

Prince William Forest Park

Visitor Study
Fall 1996

Report 91

Visitor Services Project
Cooperative Park Studies Unit







PLEASE RETURN TO:

Prince William Forest Park

Visitor Study
Fall 1996

Chris Wall

Visitor Services Project Report 91

June 1997

Chris Wall is a VSP Research Associate based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Mark Patterson and the staff of Prince William Forest Park for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitor Services Project Prince William Forest Park Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Prince William Forest Park during October 7-13, 1996. A total of 395 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 337 questionnaires for an 85% response rate.
- This report profiles Prince William Forest visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Forty-six percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-two percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Thirty-five percent of visitors were aged 36-55.
- Forty-two percent of visitors were making their first visits to Prince William Forest. Sixty-nine
 percent of the visitor groups spent less than a day at the park and 17% spent one or two days.
 Of those groups that spent less than a day at the park, 55% spent two or three hours.
- United States visitors were from Virginia (57%), the District of Columbia (9%), Maryland (6%), Florida (5%) and 28 other states. There were not enough international visitors to provide reliable information.
- On this visit, the most common activities were walking or hiking (69%), driving the scenic loop road (49%) and camping in developed campgrounds (32%).
- Previous visits (49%), highway signs (27%), friends and relatives (22%) and camping guides or tour books (21%) were the most used sources of information by visitor groups.
- Forty percent of visitor groups indicated that recreation was a primary reason for visiting the Northern Virginia area. Another 35% reported that visiting Prince William Forest Park was a primary reason for visiting the area.
- The park features that received the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings were recreational opportunities (81%) and solitude (69%).
- The most commonly visited sites in the park were trails other than the Farms to Forest Trail (46%), the visitor center (33%), Travel Trailer Village (21%) and the Pine Grove Picnic Area (20%).
- In regard to the use, importance and quality of services, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The services that were most used by 228 respondents were the park brochure/map (72%) and park directional signs (56%). According to visitors, the most important services were self-guided trail signs (92% of 123 respondents) and garbage collection/recycling (89% of 44 respondents). The highest quality services were information from park personnel (95% of 65 respondents) and the park brochure/map (92% of 157 respondents).
- In regard to the use, importance and quality of facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The facilities that were most used by 275 respondents were trails (68%) and restrooms (63%). According to visitors, the most important facilities were campgrounds (96% of 95 respondents) and trails (95% of 186 respondents). The highest quality facilities were campgrounds (95% of 92 respondents) and trails (88% of 180 respondents).
- Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups spent no money on lodging, travel, food or "other" items such
 as souvenirs, film and gifts in Prince William County, while 28% spent from \$1 to \$50. Of the total
 expenditures by groups, 40% was for lodging and 31% was for food.
- Ninety-four percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services at Prince William Forest as "very good" or "good." Less than one percent of groups rated services as "very poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7129 or 885-7863.

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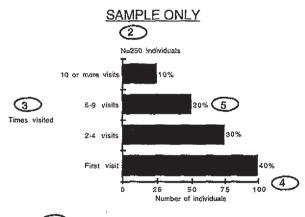
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors at Prince William Forest Park (referred to as "Prince William Forest"). This visitor study was conducted October 7-13, 1996 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A *Methods* section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. A *Results* section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, an *Additional Analysis* page helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the *Questionnaire*. 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.



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

METHODS

Questionnaire design and administration

The questionnaire for this visitor study was designed using a standard format that has been developed in previous Visitor Services Project studies. A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this report.

Interviews were conducted with, and questionnaires were distributed to, a sample of visitors who arrived at Prince William Forest Park during the period from October 7-13, 1996. Visitors were sampled at the park entrance station and at the registration area for Travel Trailer Village, the park's concessionaire operated RV campground.

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study, and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, an interview, lasting approximately two minutes, was used to determine group size, group type, and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This individual was given a questionnaire and was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminder-thank you postcard. Visitor groups were asked to complete the questionnaire during or after their visit and then return it by mail.

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. Eight weeks after the survey, second replacement questionnaires were mailed to visitors who still had not returned their questionnaires.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the information was entered into a computer using a standard statistical software package. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated for the coded data; and responses to open-ended questions were categorized and 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 336 visitor groups, Figure 4 presents data for 771 individuals. A note above each graph specifies the information illustrated.

Sample size, missing data and reporting errors

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions result in missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 337 questionnaires were returned by Prince William Forest visitors, Figure 1 shows data for only 336 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.

Limitations

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

- 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.
- The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of October 7-13, 1996. 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.

Tuesday, October 8 was a very rainy day with low visitation. A total of fifteen questionnaires was distributed at the sampling sites on that day.

Special conditions

RESULTS

Visitors contacted

At Prince William Forest, 411 visitor groups were contacted, and 395 of these groups (96%) accepted questionnaires.

Questionnaires were completed and returned by 337 visitor groups, resulting in an 85% response rate for this study.

Table 1 compares age and group size information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted with that from those who actually returned questionnaires. Based on the variable of group size, non-response bias was judged to be slightly significant since the average group size for actual respondents was larger than the average group size for those who agreed to participate.

Table 1: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N .	Avg.
Age of respondents	390	45.5	327	46.5
Group size	394	3.2	336	5.5

Demographics

Figure 1 shows visitor group sizes, which ranged from one person to 80 people. Forty-two percent of visitor groups consisted of two people, while another 26% were people visiting alone. Forty-six percent of visitor groups were made up of family members, 9% were made up of friends, and 7% were made up of family and friends (see Figure 2). Groups listing themselves as "other" for group type included church groups and Girl Scout groups. Three percent of the visitor groups at Prince William Forest were guided tour or school groups (see Figure 3).

As is shown by Figure 4, visitors were concentrated in three different age groups. Twenty-eight percent of the visitors were in the 31-45 age group and 23% were in the 51-65 age group. Another 15% of visitors were in the 10 or younger age group respondents. Forty-two percent of visitors were making their first visit to the park while the majority of visitors (58%) had visited the park previously (see Figure 5).

There were not enough international visitors to Prince William Forest to provide reliable information (see Table 2). The largest proportions of United States visitors were from Virginia (57%), the District of Columbia (9%), Maryland (6%) and Florida (5%). Smaller proportions of U.S. visitors came from another twenty-eight states (see Map 1 and Table 3).

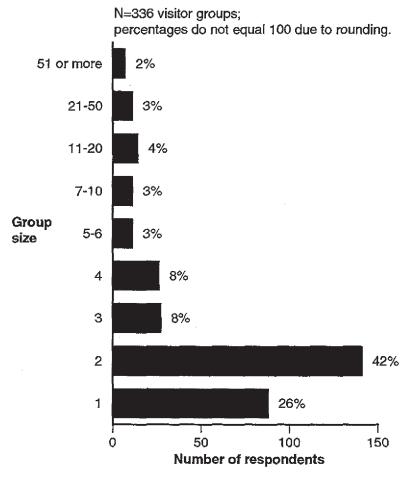


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

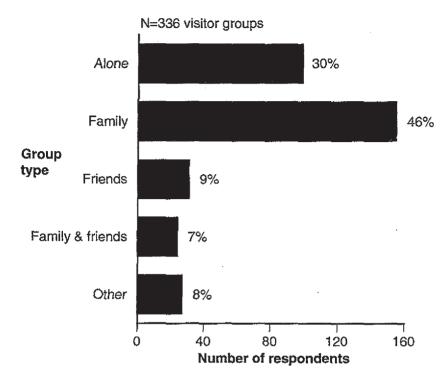


Figure 2: Visitor group types

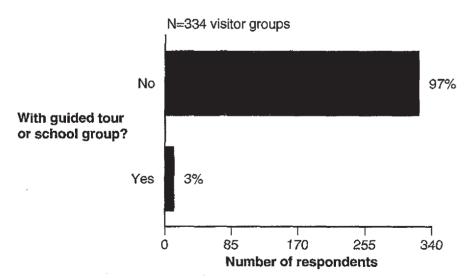


Figure 3: With guided tour or school group?

