and your personal group use to arrive at the Preserve?

Results

- 80% of visitor groups used one vehicle to arrive at the Preserve (see Figure 31).

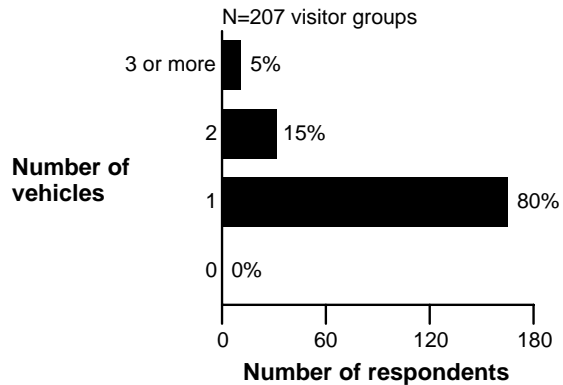


Figure 31. Number of vehicles used to arrive at the Preserve

Overnight stays

Question 9a

On this trip, did you and your personal group stay overnight away from your permanent residence in the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (within 40 miles of the Preserve)?

Results

- 30% of visitor groups stayed overnight away from their permanent residence within 40 miles of the Preserve (see Figure 32).

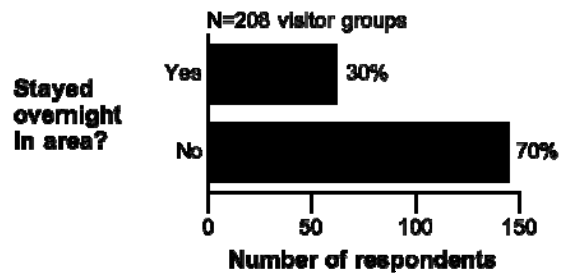


Figure 32. Visitor groups that stayed overnight within 40 miles of the Preserve

Question 9b

If YES, please list the number of nights you and your personal group stayed.

Results

- 29% of visitor groups stayed three nights within 40 miles of Little River Canyon National Preserve (see Figure 33).
- 27% stayed one night.

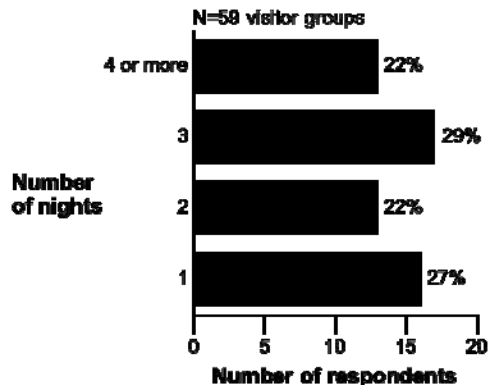


Figure 33. Number of nights spent within 40 miles of the Preserve

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Lodging used in the area

Question 9c

In which types of lodging did you and your personal group spend the night(s)?

Results

- 56% of visitor groups stayed in a lodge, motel, hotel, cabin, rented condo/home, bed & breakfast, etc. (see Figure 34).
- 19% camped in an RV/trailer.
- “Other” (3%) types of lodging were:

DeSoto State Park chalet
Camp Comer (Boy Scouts)

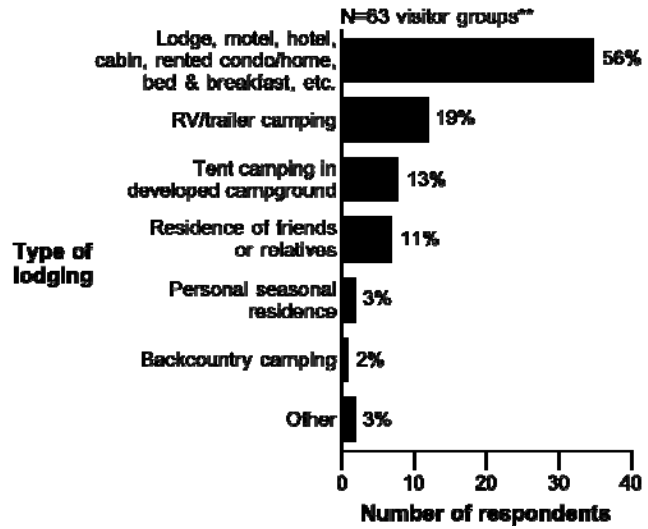


Figure 34. Lodging used in the area within 40 miles of the Preserve

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Length of visit

Question 8a

On this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve, did you and your personal group visit the Preserve on more than one day?

Results

- 15% of visitor groups visited the Preserve on more than one day (see Figure 35).

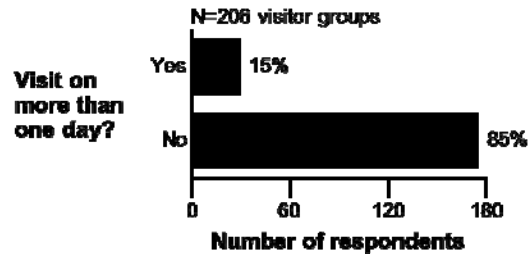


Figure 35. Visitor groups that visited on more than one day

Question 8b

If YES, on how many days did you visit Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results – Interpret with CAUTION!

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Figure 36).

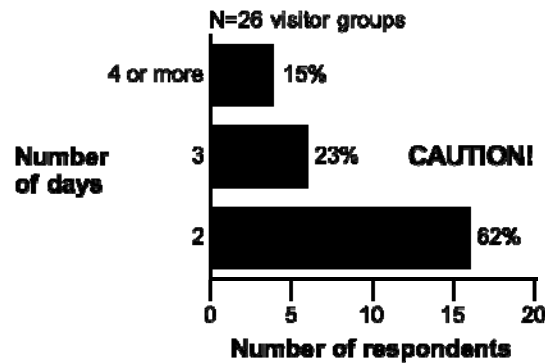


Figure 36. Days spent in the Preserve

Question 8c

If NO, how many hours did you visit Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- Of those visitor groups that did not visit the Preserve on more than one day, 25% spent three hours and 25% spent five or more hours (see Figure 37).
- 19% spent up to one hour.
- 19% spent up to one hour.
- The average length of visit for visitor groups that visited up to one day was 3.6 hours.

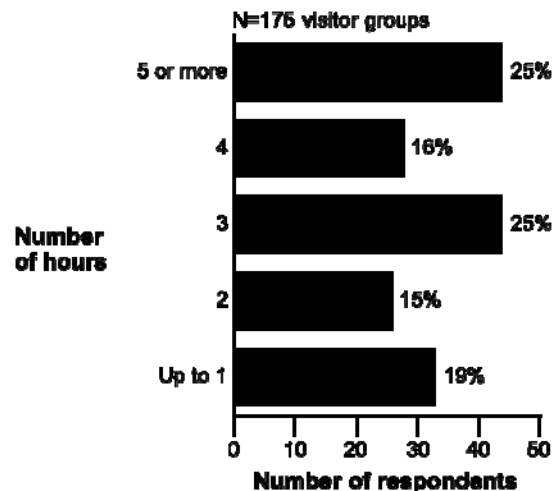


Figure 37. Hours spent in the Preserve

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Length of stay in the area

Question 8d

How long did you and your personal group stay in the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (within 40 miles of Preserve)?

Results

- 21% of visitors groups were residents of the area (see Figure 38).

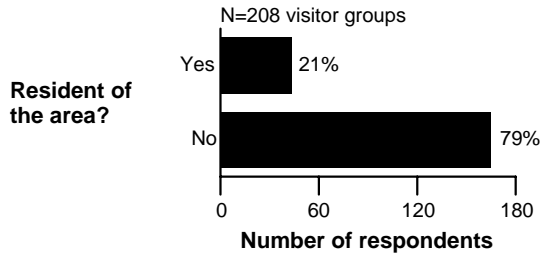


Figure 38. Visitor groups that were residents of the area (within 40 miles of the Preserve)

Number of hours if less than 24

- Of those visitor groups that were non-residents, 40% spent five or more hours in the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (see Figure 39).
- 34% spent two to three hours.
- The average length of stay for visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours in the area was 4.3 hours.

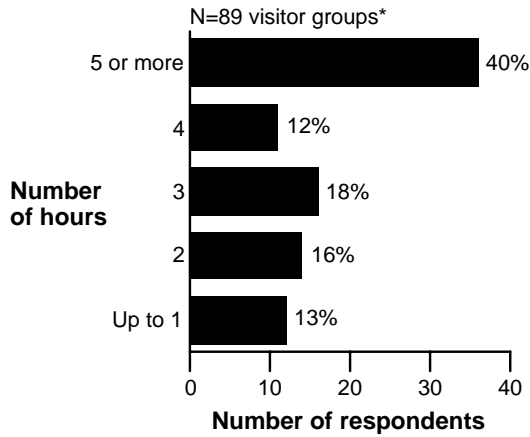


Figure 39. Number of hours spent in the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (within 40 miles of the Preserve)

Number of days if 24 hours or more

- Of those visitor groups that were non-residents, 35% spent four or more days in the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (see Figure 40).
- 30% stayed three days.
- 30% stayed three days.
- The average length of stay for visitor groups that spent more than 24 hours in the area was 3.1 days.

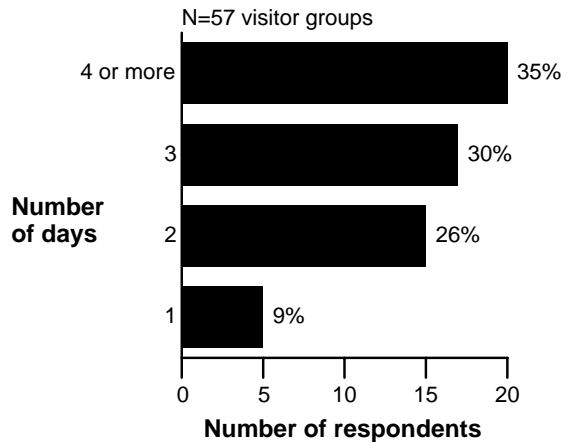


Figure 40. Number of days spent in the Little River Canyon National Preserve area (within 40 miles of the Preserve)

Average length of stay

- The average length of stay for all visitor groups was 32 hours, or 1.3 days.

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Sites visited in the Preserve

Question 11

On this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve, which of the following sites did you and your personal group visit?

Results

- As shown in Figure 41, the most commonly visited sites by visitor groups at Little River Canyon National Preserve were:

70% Little River Falls
64% Little River Falls Overlook

- The least visited site was:

4% Little River Wildlife Management Area

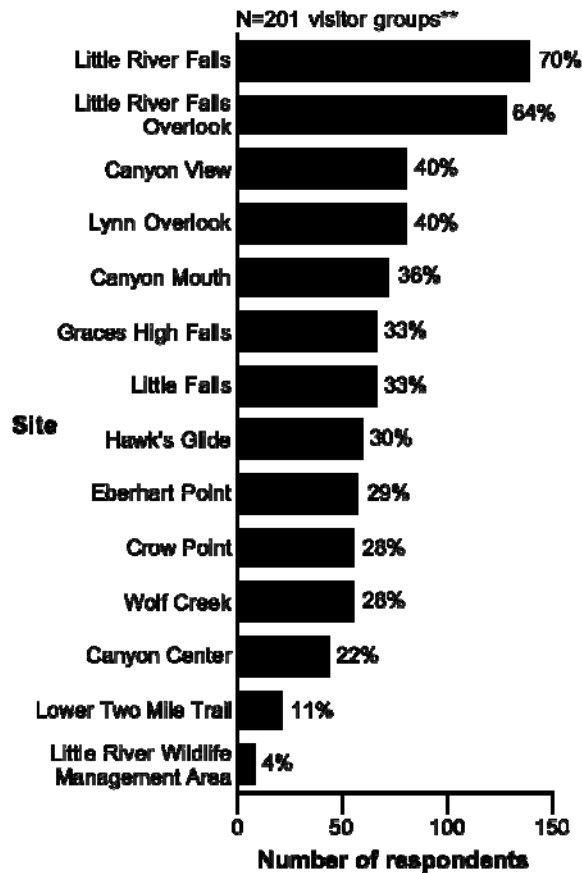


Figure 41. Sites visited in the Preserve

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Local and regional attractions visited

Question 14

Which other local and regional attractions did you and your personal group visit on this trip to Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- 61% of visitor groups visited other local and regional attractions (see Figure 42).
- As shown in Figure 43, of visitor groups that visited other local and regional attractions, the most common site was:
 - 69% DeSoto State Park
- “Other” local and regional attractions (10%) were:
 - Bluegrass Festival
 - Cathedral Caverns
 - Collinsville Trade Days
 - Comer Scout Camp
 - High Falls Park
 - Huntsville Space Museum
 - Mentone
 - Monument in Fort Payne
 - Noccalula Falls
 - Rock Church
 - Sand Rock
 - Scottsboro
 - Skyland National Wildlife Refuge
 - U.S. Space and Rocket Center

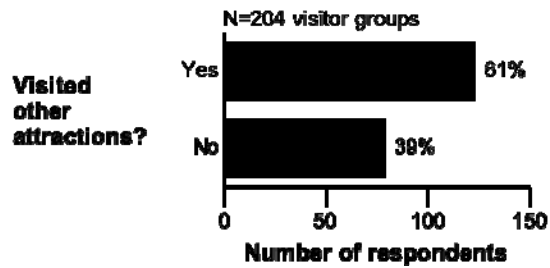


Figure 42. Visitor groups that visited other local and regional attractions

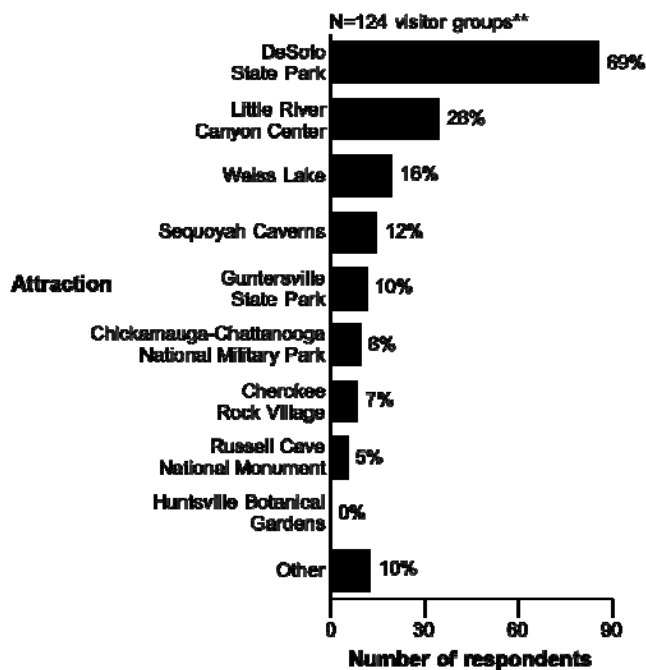


Figure 43. Local and regional attractions visited

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Activities on past visits

Question 12a

On past visits, in which activities have you and your personal group participated within Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- 31% of visitor groups were on their first visit to Little River Canon National Preserve (see Figure 44).
- As shown in Figure 45, the most common activities in which visitor groups participated on past visits were:
 - 76% Touring/driving Little River Canyon scenic drive
 - 72% General sightseeing
- “Other” activities (20%) were:
 - Canoeing
 - Cliff jumping
 - Kayaking
 - Sunbathing
- Note: Swimming was not an answer choice in the list of responses. However, 16% of visitor groups listed swimming as an “other” activity so it was included in Figure 45.



Figure 44. Visitor groups on their first visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve

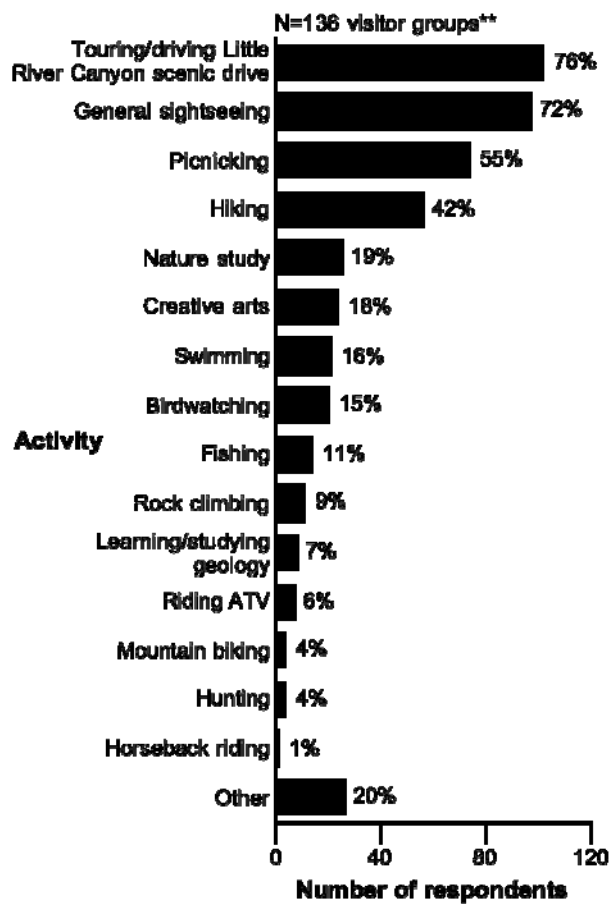


Figure 45. Activities on past visits

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Activities on this visit

Question 12b

On this visit, in which activities did you and your personal group participate within Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- As shown in Figure 46, the most common activities visitor groups participated in on this visit were:
 - 65% General sightseeing
 - 59% Touring/driving Little River Canyon scenic drive
- “Other” activities (19%) were:
 - Camping
 - Kayaking
 - Scuba diving
 - Trail maintenance at Canyon Center
 - Visiting visitor center
- Note: Swimming was not an answer choice in the list of responses. However, 16% of visitor groups listed swimming as an “other” activity so it was included in Figure 46.

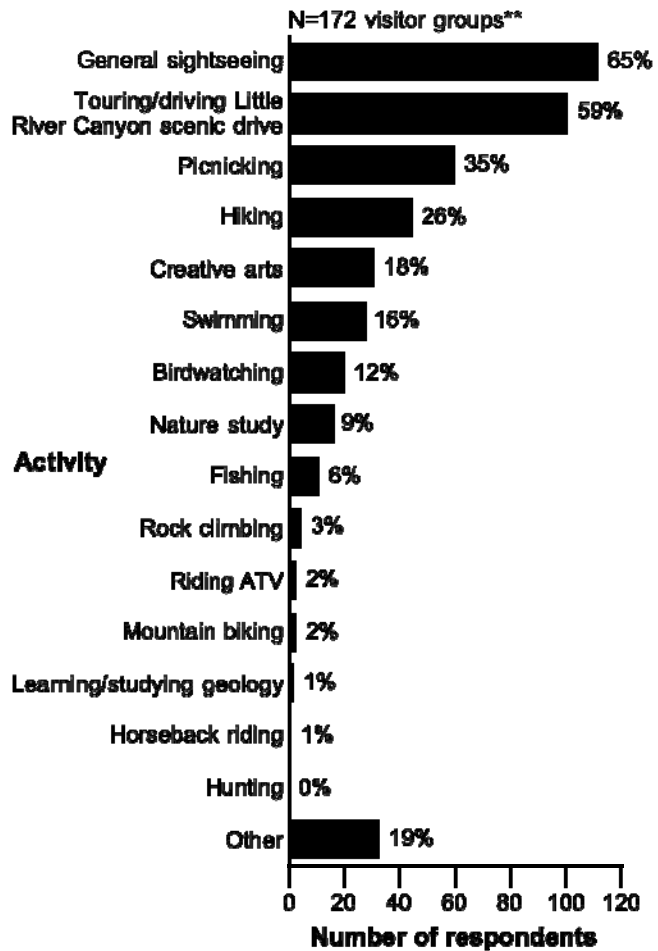


Figure 46. Activities on this visit

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Informational talks/programs

Question 3a

Prior to this visit, were you and your personal group aware of the following informational talks/programs for visitors at Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- Table 10 shows the visitor groups that were aware of informational talks/programs for visitors prior to their visit.

Question 3b

Did you and your personal group learn (or learn more) about these talks/programs during this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve (via publications, signs, talking to Preserve staff, etc.)?