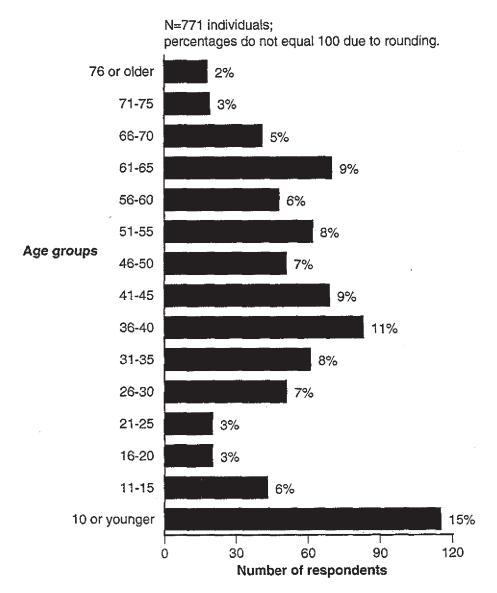


Figure 4: Visitor ages

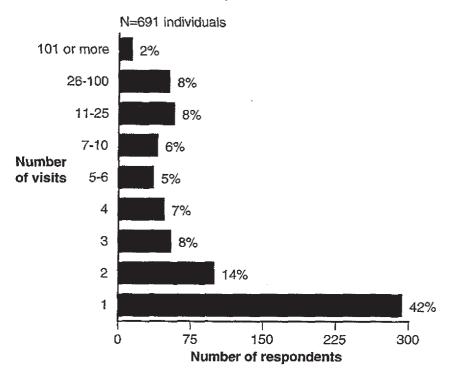


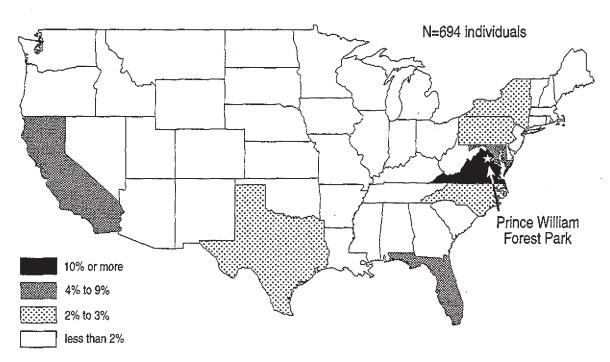
Figure 5: Number of visits to Prince William Forest

Table 2: International visitors by country of residence N=8 individuals;

percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

CAUTION!

Country	Number of individuals	Percent of international visitors
England	5	63
Denmark	2	25
Japan	1	13



Map 1: Proportion of United States visitors by state of residence

Table 3: United States visitors by state of residence N=694 individuals; percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	Percent of U.S. visitors
Otate	maryidadis	0.0. 10.00
Virginia	398	57
District of Columbia	62	9
Maryland	40	6
Florida	36	5
California	25	4
Texas	19	3
Pennsylvania	14	2
North Čarolina	11	2
New York	11	2
Illinois	6	1
Ohio	6	1
Washington	6	1
Alabama	6 5 5	1
Wisconsin		1
Arizona	4	1
Connecticut	4	1
Missouri	4	1
New Hampshire	4	1
Rhode island	4	1
Tennessee	4	1
12 other states	26	4

10

Visitor groups were asked how much time they spent at Prince William Forest Park. Sixty-nine percent of visitor groups spent less than one day at the park, 17% spent one or two days and another 10% spent four or more days (see Figure 6). Of the groups that spent less than a day at the park, 83% reported that they spent from one to four hours at the park while 10% spent eleven hours or more (see Figure 7).

Visitor groups were also asked how much time they spent outside the park but within thirty-five miles of the park. Groups that had members who resided in Prince William County were directed to skip this part of the question since they would normally spend the majority of their time within thirty-five miles of the park. As is shown by Figure 8, 61% of the visitor groups had no group members who were county residents.

Seventy percent of visitor groups spent less than a day in the area within thirty-five miles of the park, 15% spent two to four days and 14% spent five or more days (see Figure 9). Of those groups that spent less than a day in the area, 46% reported spending no time in the area and 32% spent one to three hours (see Figure 10).

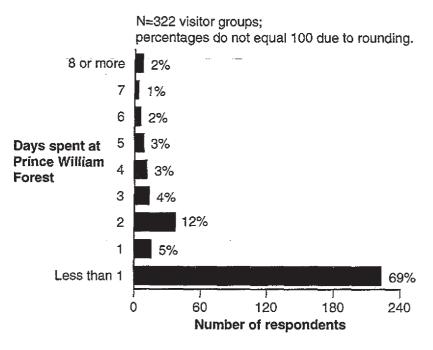


Figure 6: Days spent at Prince William Forest

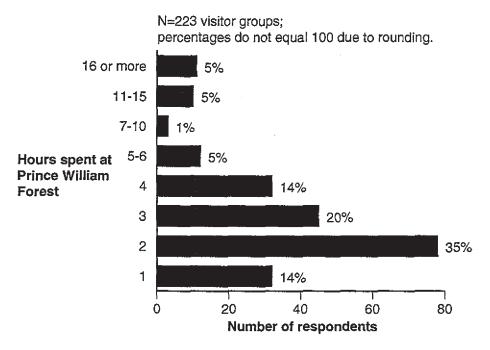


Figure 7: Hours spent at Prince William Forest

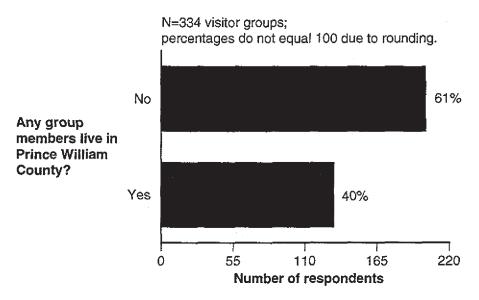


Figure 8: Any members of group live in Prince William County?

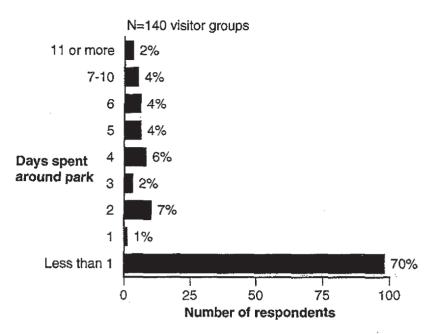


Figure 9: Days spent outside park but within 35 miles of park

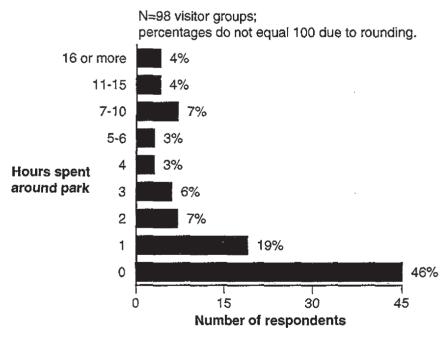


Figure 10: Hours spent outside park but within 35 miles of park

Activities

Figure 11 shows the percentages of visitor groups which participated in a variety of activities at Prince William Forest. The most common activities were walking or hiking (69%), driving the scenic loop road (49%), and camping in developed campgrounds (32%). Visitor groups participated in a number of "other" activities including running or jogging, visiting Washington, D.C., visiting friends or relatives and attending a church retreat.

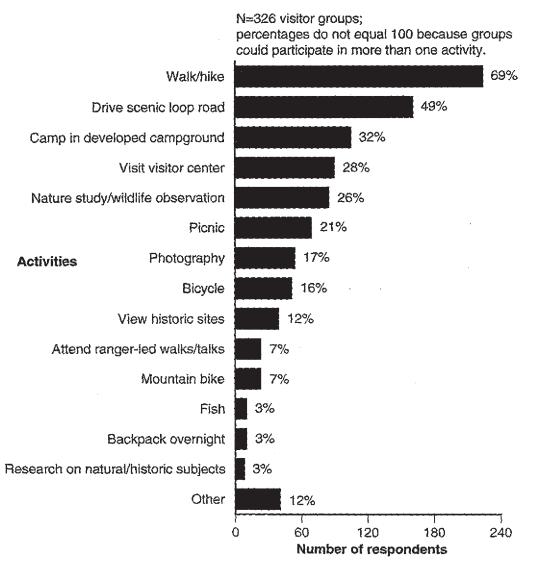


Figure 11: Visitor activities

Sources of information

Visitor groups were asked to indicate the sources from which they had received information about Prince William Forest Park prior to their visit. Forty-nine percent of visitor groups received information during previous visits, 27% received information from highway signs, and 22% received information from friends or relatives (see Figure 12). Eight percent of visitor groups received no information prior to their visits. "Other" sources of information used by visitor groups included living or growing up nearby, church and bike shops.