Results

- Table 10 also shows the visitor groups that learned or learned more about these talks/programs during their visit.

Table 10. Visitor groups that were aware of prior to visit or learned/learned more about talks/programs during this visit (N=number of visitor groups that responded to each item)

a) Aware prior to visit?			Type of program	b) Learned or learned more about during visit?		
N	Yes %	No %		N	Yes %	No %
187	19	81	Ranger-led programs	162	28	72
173	13	87	Jacksonville State University Field School Nature Camps	156	13	87
156	9	91	Jacksonville State University Campfire Talks	153	10	90
178	27	73	Desoto State Park Nature Programs	161	22	78

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Opinions about safety

Question 13a

Please indicate how safe you and your personal group felt in the following locations during this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve.

Results

On roads

- 64% of visitor groups felt “very safe” on roads (see Figure 47).
- 27% felt “somewhat safe.”

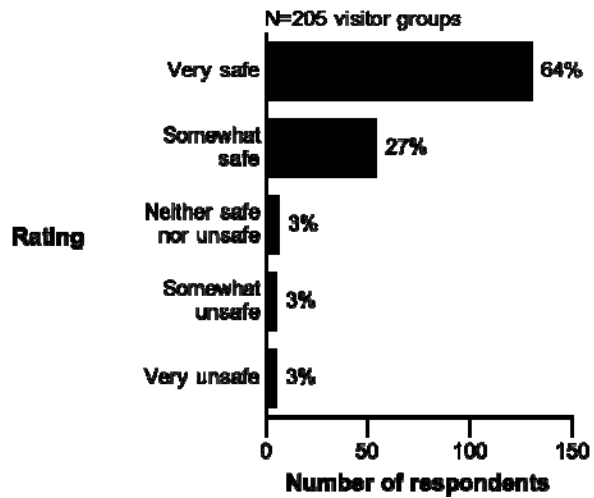


Figure 47. Visitor groups’ feeling of safety on roads

On trails

- 57% of visitor groups felt “very safe” on trails (see Figure 48).
- 33% felt “somewhat safe.”

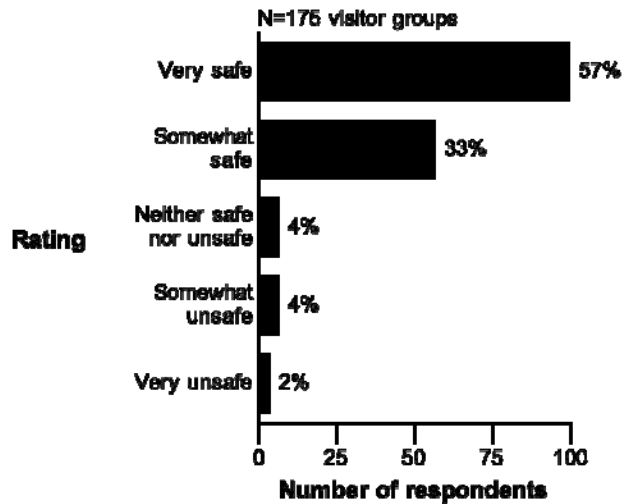


Figure 48. Visitor groups’ feeling of safety on trails

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

In parking areas

- 71% of visitor groups felt “very safe” in parking areas (see Figure 49).
- 24% felt “somewhat safe.”

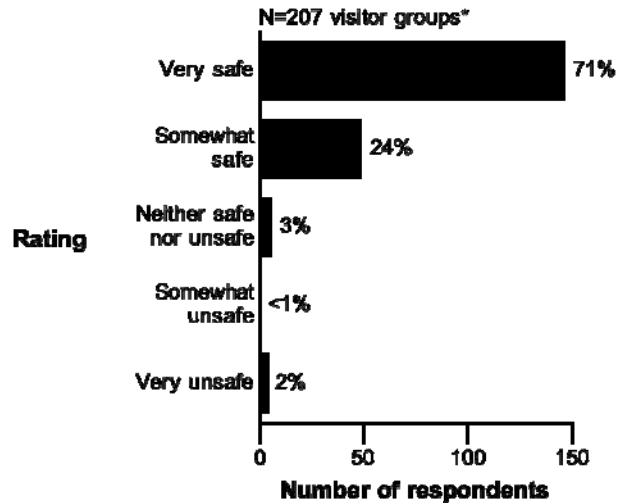


Figure 49. Visitor groups' feeling of safety in parking areas

Question 13b

If you indicated that you felt “very unsafe” or “somewhat unsafe” for any of the above locations, please explain where and why.

Results – Interpret with **CAUTION!**

- 14 visitor groups responded to this question.
- Table 11 shows visitor groups' reasons for feeling unsafe.

Table 11. Reasons for feeling unsafe

(N=18 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment.) **CAUTION!**

Location	Reason	Number of times mentioned
On roads	Poor road condition	5
	Need guard rails	2
	Needs to be paved	1
	No security	1
	People speeding	1
	Very steep, hilly grades	1
On trails	No rangers present	1
	Poor trail condition	1
	Physical disability	1
	Trails weren't completed cleared	1
In parking areas	People inattentive	1
	Other visitors were drinking/using vulgar language	1
	Other visitors were questionable	1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Ratings of Services, Facilities, Attributes, and Resources

Visitor services and facilities used

Question 17a

Please indicate all the visitor services and facilities that you or your personal group used during this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve.

Results

- As shown in Figure 50, the most common visitor services and facilities used by visitor groups were:

- 56% Canyon Center restrooms
- 44% Picnic areas
- 38% Preserve brochure/map
- 36% Exhibits at viewpoints

- The least used service/facility was:

- 1% Junior Ranger program

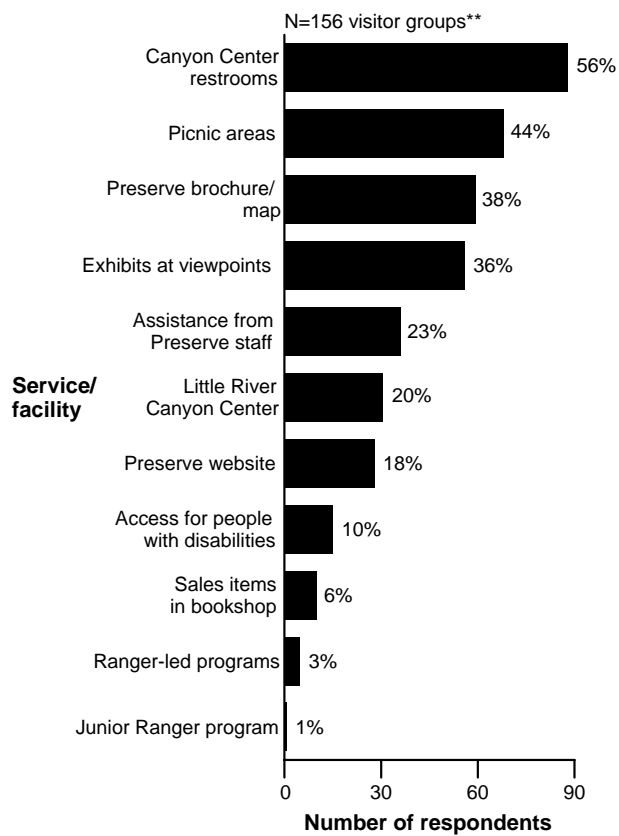


Figure 50. Visitor services and facilities used

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Importance ratings of visitor services and facilities

Question 17b

Next, for only those services and facilities that you or your personal group used, please rate their importance from 1-5.

- 1=Not important
- 2=Somewhat important
- 3=Moderately important
- 4=Very important
- 5=Extremely important

Results

- Figure 51 shows the combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings for visitor services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.
- The services and facilities receiving the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings were:
 - 89% Canyon Center restrooms
 - 85% Preserve brochure/map
- Figures 52 to 61 show the importance ratings for each service and facility.
- The service/facility receiving the highest “not important” ratings that was rated by 30 or more visitor groups was:
 - 4% Canyon Center restrooms

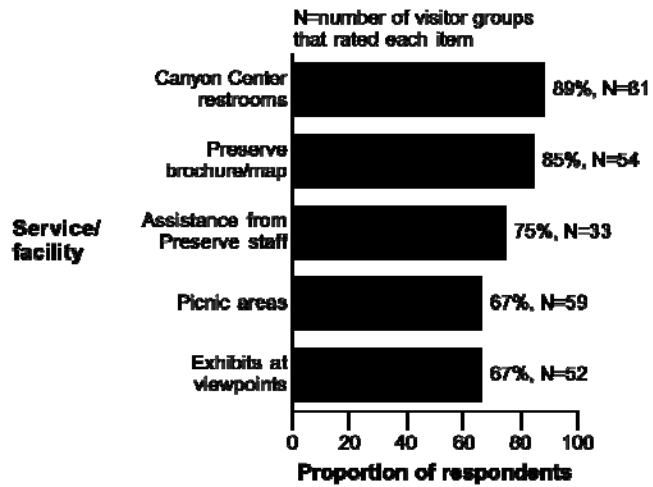


Figure 51. Combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of visitor services and facilities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

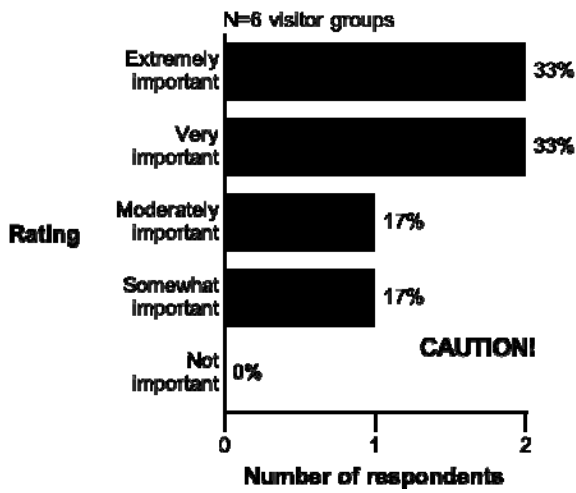


Figure 52. Importance of sales items in Canyon Center bookshop (selection, price, etc.)