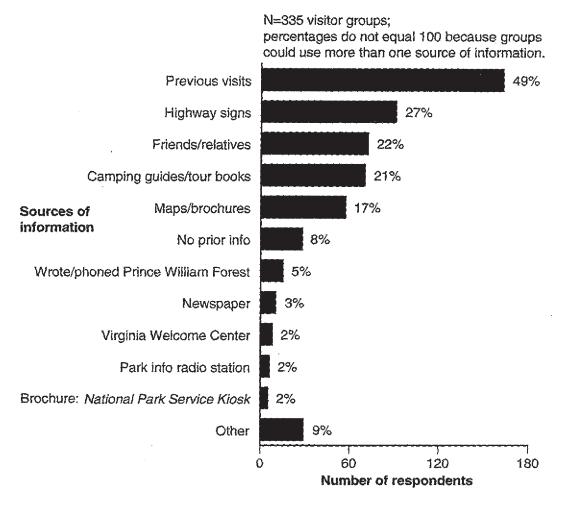


Figure 12: Sources of information used by visitors

Visitor groups were asked to indicate their reasons for visiting Northern Virginia and/or the Washington, D.C. area. Forty percent of the visitor groups were in the area to participate in recreation (such as walking, biking, picnicking, and camping), 35% were in the area specifically to visit Prince William Forest Park, 13% were visiting friends or relatives, and 13% were there to tour the Washington, D.C. area (see Figure 13). Visitor groups mentioned a number of "other" reasons for visiting, including living nearby, attending a church retreat and driving through the area.

Reasons for visiting

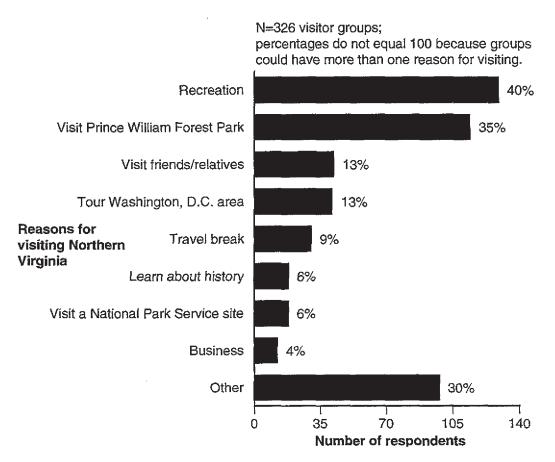


Figure 13: Reasons for visiting Northern Virginia area

Aware of NPS administration?

Visitor groups were asked to indicate whether they were aware prior to their visit that Prince William Forest is administered by the National Park Service. Seventy-one percent of visitor groups were aware that the park is a National Park Service site, 26% were not aware of NPS administration and 3% were not sure (see Figure 14).

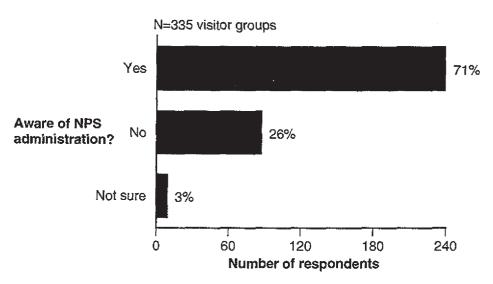


Figure 14: Aware of NPS administration?

Visitor groups were asked to indicate whether they had visited any additional attractions in Prince William County during their visit. As is shown by Figure 15, 91% of visitor groups did not visit any other attractions in Prince William County. Visitor groups who had visited other attractions were also asked how they had learned about these attractions. The most common sources of information were friends or relatives, living nearby, books or newspapers, advertisements, and brochures (see Table 4).

Visited other attractions?

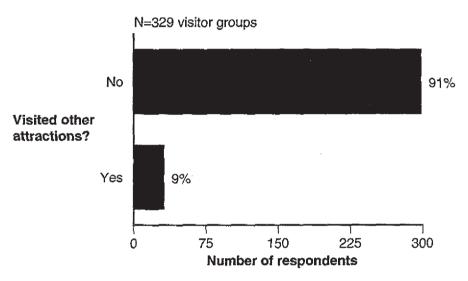


Figure 15: Visited other attractions?

Table 4: Sources of information about Prince William County attractions

N=35 comments; several visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Friends or relatives	5
Live nearby	4
Books or newspapers	4
Advertisements	4
Brochures	4
Word of mouth	2
Signs	2
Virginia Welcome Center	2
Other comments	8

Importance of park features

Visitor groups were asked to rate the importance of several park features and qualities to their visit. As is shown by Figures 16-19, the features or qualities that received the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings were recreational opportunities (81%) and solitude (69%). The feature or quality that received the highest proportion of "not important" ratings was educational opportunities (25%).

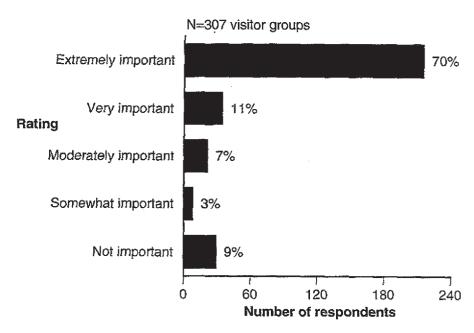


Figure 16: Importance of recreational opportunities

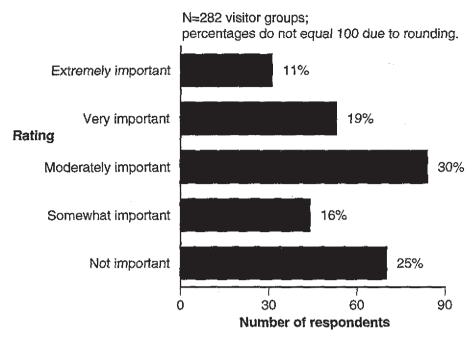


Figure 17: Importance of educational opportunities

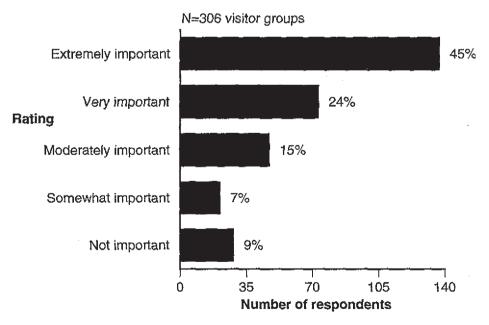


Figure 18: Importance of solitude

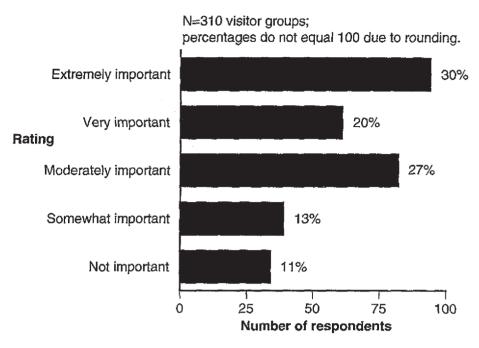


Figure 19: Importance of facilities

Visitor groups were asked to indicate whether they had any difficulty locating Prince William Forest Park. Ninety-eight percent of visitor groups did not have any trouble (see Figure 20). Those who did have trouble were also asked to suggest ways to make locating the park easier. As is shown by Table 5, the most common suggestions were to improve signs, to put more signs on Interstate 95, and to place signs *before* it is necessary for drivers to make a turn.

Difficulty locating park?

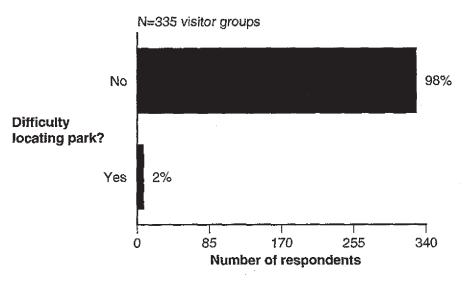


Figure 20: Difficulty locating park?

Table 5: Suggestions for making park easier to locate

N=9 comments

CAUTION!

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Improve signs More signs on I-95 Put signs <i>before</i> turns are necessary	4 2 2
Other comment	1

Sites visited

Visitor groups were asked to indicate the sites that they had visited during their visit to Prince William Forest. As is shown by Figure 21, the most commonly visited sites were trails other than the Farms to Forest Trail (46%), the visitor center (33%), Travel Trailer Village (21%) and the Pine Grove Picnic Area (20%). The least visited site was the Chopawamsic Backcountry Area (1%).

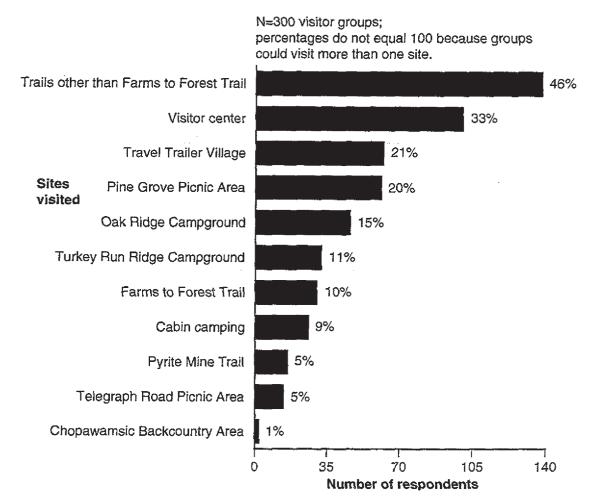


Figure 21: Sites visited

Visitor groups were asked to note the park services they used during their visit to Prince William Forest. As is shown by Figure 22, the services that were most commonly used by visitor groups were the park brochure/map (72%), park directional signs (56%), self-guided trail signs (55%) and the visitor center (37%). The least used service was the visitor center slide program (1%).

Visitor services: use, importance and quality

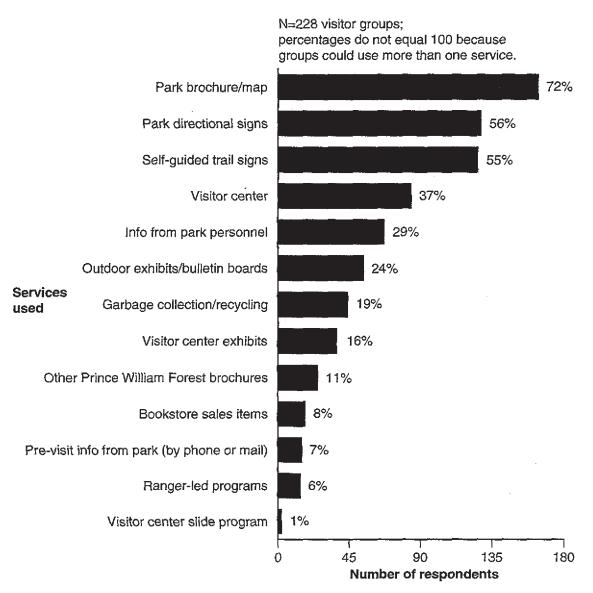


Figure 22: Services used

Visitor groups rated the importance and quality of each of the services they used. The following five point scales were used in the questionnaire:

IMPORTANCE
5=extremely important
4=very important
3=moderately important
2=somewhat important
1=not important

QUALITY
5=very good
4=good
3=average
2=poor
1=very poor

Figure 23 shows the average importance and quality ratings for visitor services. An average score was determined for each service based on ratings provided by visitors who used that service. This was done for both importance and quality, and the results are plotted on the grid shown in Figure 23. All services were rated as above "average" both in importance and quality. It should be noted that other Prince William Forest brochures, visitor center slide program, bookstore sales items, ranger-led programs and pre-visit information from the park were not rated by enough people to provide reliable data.

Figures 24-36 show the importance ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services. Those services receiving the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings included self-guided trail signs (92%), garbage collection and recycling (89%) and the park brochure/map (86%). The highest proportion of "not important" ratings was for garbage collection and recycling (5%).

Figures 37-49 show the quality ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services. Those services receiving the highest proportion of "very good" or "good" ratings included information from park personnel (95%), the park brochure/map (92%) and the visitor center (84%). The highest proportion of "very poor" ratings was for self-guided trail signs (4%).

Figure 50 combines the "very good" and "good" quality ratings and compares those ratings for all of the services.

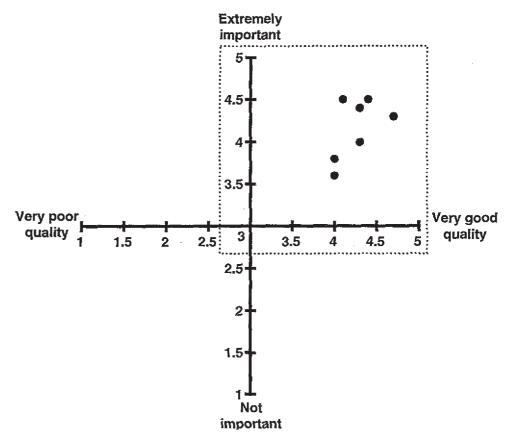
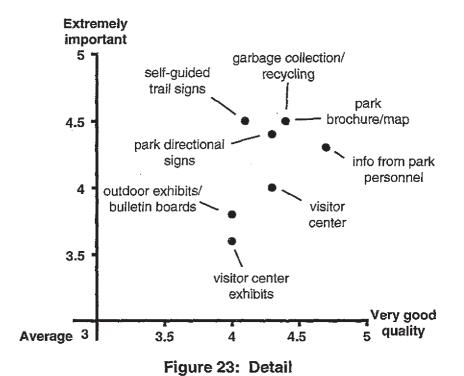