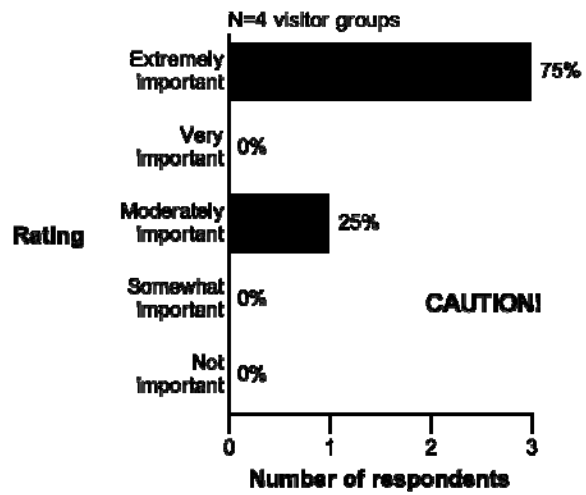


Figure 53. Importance of ranger-led programs

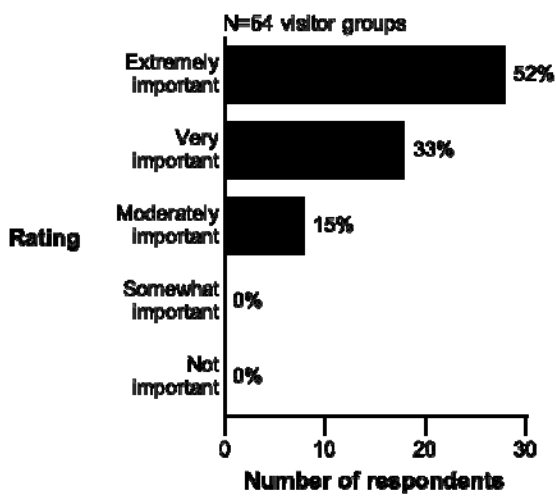


Figure 54. Importance of Preserve brochure/map

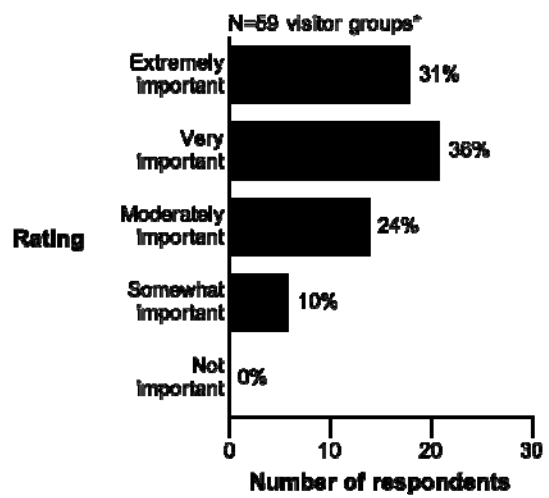


Figure 55. Importance of picnic areas

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

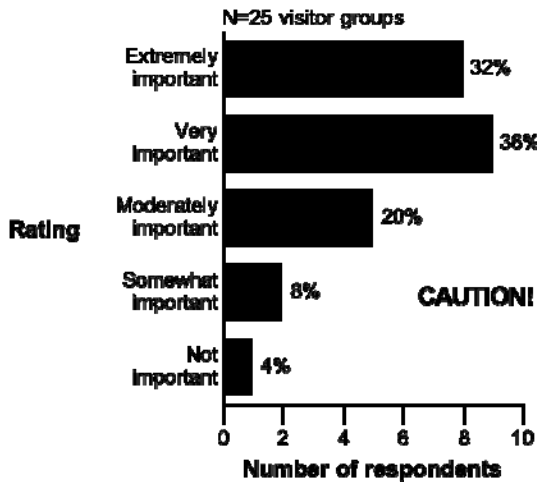


Figure 56. Importance of Little River Canyon Center

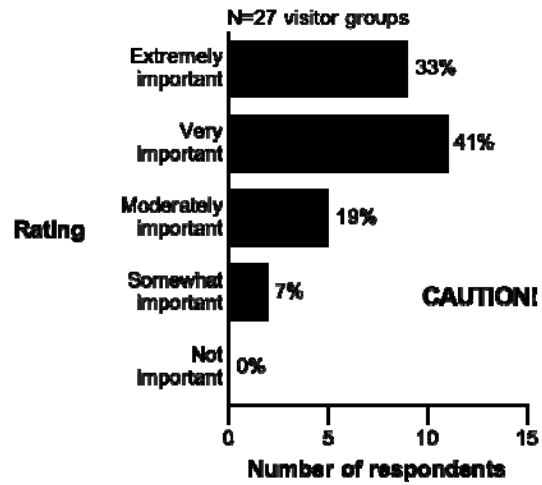


Figure 57. Importance of Little River Canyon National Preserve website: www.nps.gov/liri (used before or during visit)

Note: No visitor groups rated the importance of the Junior Ranger program

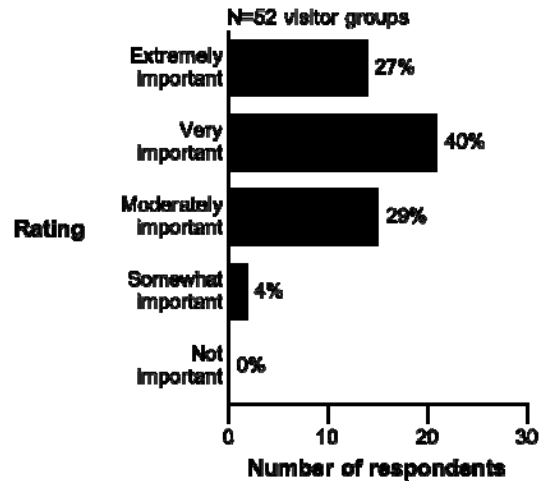


Figure 58. Importance of exhibits at viewpoints

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

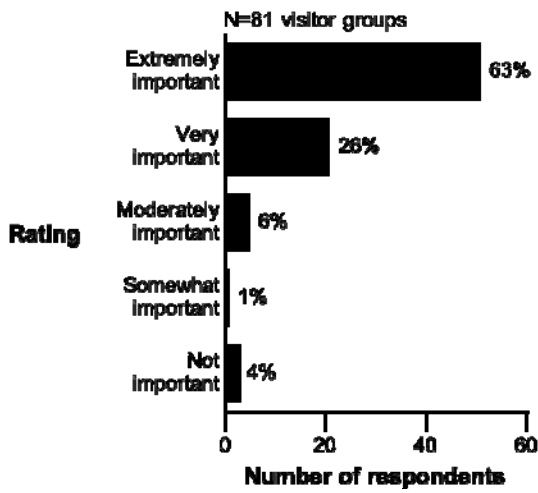


Figure 59. Importance of Canyon Center restrooms

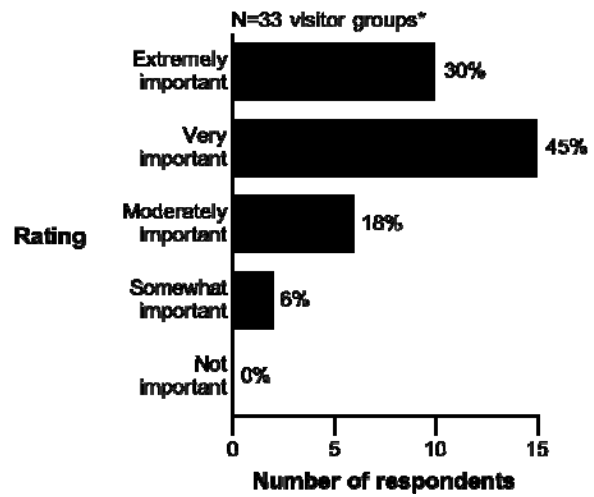


Figure 60. Importance of assistance from Preserve staff

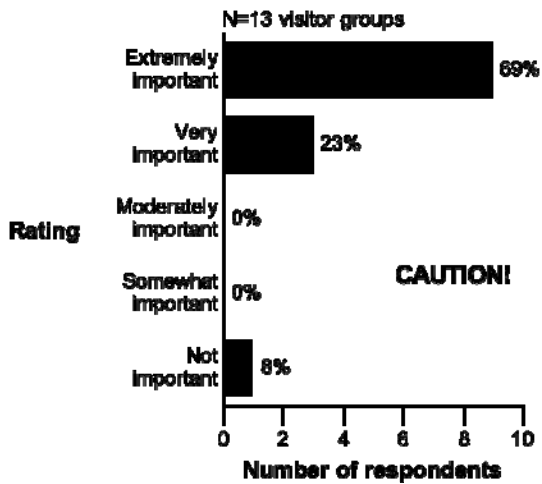


Figure 61. Importance of access for people with disabilities (other than restrooms)

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Quality ratings of visitor services and facilities

Question 17c

Finally, for only those services and facilities that you or your personal group used, please rate their quality from 1-5.

- 1=Very poor
- 2=Poor
- 3=Average
- 4=Good
- 5=Very good

Results

- Figure 62 shows the combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings for visitor services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.

- The services and facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings were:

- 95% Preserve brochure/
map
- 94% Assistance from
Preserve staff

- Figures 63 to 72 show the quality ratings for each service and facility.
- The service/facility receiving the highest “very poor” quality rating that was rated by 30 or more visitor groups was:

- 3% Canyon Center
restrooms

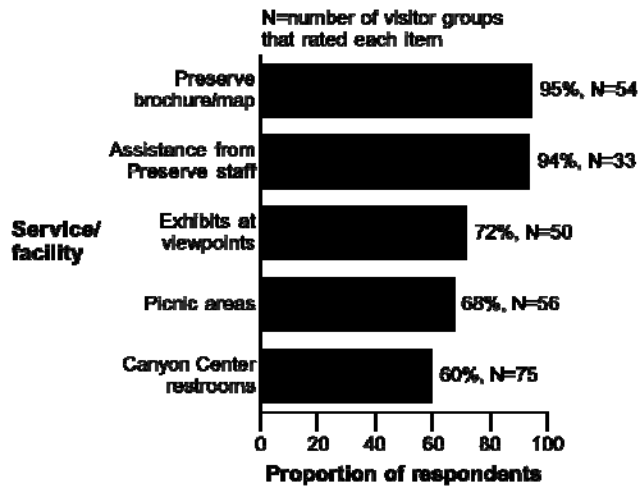


Figure 62. Combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings of visitor services and facilities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

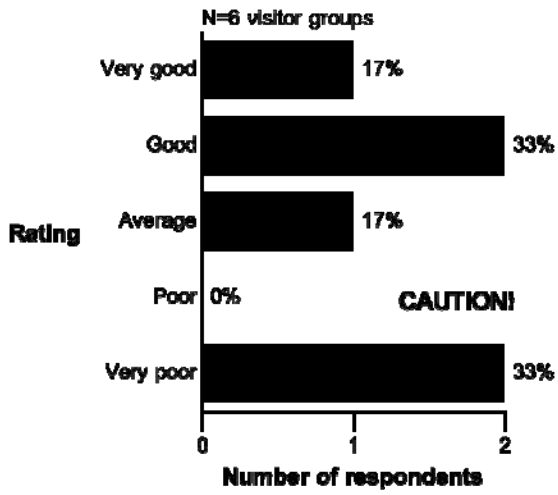


Figure 63. Quality of sales items in Canyon Center bookshop (selection, price, etc.)

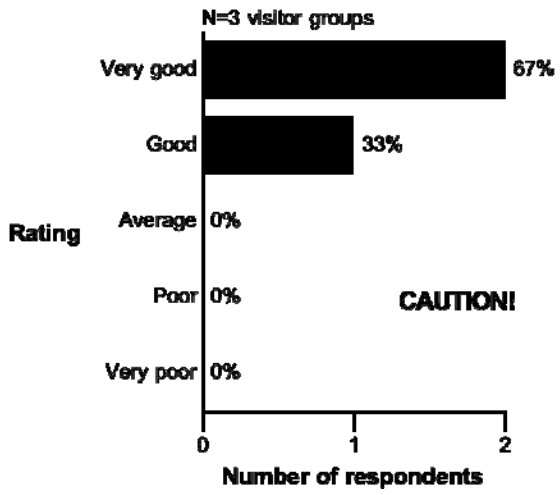


Figure 64. Quality of ranger-led programs

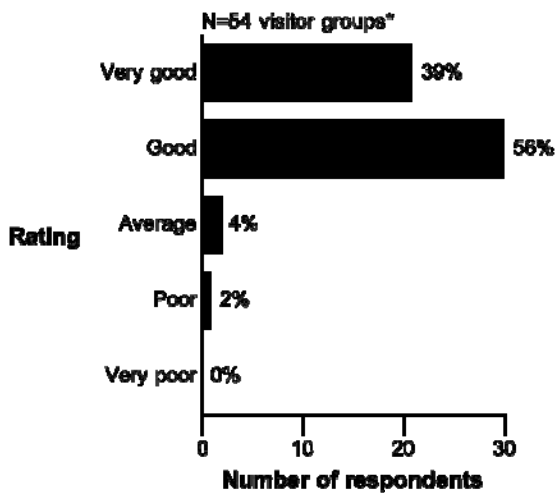


Figure 65. Quality of Preserve brochure/map

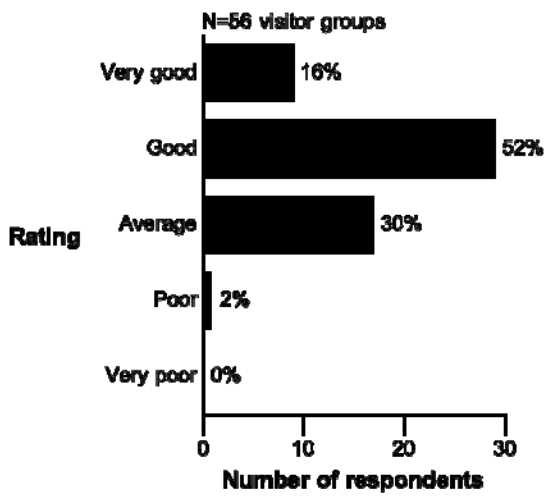


Figure 66. Quality of picnic areas

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

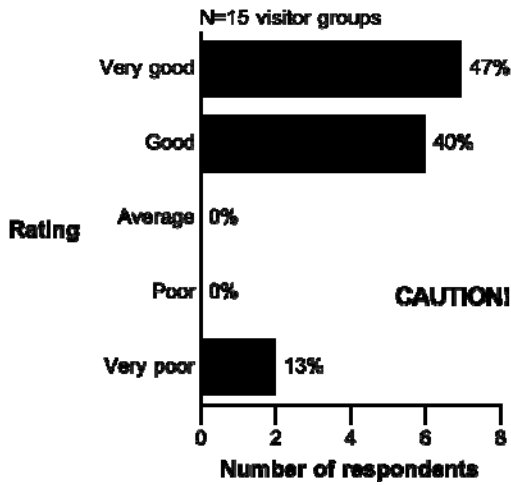


Figure 67. Quality of Little River Canyon Center

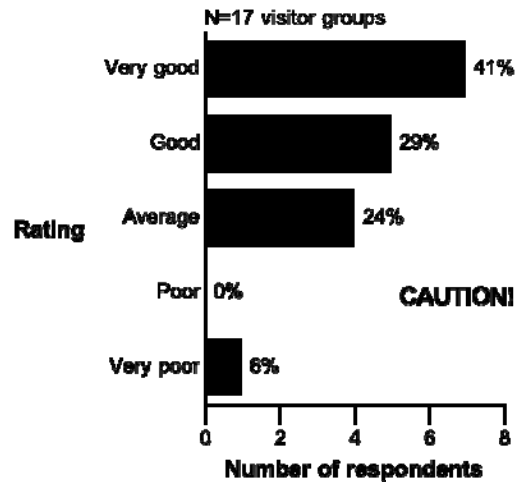


Figure 68. Quality of Little River Canyon National Preserve website: www.nps.gov/liri (used before or during visit)

Note: No visitor groups rated the quality of the Junior Ranger program.

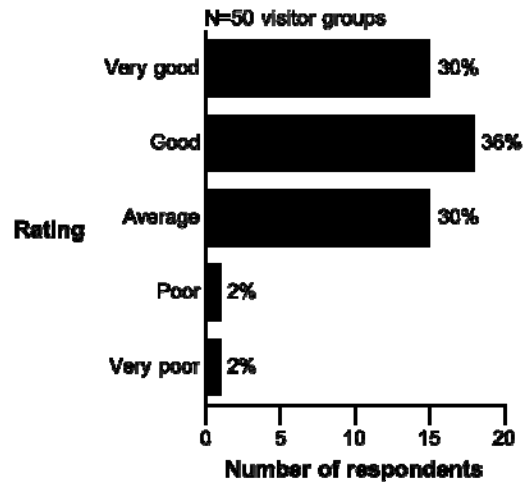


Figure 69. Quality of exhibits at viewpoints

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

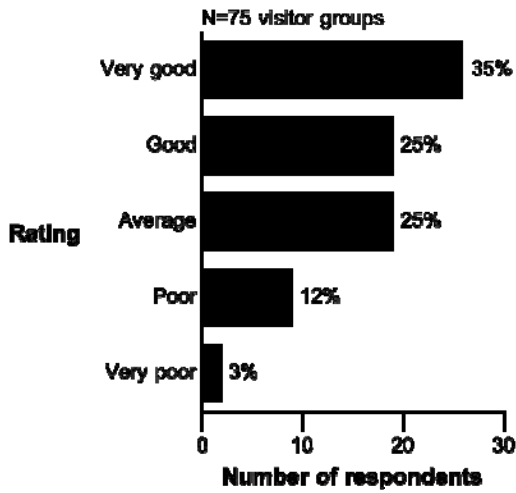


Figure 70. Quality of Canyon Center restrooms

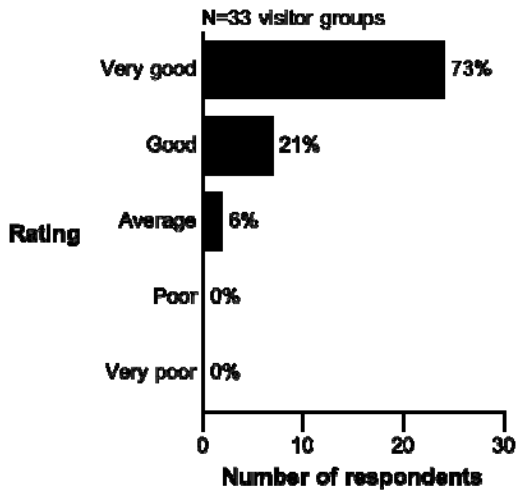


Figure 71. Quality of assistance from Preserve staff

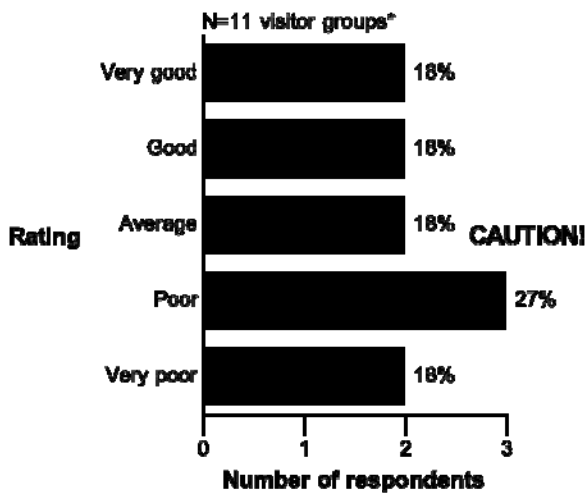


Figure 72. Quality of access for people with disabilities (other than restrooms)

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Mean scores of importance and quality ratings for visitor services and facilities

- Figures 73 and 74 show the mean scores of importance and quality ratings for all visitor services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.
- All visitor services and facilities were rated above average.