Figure 23: Average ratings of service importance and quality



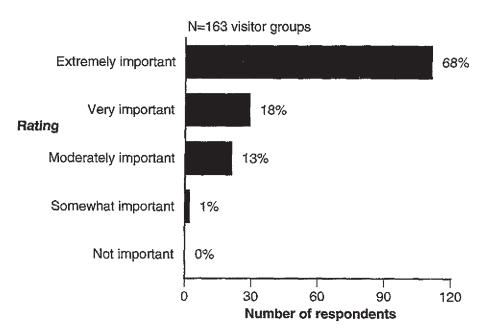


Figure 24: Importance of park brochure/map

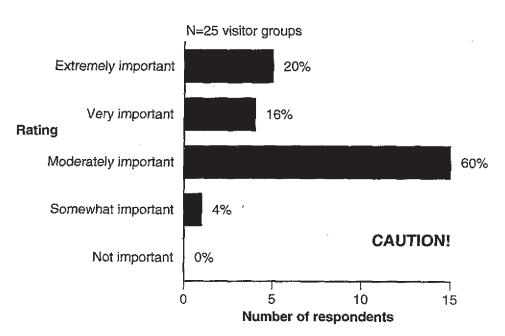


Figure 25: Importance of other Prince William Forest brochures

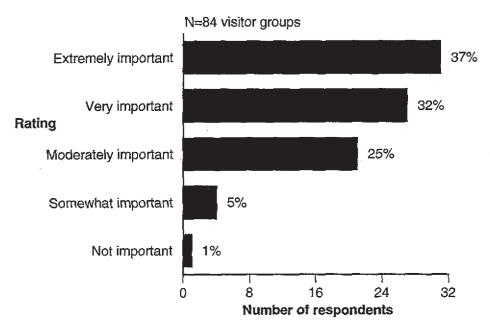


Figure 26: Importance of visitor center

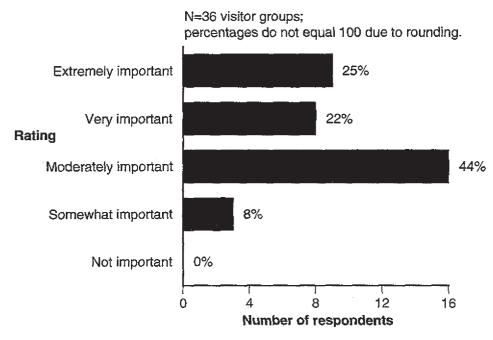


Figure 27: Importance of visitor center exhibits

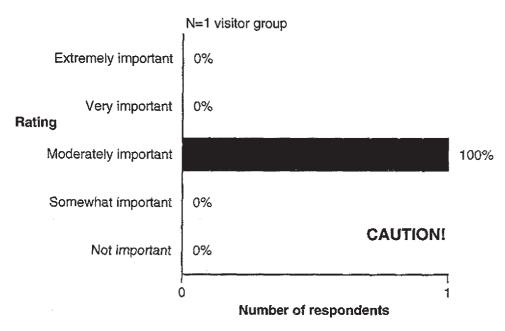


Figure 28: Importance of visitor center slide program

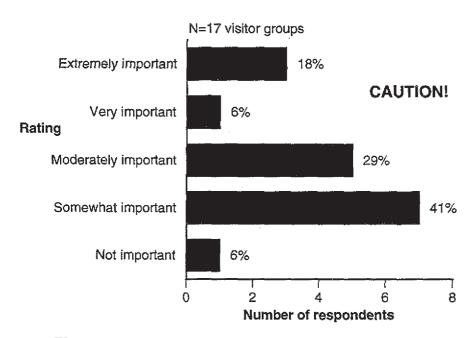


Figure 29: Importance of bookstore sales items

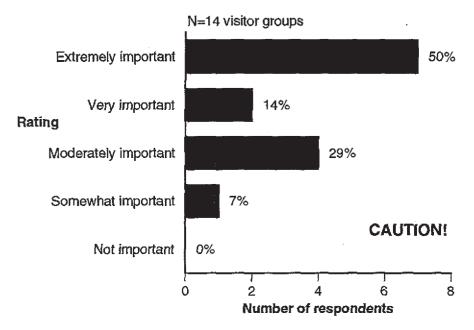


Figure 30: Importance of ranger-led programs

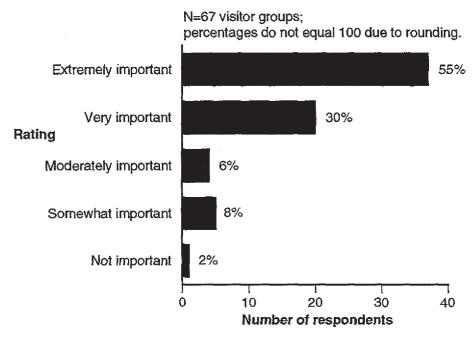


Figure 31: Importance of information from park personnel

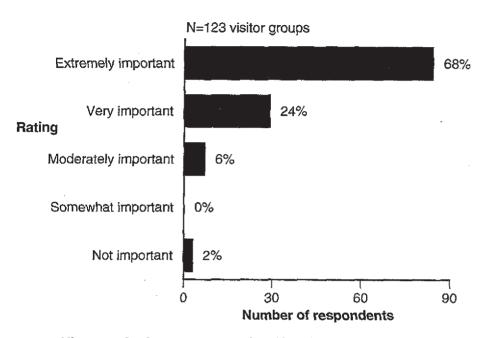


Figure 32: Importance of self-guided trail signs

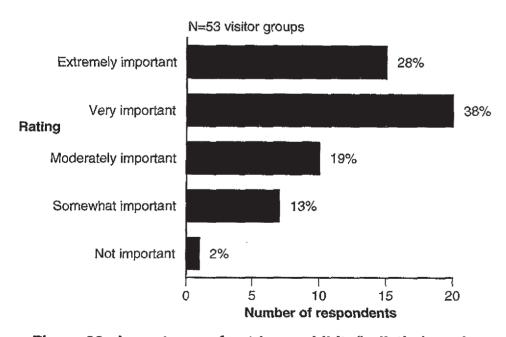


Figure 33: Importance of outdoor exhibits/bulletin boards

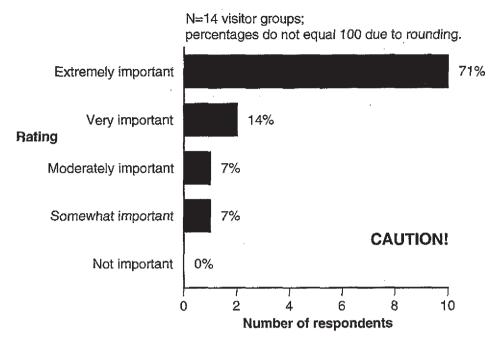


Figure 34: Importance of pre-visit information (by phone or mail from the park)

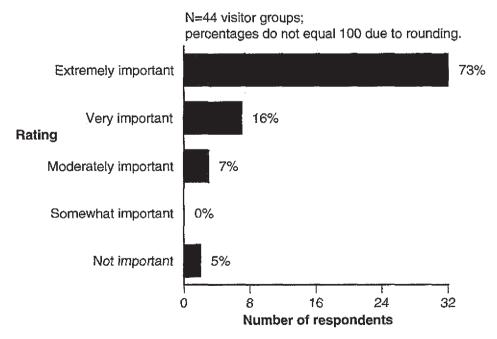


Figure 35: Importance of garbage collection/recycling

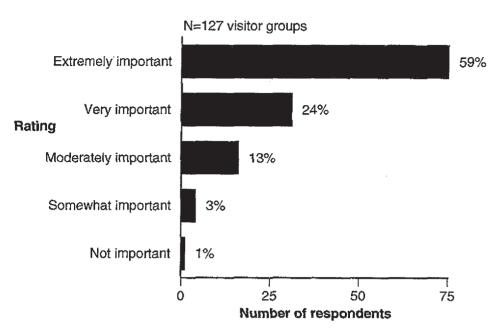


Figure 36: Importance of park directional signs

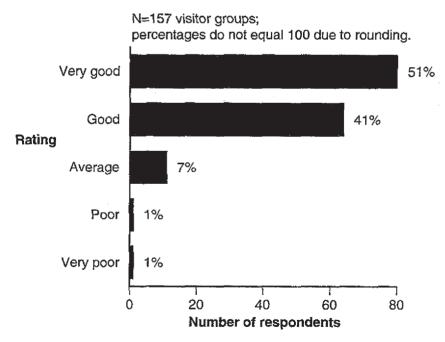


Figure 37: Quality of park brochure/map

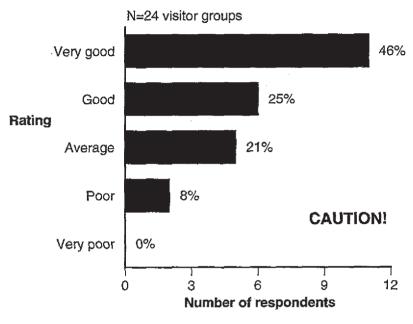


Figure 38: Quality of other Prince William Forest brochures

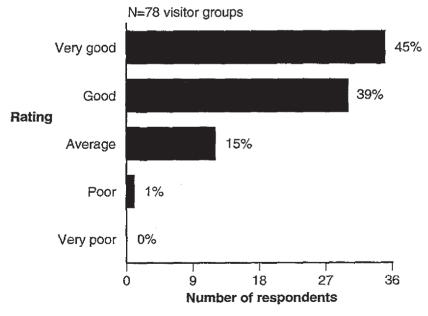


Figure 39: Quality of visitor center

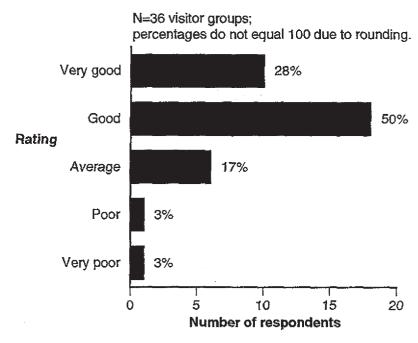


Figure 40: Quality of visitor center exhibits

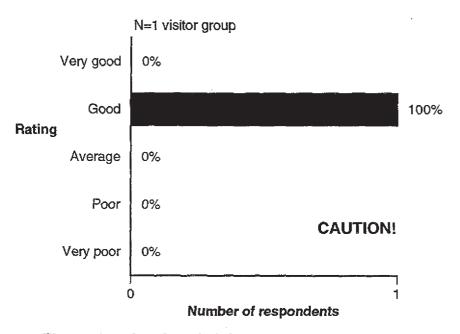


Figure 41: Quality of visitor center slide program

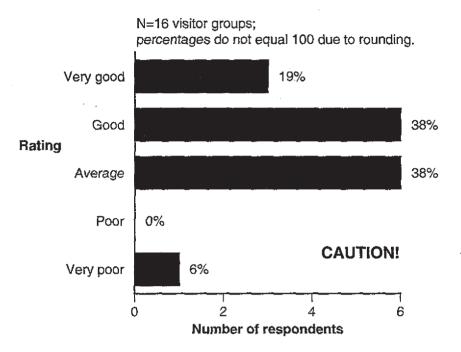


Figure 42: Quality of bookstore sales items

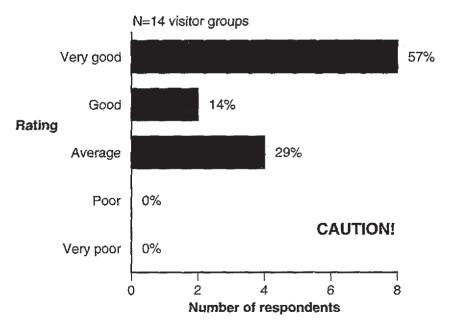


Figure 43: Quality of ranger-led programs

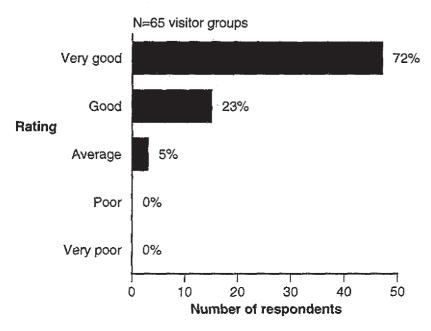


Figure 44: Quality of information from park personnel

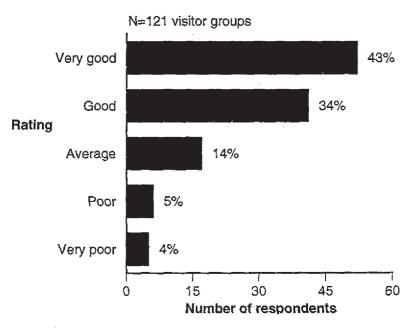


Figure 45: Quality of self-guided trail signs

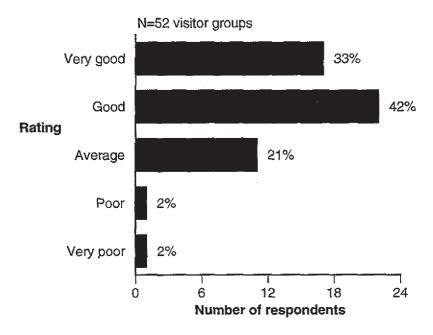


Figure 46: Quality of outdoor exhibits/bulletin boards

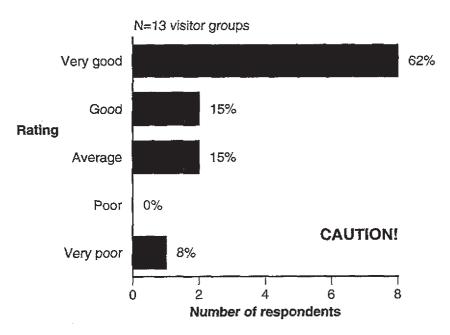


Figure 47: Quality of pre-visit information (by phone or mail from park)