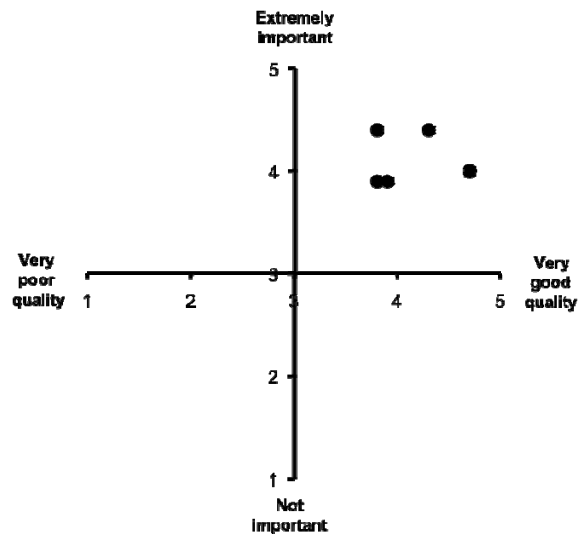


Figure 73. Mean scores of importance and quality ratings for visitor services and facilities

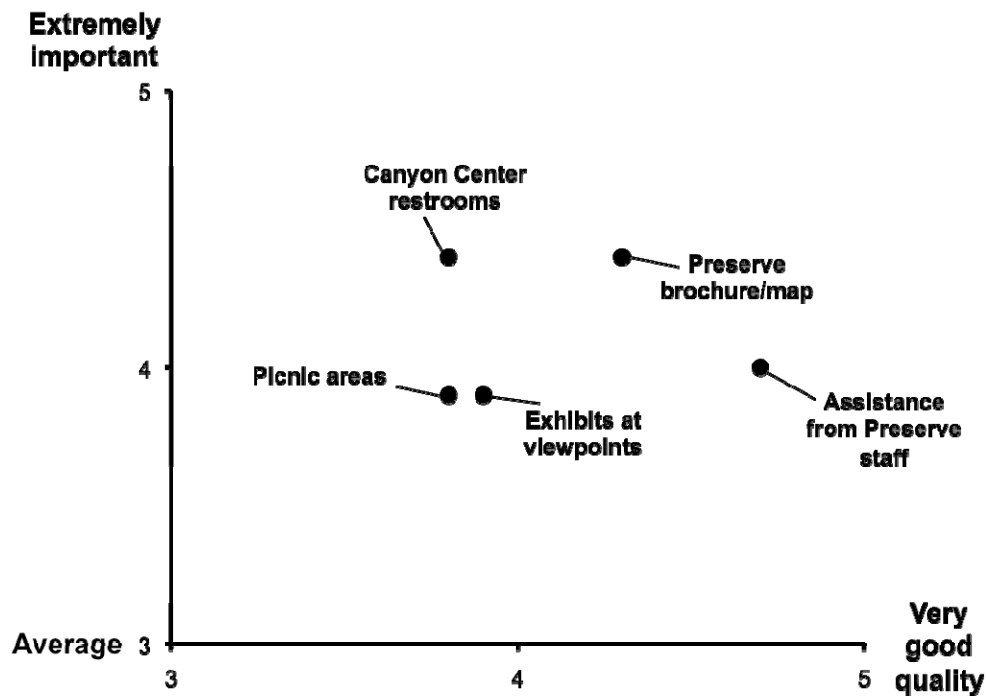


Figure 74. Detail of Figure 73

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Importance of protecting park attributes, resources, and experiences

Question 18

It is the National Park Service's responsibility to protect Little River Canyon National Preserve's natural, scenic and cultural resources and visitor experiences that depend on these. How important is protection of the following to you and your personal group?

Results

- As shown in Figure 75, the highest combined proportions of "extremely important" and "very important" ratings were:

97% Clean water
 96% Clean air (visibility)
 93% Scenic views

- The attributes, resources, and experiences that received the highest "not important" rating were:

3% Solitude
 3% Recreational opportunities

- Table 12 shows the importance ratings of Preserve attributes, resources, and experiences.

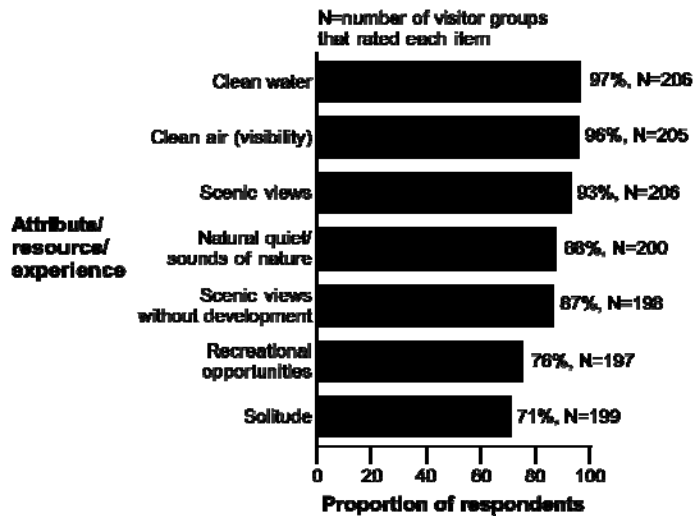


Figure 75. Combined proportions of "extremely important" and "very important" ratings for protection of Preserve attributes, resources, and experiences

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 12. Visitor ratings of importance of protecting Preserve attributes, resources, and experiences (N=number of visitors that rated each attribute, resource, and experience)

Attribute/resource/experience	N	Rating (%)				
		Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Clean air (visibility)	205	0	2	2	32	64
Clean water	206	0	1	1	23	74
Natural quiet/sounds of nature	200	2	3	9	34	54
Recreational opportunities (fishing, hiking, climbing, etc.)	197	3	5	16	33	43
Scenic views	206	0	1	7	32	61
Scenic view without development	198	1	3	10	29	58
Solitude	199	3	4	23	28	43

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Preferences for Future Visit

Likelihood of future visit

Question 19a

Will you and your personal group be likely to visit Little River Canyon National Preserve again in the future?

Results

- 88% of visitor groups were likely to visit the Preserve again (see Figure 76).

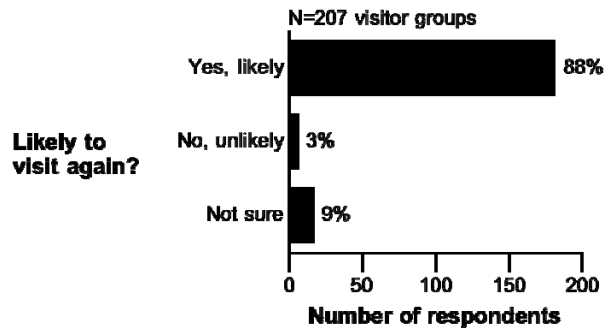


Figure 76. Visitor groups' likelihood of visiting the Preserve in the future

Question 19b

If YES, how often would you be likely to visit?

Results

- 49% of visitor groups would be likely to visit several times per year, but not monthly (see Figure 77).

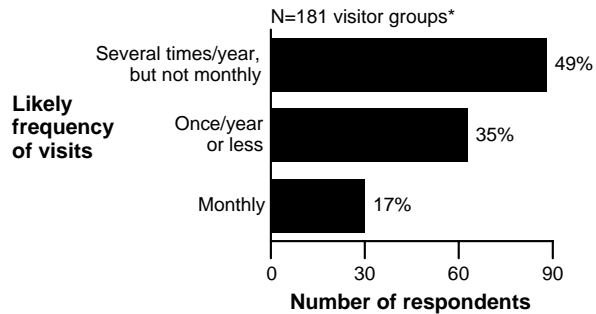


Figure 77. Visitor groups' likely frequency of future visits

Question 19c

If NO, why wouldn't you return? (open ended)

Results

- 11 visitor groups gave reasons why they won't return to the Preserve (see Table 13).

Table 13. Reasons why visitor groups wouldn't return to the Preserve (N=11) **CAUTION!**

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Don't live in state/area	7
Have already seen it	1
Only if in area again	1
Too many trees so could not have a view from the road	1
Would need another reason to travel to this area again	1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Interpretive/ranger-led program topic preferences

Question 16a

If you and your personal group were to visit in the future, which topics would you like to learn about in interpretive/ranger-led programs at Little River Canyon National Preserve?

Results

- 81% of visitor groups were interested in interpretive/ranger-led programs (see Figure 78).
- Of those visitor groups that were interested in interpretive/ranger-led programs on a future visit, 74% would be interested in learning about history (see Figure 79).
- 67% would be interested in learning about wildlife.
- “Other” topics (8%) were:
 - Birdwatching
 - Creative arts
 - Diving sites
 - Duties of a park ranger
 - “Green” activities
 - Lores and legends
 - Native Americans
 - Night hikes
 - Trail of Tears
 - Trails (locations of more remote, longer trails)
 - Welsh Caves

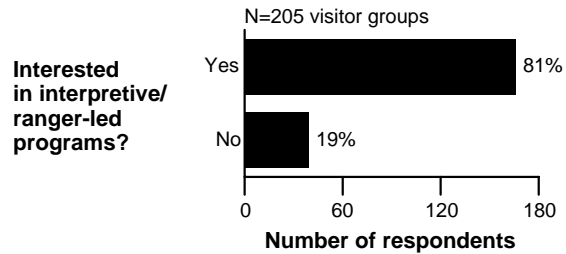


Figure 78. Visitor groups that were interested in interpretive/ranger-led programs

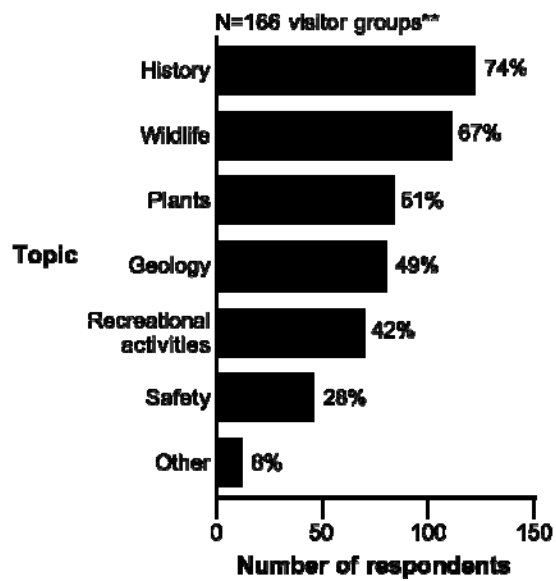


Figure 79. Topics visitor groups would be interested in learning about

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Preferred interpretive/ranger-led program length and time

Question 16b

Which program length would be most suitable for you and your personal group?

Results

- 54% of visitor groups preferred a program lasting 1/2 to 1 hour in length (see Figure 80).
- “Other” preferred program lengths (1%) were:

- 4 - 6 hours
- 4 - 8 hours

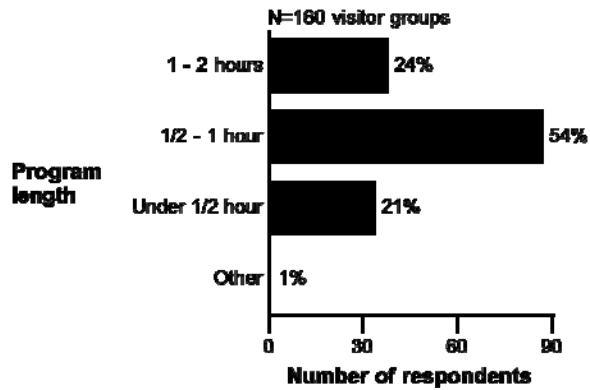


Figure 80. Preferred length of program

Question 16c

Which times of day would be most suitable for you and your personal group to attend an interpretive/ranger-led program?

Results

- 56% of visitor groups preferred a program offered from 10 a.m. to noon (see Figure 81).

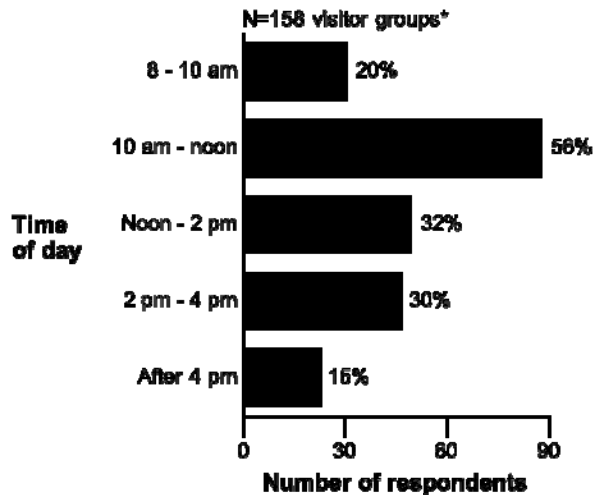


Figure 81. Preferred time of day for program

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Interest in viewing exhibits in a new museum

Question 15

If you and your personal group were to visit Little River Canyon National Preserve in the future, would you be interested in viewing exhibits in a new museum at the Little River Canyon Center?

Results

- 77% of visitor groups would be interested in viewing exhibits in a new museum (see Figure 82).

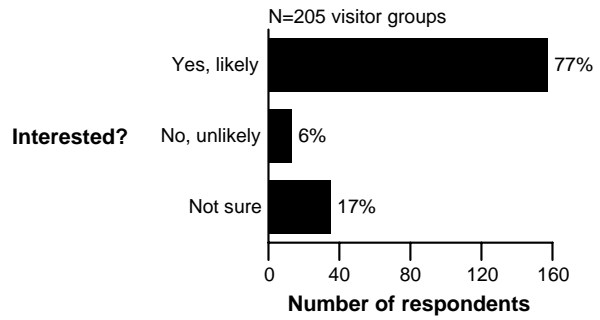


Figure 82. Visitor groups' interest in viewing exhibits in a new museum at Little River Canyon Center

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Overall Quality

Question 26

Overall, how would you and your personal group rate the quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Little River Canyon National Preserve during this visit?

Results

- 88% of visitor groups rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities as “very good” or “good” (see Figure 83).
- 1% of visitor groups rated the quality as “very poor” or “poor.”

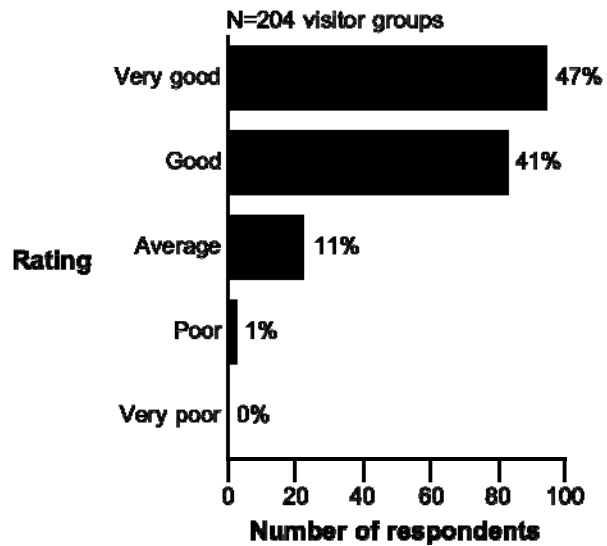


Figure 83. Overall quality rating of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor Comments

What visitors liked most

Question 24a

What did you and your personal group like most about this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve? (open-ended)

Results

- 91% of visitor groups (N=192) responded to this question.
- Table 14 shows a summary of visitor comments followed by the hand-written comments.

Table 14. What visitors liked most (N=297 comments; some visitors made more than one comment.)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL (3%)	
Friendliness of park rangers	5
Talking to rangers	2
Other comment	1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (1%)	
Little River Canyon Center	3
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (7%)	
Cleanliness of park	6
Overlooks	6
Recent improvements to the park	3
Accessibility	2
ATV trail	2
Other comments	3
POLICIES/MANAGEMENT (<1%)	
Comment	1
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (6%)	
Clean, clear water	16
Trees	2
Other comment	1
GENERAL (47%)	
View scenery/natural beauty	54
Beauty	26
Nature	11
Solitude	9
Peace/quiet	8
Time to spend with family and friends	5
Getting away from home	4
Enjoying God's nature/creation	3
Everything	3

Table 14. What visitors liked most (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
GENERAL (continued)	
Secluded/remote	2
Showing Preserve to new people	2
Other comments	14
GENERAL – Park features (16%)	
Waterfalls	32
Little River	5
Little River Canyon	4
Rock formations	4
Little River Falls	3
Other comment	1
GENERAL – Recreational opportunities (18%)	
Swimming	31
Hiking	11
Picnicking	5
Scenic drive	3
Photography	2
Other comments	2

What visitors liked least

Question 24b

What did you and your personal group like least about this visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve? (open-ended)

Results

- 63% of visitor groups (N=133) responded to this question.
- Table 15 shows a summary of visitor comments followed by the hand-written comments.

Table 15. What visitors liked least (N=145 comments; some visitors made more than one comment.)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (4%)	
Lack of interpretive exhibits	4
Limited operation hours of Canyon Center	2
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (50%)	
Condition of restrooms	14
Trash	10
Condition of roads	7
Road/parking lot/bridge construction	6
Lack of vending machines	4
Access difficulties for people in wheelchairs	3
Lack of restrooms	3
Trails not clearly marked	3
Conditions of trails	2
Highway 35	2
Lack of restrooms with changing facilities	2
Other comments	16
POLICY/MANAGEMENT (8%)	
No operable visitor center	3
Gift shop isn't open	2
Lack of nearby accommodations	2
Too much development	2
Other comments	2
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (2%)	
Comments	3
GENERAL (37%)	
Nothing to dislike	16
Insects	6
Lack of time	6
Long hike/walk	4
Offensive behavior of other visitors	4

Table 15. What visitors liked least (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
GENERAL (continued)	
Inclement weather	3
Not enough beach area	3
Crowds	2
Other comments	9

Additional comments

Question 25

Is there anything else you and your personal group would like to tell us about your visit to Little River Canyon National Preserve? (open-ended)

Results

- 46% of visitor groups (N=96) responded to this question.
- Table 16 shows a summary of visitor comments followed by the hand-written comments.

Table 16. Additional comments (N=127 comments; some visitors made more than one comment.)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL (5%)	
Great employees and volunteers	6
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (12%)	
Add interpretive exhibits	2
Add interpretive programs	2
Other comments	11
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (26%)	
Improve trails	4
Clean up picnic areas	2
Improve wheelchair accessibility	2
Well-maintained and clean park	2
Other comments	23
POLICY/MANAGEMENT (8%)	
Limit development/impact	2
Other comments	8
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (2%)	
Stock trout	2
GENERAL COMMENTS (46%)	
Enjoyed visit	16
Will return	7
Beautiful park	4
Have been coming here a long time	4
Enjoyed swimming	3
Keep up the good work	3
Love the park	3
Unique part of Alabama	3
Interested in a volunteer trash cleanup day	2
Thank you	2
Other comments	14

Visitor Comments

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Additional Analysis

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) offers the opportunity to learn more from VSP visitor study data through additional analysis. Two-way and three-way cross tabulations can be made with any questions.

Below are some examples of the types of cross tabulations that can be requested. To make a request, please use the contact information below, and include your name, address and phone number in the request.

1. What proportion of family groups with children attend interpretive programs?
2. Is there a correlation between visitors' ages and their preferred sources of information about the park?
3. Are highly satisfied visitors more likely to return for a future visit?
4. How many international visitors participate in hiking?
5. What ages of visitors would use the park website as a source of information on a future visit?
6. Is there a correlation between visitor groups' rating of the overall quality of their park experience, and their ratings of individual services and facilities?
7. Do larger visitor groups (e.g., four or more) participate in different activities than smaller groups?
8. Do frequent visitors rate the overall quality of their park experiences differently than less frequent visitors?