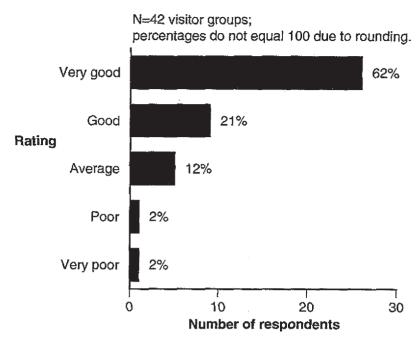


Figure 48: Quality of garbage collection/recycling

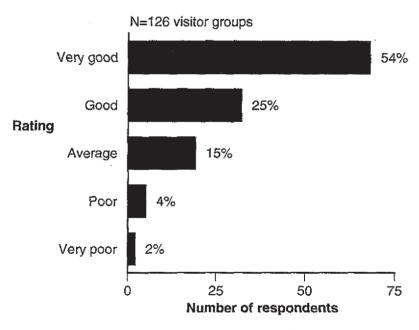


Figure 49: Quality of park directional signs

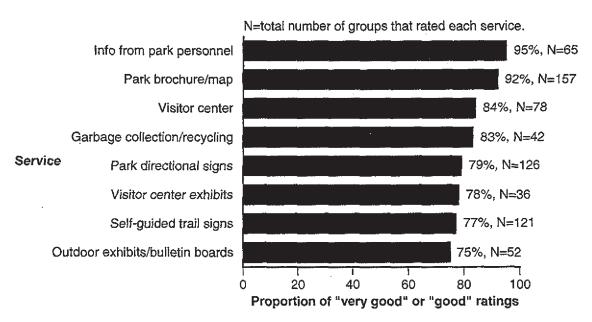


Figure 50: Combined proportions of "very good" or "good" quality ratings for services

Visitor facilities: use, importance and quality

Visitor groups were asked to note the visitor facilities they used during their visit to Prince William Forest. As is shown by Figure 51, the facilities that were most commonly used by visitor groups were trails (68%) and restrooms (63%). The least used facility was the cabin camps (7%).

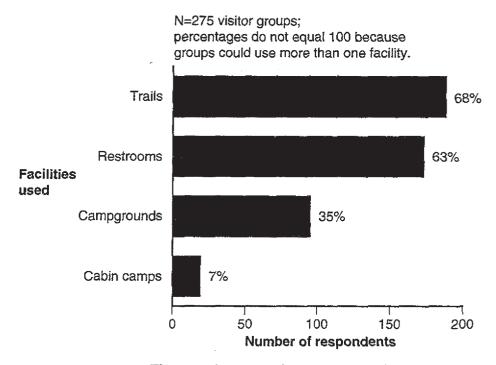


Figure 51: Facilities used

Visitor groups rated the importance and quality of each of the facilities they used. The following five point scales were used in the questionnaire:

IMPORTANCE

5=extremely important 4=very important 3=moderately important 2=somewhat important 1=not important

QUALITY

5=very good 4=good 3=average 2=poor

1=very poor

Figure 52 shows the average importance and quality ratings for visitor facilities. An average score was determined for each facility based on ratings provided by visitors who used that facility. This was done for both importance and quality, and the results are plotted on the grid shown in Figure 52. All facilities were rated as above "average" both in importance and quality. It should be noted that cabin camps were not rated by enough people to provide reliable data.

Figures 53-56 show the importance ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual facilities. Those facilities receiving the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings included campgrounds (96%) and trails (95%).

Figures 57-60 show the quality ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual facilities. Those facilities receiving the highest proportion of "very good" or "good" ratings included campgrounds (95%) and trails (88%).

Figure 61 combines the "very good" and "good" quality ratings and compares those ratings for all of the facilities.