For more information please contact:

Visitor Services Project, PSU
College of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 441139
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83844-1139

Phone: 208-885-7863
Fax: 208-885-4261
Email: littlej@uidaho.edu
Website: <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>

Appendix 3: Decision Rules for Checking Non-response Bias

Non-response bias is one of the major threats to the quality of a survey project. It affects the ability to generalize from a sample to general population (Salant and Dillman 1994; Dillman, 2007; Stoop 2004; Fillion 1976; Dey 1997). Since non-response bias is usually caused by participants failing to return their questionnaires, a higher response rate is more desirable. However, higher response rates do not guarantee low non-response bias. Researchers have suggested different methods to detect non-response bias. The most common variables used to detect non-response bias are demographic variables. Some researchers such as Van Kenhove (2002), Groves (2000) also suggest that saliency of topic has an effect on response rate. In this visitor study, visitor satisfaction (overall quality rating) could be considered as one of the salient factors as we aim to collect opinions from both unsatisfied and satisfied visitors. There are also several methods for checking non-response bias suggested in the literature. We decided to follow the method suggested by Groves (2006), De Rada (2005), and Rogelberg and Luong (1998) to compare the demographic characteristics as well as satisfaction scores of respondents in three different mailing waves. This seems to be the most suitable method because the visitor population is generally unknown.

Respondents were categorized based on the date their questionnaire was received. The first wave is defined as surveys received before the reminder postcards was mailed, the second wave is between postcards and 1st replacement, and the third wave contains surveys received after the 1st replacement. Analysis of variance was used to detect differences overall quality rating scores among different mailing waves. Respondents and nonrespondents were compared in term of average age and average group size. The hypothesis was that no significant difference is found in any of the variables. If the p-value is greater than 0.05, the difference is judged to be insignificant.

Therefore, the hypotheses for checking non-response bias are:

1. Respondents and nonrespondents were not different in average age.
2. Respondents and nonrespondents were not different in average group size.
3. Respondents of different mailing waves had the same average satisfaction scores.

Tables 3 and 4 show no significant difference satisfaction scores. However, there were differences in age and group size. While there is not enough evidence to indicate a bias in visitors' opinion of the park operation, there is a bias in visitors' demographic due to non-response error. The results need to be interpreted with caution.

References

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- Van Kenhove, P., Wijnen, K., and De Wulf K. (2002). The Influence of Topic Involvement on Mail-Survey Response Behavior. *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol 19 (3): 293-301.

Appendix 4: Visitor Services Project Publications

All VSP reports are available on the Park Studies Unit website at www.psu.uidaho.edu.vsp.reports.htm. All studies were conducted in summer unless otherwise noted.

1982

1. Mapping interpretive services: A pilot study at Grand Teton National Park.

1983

2. Mapping interpretive services: Identifying barriers to adoption and diffusion of the method.
3. Mapping interpretive services: A follow-up study at Yellowstone National Park and Mt Rushmore National Memorial.
4. Mapping visitor populations: A pilot study at Yellowstone National Park.

1985

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex
6. Crater Lake National Park

1986

7. Gettysburg National Military Park
8. Independence National Historical Park
9. Valley Forge National Historical Park

1987

10. Colonial National Historical Park (summer & fall)
11. Grand Teton National Park
12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
13. Mesa Verde National Park
14. Shenandoah National Park (summer & fall)
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 (winter)
22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
23. The White House Tours, President's Park

1989 (continued)

24. Lincoln Home National Historic Site
25. Yellowstone National Park
26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

28. Canyonlands National Park (spring)
29. White Sands National Monument
30. National Monuments & Memorials, Washington, D.C.
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 (spring)
39. Joshua Tree National Monument (spring)
40. The White House Tours, President's Park (spring)
41. Natchez Trace Parkway (spring)
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 (spring)
46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (spring)
47. Glen Echo Park (spring)
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, AK
53. Arlington House-The Robert E. Lee Memorial

Visitor Services Project Publications (continued)**1993**

- 54. Belle Haven Park/Dyke Marsh Wildlife Park (spring)
- 55. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (spring)
- 56. Whitman Mission National Historic Site
- 57. Sitka National Historical Park
- 58. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- 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 (fall)

1994

- 64. Death Valley National Monument Backcountry (winter)
- 65. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (spring)
- 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 (fall)

1995

- 74. Grand Teton National Park (winter)
- 75. Yellowstone National Park (winter)
- 76. Bandelier National Monument
- 77. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve
- 78. Adams National Historic Site
- 79. Devils Tower National Monument
- 80. Manassas National Battlefield Park
- 81. Booker T. Washington National Monument
- 82. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
- 83. Dry Tortugas National Park

1996

- 84. Everglades National Park (spring)
- 85. Chiricahua National Monument (spring)

1996 (continued)

- 86. Fort Bowie National Historic Site (spring)
- 87. Great Falls Park, Virginia (spring)
- 88. Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- 89. Chamizal National Memorial
- 90. Death Valley National Park (fall)
- 91. Prince William Forest Park (fall)
- 92. Great Smoky Mountains National Park (fall)

1997

- 93. Virgin Islands National Park (winter)
- 94. Mojave National Preserve (spring)
- 95. Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site (spring)
- 96. Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial
- 97. Grand Teton National Park
- 98. Bryce Canyon National Park
- 99. Voyageurs National Park
- 100. Lowell National Historical Park

1998

- 101. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Park (spring)
- 102. Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (spring)
- 103. Cumberland Island National Seashore (spring)
- 104. Iwo Jima/Netherlands Carillon Memorials
- 105. National Monuments & Memorials, Washington, D.C.
- 106. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, AK
- 107. Whiskeytown National Recreation Area
- 108. Acadia National Park

1999

- 109. Big Cypress National Preserve (winter)
- 110. San Juan National Historic Site, Puerto Rico (winter)
- 111. St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
- 112. Rock Creek Park
- 113. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
- 114. Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve
- 115. Kenai Fjords National Park
- 116. Lassen Volcanic National Park
- 117. Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (fall)

Visitor Services Project Publications (continued)**2000**

- 118. Haleakala National Park (spring)
- 119. White House Tour and White House Visitor Center (spring)
- 120. USS Arizona Memorial
- 121. Olympic National Park
- 122. Eisenhower National Historic Site
- 123. Badlands National Park
- 124. Mount Rainier National Park

2001

- 125. Biscayne National Park (spring)
- 126. Colonial National Historical Park (Jamestown)
- 127. Shenandoah National Park
- 128. Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
- 129. Crater Lake National Park
- 130. Valley Forge National Historical Park

2002

- 131. Everglades National Park (spring)
- 132. Dry Tortugas National Park (spring)
- 133. Pinnacles National Monument (spring)
- 134. Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve
- 135. Pipestone National Monument
- 136. Outer Banks Group (Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Ft. Raleigh National Historic Site, and Wright Brothers National Memorial)
- 137. Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks and Sequoia National Forest
- 138. Catoclin Mountain Park
- 139. Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site
- 140. Stones River National Battlefield (fall)

2003

- 141. Gateway National Recreation Area: Floyd Bennett Field (spring)
- 142. Cowpens National Battlefield (spring)
- 143. Grand Canyon National Park – North Rim
- 144. Grand Canyon National Park – South Rim
- 145. C&O Canal National Historical Park
- 146. Capulin Volcano National Monument
- 147. Oregon Caves National Monument
- 148. Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site
- 149. Fort Stanwix National Monument
- 150. Arches National Park

2003 continued

- 151. Mojave National Preserve (fall)

2004

- 152. Joshua Tree National Park (spring)
- 153. New River Gorge National River
- 154. George Washington Birthplace National Monument
- 155. Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve
- 156. Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park
- 157. Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
- 158. Keweenaw National Historical Park
- 159. Effigy Mounds National Monument
- 160. Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site
- 161. Manzanar National Historic Site
- 162. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

2005

- 163. Congaree National Park (spring)
- 164. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (spring)
- 165. Lincoln Home National Historic Site
- 166. Chickasaw National Recreation Area
- 167. Timpanogos Cave National Monument
- 168. Yosemite National Park
- 169. Fort Sumter National Monument
- 170. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
- 171. Cuyahoga Valley National Park
- 172. Johnstown Flood National Memorial
- 173. Nicodemus National Historic Site

2006

- 174. Kings Mountain National Military Park (spring)
- 175. John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site
- 176. Devils Postpile National Monument
- 177. Mammoth Cave National Park
- 178. Yellowstone National Park
- 179. Monocacy National Battlefield
- 180. Denali National Park & Preserve
- 181. Golden Spike National Historic Site
- 182. Katmai National Park and Preserve
- 183. Zion National Park (spring and fall)

Visitor Services Project Publications (continued)

2007

- 184.1. Big Cypress National Preserve (spring)
- 184.2. Big Cypress National Preserve (ORV Permit Holder/Camp Owner)
- 185. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (spring)
- 186. Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (spring and summer)
- 187. Lava Beds National Monument
- 188. John Muir National Historic Site
- 189. Fort Union Trading Post NHS
- 190. Fort Donelson National Battlefield
- 191. Agate Fossil Beds National Monument
- 192. Mount Rushmore National Memorial
- 193. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve
- 194. Rainbow Bridge National Monument
- 195. Independence National Historical Park
- 196. Minute Man National Historical Park

2008

- 197. Blue Ridge Parkway (fall and summer)
- 198. Yosemite National Park (winter)
- 199. Everglades National Park (winter and spring)
- 200. Horseshoe Bend National Military Park (spring)
- 201. Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site (spring)
- 202. Fire Island National Seashore resident (spring)
- 203. Fire Island National Seashore visitor
- 204. Capitol Reef National Park
- 205.1 Great Smoky Mountains National Park (summer)
- 205.2 Great Smoky Mountains National Park (fall)
- 206. Grand Teton National Park
- 207. Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
- 208. City of Rocks National Reserve

2009

- 209. Fort Larned National Historic Site
- 210. Homestead National Monument of America
- 211. Minuteman Missile National Historic Site

2009 (continued)

- 212. Perry's Victory & International Peace Memorial
- 213. Women's Rights National Historical Park
- 214. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park Unit -Seattle
- 215. Yosemite National Park
- 216. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
- 217. James A. Garfield National Historic Site
- 218. Boston National Historical Park
- 219. Bryce Canyon National Park
- 220. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
- 221. Acadia National Park
- 222. Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve
- 223. Martin Van Buren National Historic Site

2010

- 224.1 Death Valley National Park (fall)
- 224.2 Death Valley National Park (spring)
- 225. San Juan National Historic Site (winter)
- 226. Ninety Six National Historic Site (spring)
- 227. Kalaupapa National Historical Park
- 228. Little River Canyon National Preserve

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit, website: www.psu.uidaho.edu or phone (208) 885-7863.

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

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U.S. Department of the Interior**



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