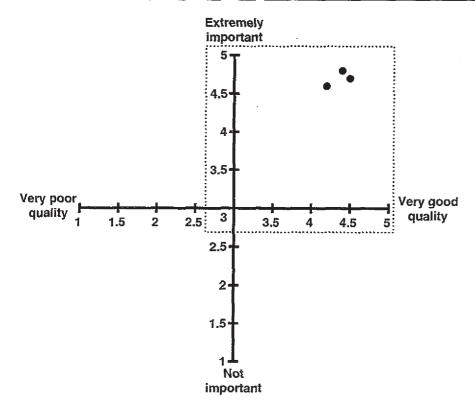


Figure 52: Average importance and quality for facilities

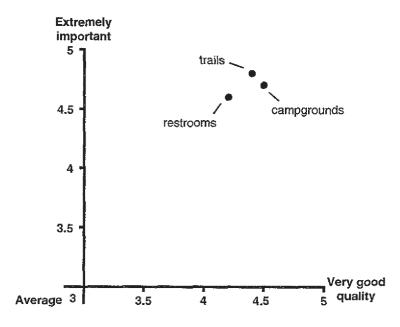


Figure 52: Detail

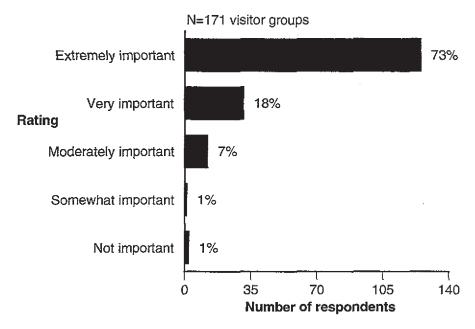


Figure 53: Importance of restrooms

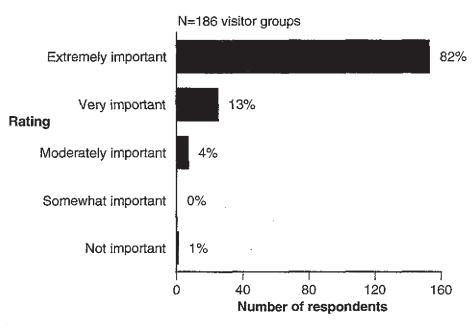


Figure 54: Importance of trails

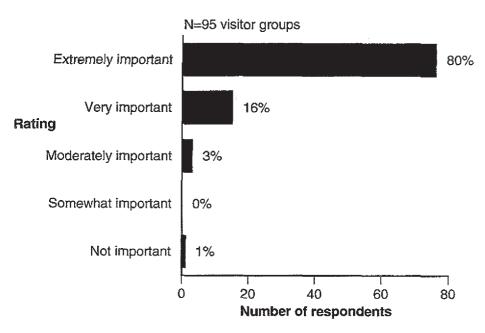


Figure 55: Importance of campgrounds

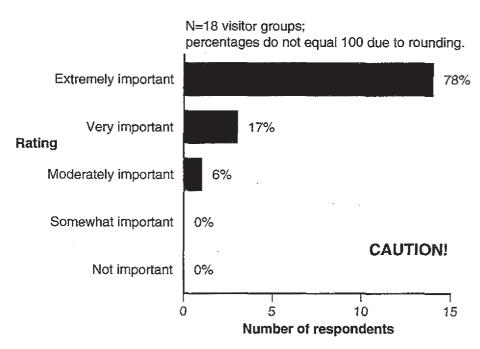


Figure 56: Importance of cabin camps

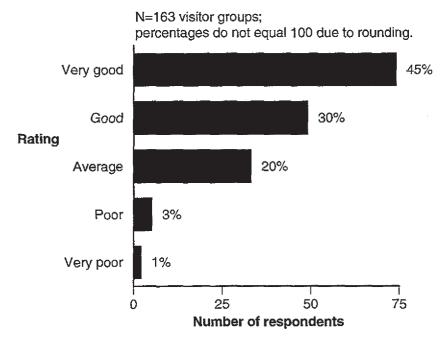


Figure 57: Quality of restrooms

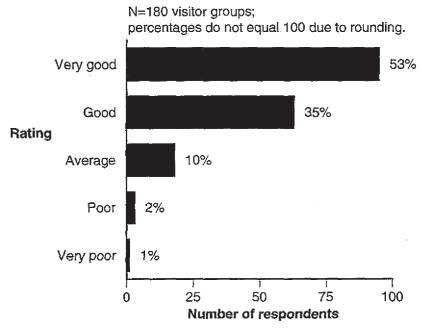


Figure 58: Quality of trails

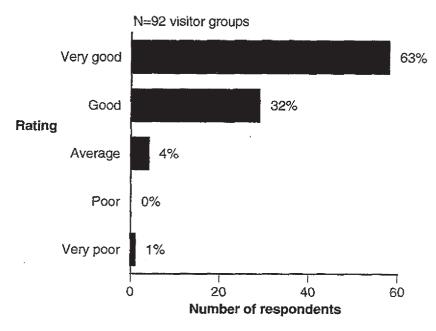


Figure 59: Quality of campgrounds

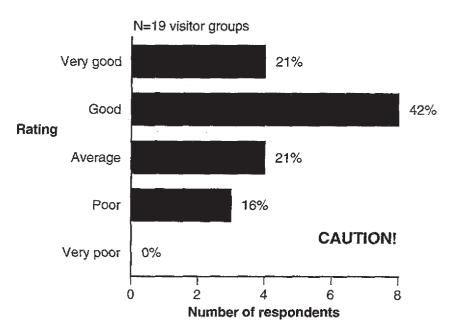


Figure 60: Quality of cabin camps

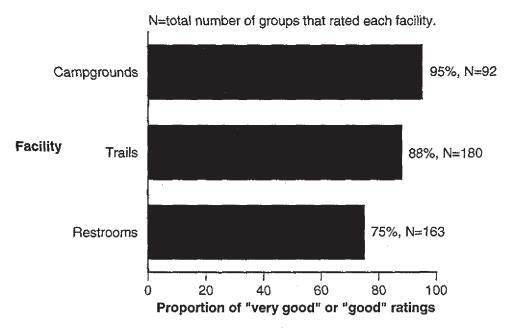


Figure 61: Combined proportions of "very good" or "good" quality ratings for facilities

Expenditures

Visitor groups were asked if all the members of their groups lived in Prince William County. As is shown by Figure 62, 68% of the visitor groups indicated that not all of their group members lived in the county. Those groups for which some or all of the group members lived *outside* of Prince William County were also asked to indicate the amount of money they had spent in Prince William County on lodging, travel, food and "other" items (such as souvenirs, gifts and film) on this visit. The expenditure totals that follow refer to these groups only.

Total expenditures: Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups spent no money in Prince William County. Twenty-eight percent of the groups spent from \$1 to \$50, and another 10% spent from \$51 to \$100 (see Figure 63). Of the total expenditures by groups, 40% was for lodging, 31% was for food, 19% was for travel and 11% was for "other" items (see Figure 64).

The average <u>visitor group</u> expenditure during this visit was \$90. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$16. The average <u>per capita</u> expenditure was \$37.

Lodging: Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups spent no money on lodging in Prince William County. Sixteen percent of the groups spent from \$1 to \$25 and another 7% spent from \$26 to \$50 (see Figure 65).

Travel: Fifty-two percent of visitor groups spent no money on travel in Prince William County. Twenty-six percent of the groups spent from \$1 to \$25 and another 15% spent from \$26 to \$50 (see Figure 66).

Food: Fifty-three percent of visitor groups spent no money on food in Prince William County. Twenty-three percent of the groups spent from \$1 to \$25 and another 11% spent from \$26 to \$50 (see Figure 67).

"Other" items: Eighty percent of the visitor groups spent no money on "other" items such as souvenirs, film and gifts. Eleven percent of the groups spent from \$1 to \$25 and another 4% spent from \$26 to \$50 (see Figure 68).

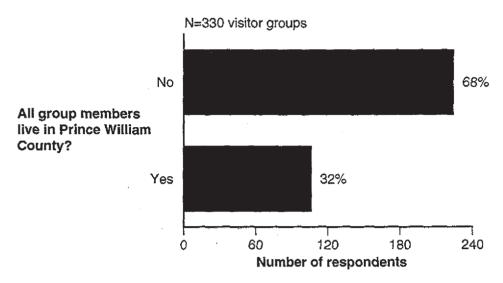


Figure 62: Do all members of group live in Prince William County?

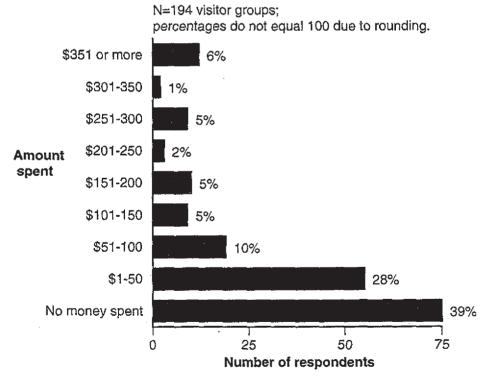


Figure 63: Total expenditures in Prince William County

N=194 visitor groups; percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

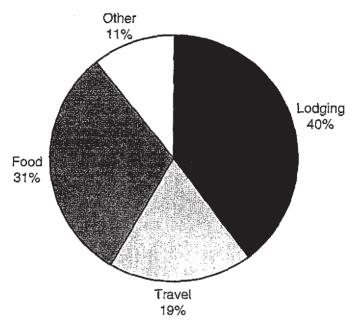


Figure 64: Proportion of expenditures in Prince William County

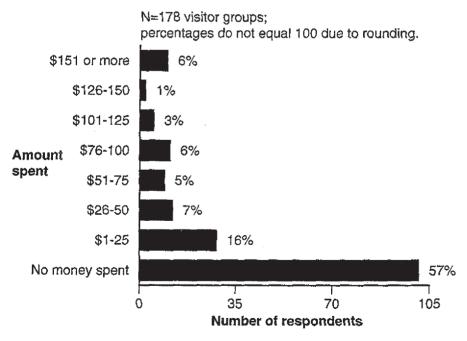


Figure 65: Expenditures for lodging in Prince William County

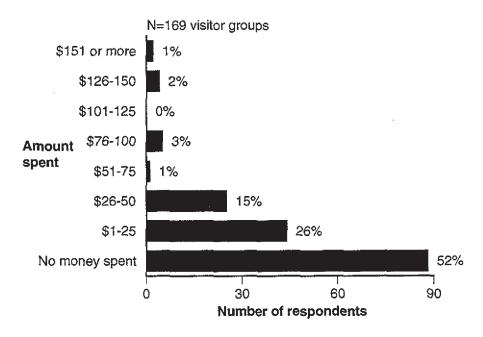


Figure 66: Expenditures for travel in Prince William County

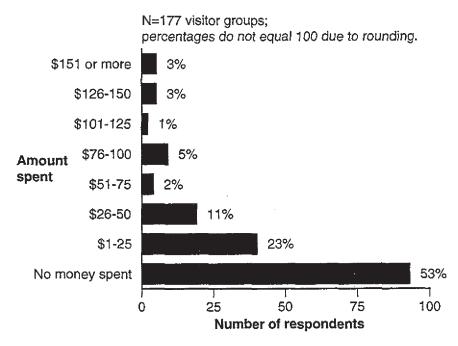


Figure 67: Expenditures for food in Prince William County

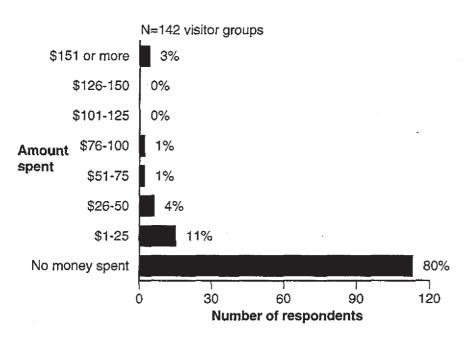


Figure 68: Expenditures for "other" items in Prince William County

Visitor groups were asked to rate the overall quality of the visitor services provided at Prince William Forest Park during this visit. The majority of visitor groups (94%) rated services as "very good" or "good" (see Figure 69). Only one visitor group (less than 1% of respondents) rated services as "very poor."

Overall quality of visitor services

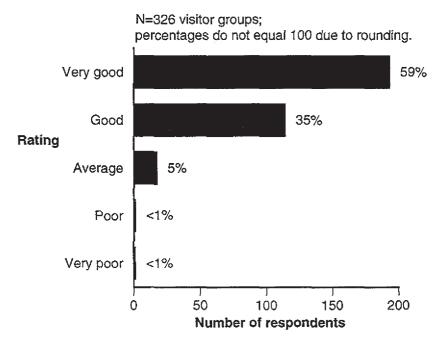


Figure 69: Overall quality of visitor services

What visitors liked most

Visitor groups were asked "What did you like most about your visit to Prince William Forest Park?" Eighty-nine percent of visitor groups (300 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

Table 6: Visitor likes

N=526 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Helpful rangers Knowledgeable rangers Friendly rangers Friendly personnel at Travel Trailer Village	4 3 3 3
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Enjoyed talking exhibits Other comments	2 2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Trails Clean park Hiking trails Campground Good facilities Biking roads Park well-maintained Scenic drive Well-marked trails Picnic areas Good RV campground Bike trails Trails well-maintained Layout of Travel Trailer Village Clean restrooms Quality of roads Variety of hikes Well-maintained roads Walk-in campsites Easy access to water Nice campsites at Travel Trailer Village Backcountry camping RV hook-ups	28 25 24 11 7 7 6 5 5 5 5 5 4 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2
Other comments	13

Comment	Number of times mentioned
POLICIES	
Designated cycling lane Other comments	6 3
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Natural setting Wildlife Forest Uncrowded Creeks Foliage Few cars Falls Other comments	24 19 17 9 5 3 3 2 4
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Peace and quiet Solitude Beauty Convenient Scenery Close to home Close to Washington, D.C. Enjoy nature Spending time with family and friends Safe Rest and relaxation Privacy Being outdoors Location Clean, fresh air Getting away from urban living and noise Nature close to urban area Room to exercise Close to Interstate 95 Other comments	56 43 35 13 13 11 8 7 6 5 4 4 4 3 3 3 3 2 2 12

What visitors liked least

Visitor groups were asked "What did you like least about your visit to Prince William Forest Park?" Sixty percent of visitor groups (202 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

Table 7: Visitor dislikes

N=226 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Park rangers' attitudes Other comments	3 2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Not enough information available Map should be updated and improved Other comments	3 2 2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Trails poorly marked Pyrite Mine Trail was closed Restrooms Trails need maintenance Cabin conditions Small trailer spaces Signs could be better No hot water Not enough trails for biking Lack of showers at Oak Ridge No access from Highway 234 side or not enough entrance Water tasted strange Restrooms need updating Insufficient parking Construction or closed areas Not enough trash cans	10 7 6 6 5 5 5 5 5 4 4 3 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
No heat in cabins Campground site density too high Dryers were not working well No trails at Travel Trailer Village Other comments	2 2 2 2 2
Carol Comments	10

Comment	Number of times mentioned
POLICIES	
Entrance fee too high Paying an entrance fee Loud campers Bikes on hiking trails Uncontrolled pets Speed of cars on road Restrictions on pets Dedicated bike path Bicycles or skateboards in camping area Other comments	4 4 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 14
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	•
Bugs Storm damage Noise from cars or aircraft Other comments	4 2 2 5
CONCESSIONS	
No snack bar or vending area Other comment	3
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Nothing Visit was too short Weather Highway traffic Other comments	38 8 6 3 8

Planning for the future

Visitor groups were asked "If you were a park manager planning for the future of Prince William Forest Park, what would you propose? Please be specific." Sixty-six percent of visitor groups (222 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

Table 8: Planning for the future

N=369 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Hire more rangers	3
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Publicize programs more Provide more information Signs which identify plants and trees More ranger-led programs More information on history More educational programs Better maps Wildlife information Plant and tree information Stress history of mine and transportation More programs to benefit wider range of people More outdoor exhibits Start Halloween program again Other comments	14 8 5 5 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
More mountain bike trails/roads Mark trails more clearly Ensure maintenance of current facilities Upgrade cabins More hiking trails More bathrooms at trailheads and parking areas Campsites for larger RVs Showers at campground Maintain trails and fire roads Expand trail system Provide entry to park from Highways 234 and/or 619	16 13 11 10 9 7 7 7 6 6 5

	Number of
Comment	times mentioned
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE (con't)	
Update/modernize RV spaces	4
Improve playground	4
More full hookups	4
Create more rustic campsites	4
Upgrade bathrooms	4
More picnic areas	3
Re-open Pyrite Mine Trail	3
Enlarge Travel Trailer Village	3
More trash cans	3
Provide hot water	3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
Cable TV hookups in campground	2
More parking	2
Improve handicapped trail	2
Rate trails for hiking or biking difficulty Improve signs (should correspond with map)	<u>د</u> 2
Current facilities are sufficient	2
More benches	2
Improve recycling within park	2
Other comments	21
Outer comments	
POLICIES	
Have events that attract people (runs, bike races, etc.)	5
Allow rollerblading	4
Continue rollerblade prohibition	3
Work with local organizations on park maintenance	
projects	3
Continue to prohibit bikes from trails	2
Enforce leash law at all times	2
Lower fees	2
Increase cost of annual pass	2
Lower or enforce speed limit Introduce horse riding	2 2 2 2 2 2
Other comments	11
Other Comments	11
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Don't develop more	13
Maintain natural setting	10
Acquire more land	6
Resist encroachment by suburbia	4
Protect park	4
Provide more fishing opportunities	2
Preserve wildlife and plant life	2
Park has land that is under-utilized	2
Other comments	11

Comment	Number of times mentioned
CONCESSIONS	
Add a grocery/convenience store Other comments	2 2
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Fine as it is Good job Enjoy park Nature is the attraction Other comments	25 6 4 2 4

Forty-six percent of visitor groups (155 groups) wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments about Prince William Forest Park 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.

Comment summary

Table 9: Additional comments

N=283 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Friendly staff Helpful staff Courteous staff Knowledgeable staff Ranger was terrific People running Travel Trailer Village were good Other comments	12 9 2 2 2 2 3
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Provide more information Advertise more Had problems with orienteering maps	5 2 2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Improve road signs Trail maintenance could be better Clean bathrooms Park is clean Well maintained Best RV park this close to Washington, D.C. Re-open Pyrite Mine Trail Clean campground Nice campground More mountain biking trails Good trails Improve showers or hot water situation Other comments	4 4 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 6

Comment	Number of times mentioned
POLICIES	umes mentioned
Free wood is nice Allow mountain bikes on unpaved roads Other comments	5 2 8
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	-
Keep it natural Not overcrowded National parks are high quality and well-run Protect against commercialism Beautiful hardwood forest Other comments	7 2 2 2 2 2
CONCESSIONS	
Comment	1
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Enjoy park Great and/or beautiful park Plan to return Keep up good work We visit often Thank you Good escape from urban living Come to hike Come to bike Thanks Great place for local residents Kids had a great time Quiet One of reasons we still live in area Had fun camping Great asset Conveniently located to Washington, D.C. Other comments	42 25 21 14 10 7 7 5 5 4 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 15

Prince William Forest Park Additional Analysis

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) staff offers 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 NPS administration
- Sources of park information
- Attractions visited
- Hours spent in park
- Days spent in park
- Hours spent in county
- Days spent in county
- Primary reasons for visiting area
 State of residence
- Importance of park qualities
- Visitor activities

- Difficulty locating park
- Sites visited
- Group size
- With guided tour/school group
- Group type
- Age
- All group members live in county
 Expenditures in county
- Some group members live in county

- Country of residence
- Number of visits
- Visitor service use
- Visitor service importance
- Visitor service quality
- Visitor facility use
- Visitor facility importance
- Visitor facility quality
- Overall quality rating

Database

A database has been developed which contains all the VSP visitor study results from 1988 through the present. The database became 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 from studies held at NPS sites across the nation, with those within a specific region or type of NPS site, or with those that meet criteria that are of importance to you as a park manager, researcher or other interested party.

Phone/send requests to:

Visitor Services Project, CPSU College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences University of Idaho Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133

Phone: 208-885-2819 FAX: 208-885-4261

cc:Mail: VSP Database NP- -PNR e-mail: vspdatabase@uidaho.edu

QUESTIONNAIRE



The Visitor Services Proj



OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Visitor Services Project
Cooperative Park Studies Unit
Department of Forest Resources
College of Forestry, Wildlife and
Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK P.O. BOX 309 TRIANGLE, VIRGINIA 22172-0209

October, 1996

I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this important study. Our goal is to gather information concerning the expectations, opinions, and interests of park visitors so that we may better serve you in the luture.

This questionnaire is only being given to a select number of visitors, so your participation I was promitted to very construct to a potential very legal to a potential very important. I would really appreciate your taking the time to answer the questions is very important. I would really appreciate your taking the time to answer the questions. and return it to us. You need only seal it with the sticker provided on the last page and

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machils. Sociology Project Leader, Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133.

Your opinion is appreciated.

Superintendent

DIRECTIONS

One adult in your group should complete the questionnaire. It should only take a few minutes. When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it with the sticker provided and drop it in any U.S. mailbox. We appreciate your help.

PRIVACY ACT and PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT statement: 16 U.S.C. 1a-7 authorize collection of this information. This information will be used by park managers to better serve the public. Response to this request is voluntary. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. Your name is requested for follow-up mailing purposes only. When analysis of the questionnaire is completed, all name and address files will be destroyed. Thus the permanent data will be anonymous. Please do not put your name or that of any member of your group on the questionnaire. Data collected through visitor surveys may be disclosed to the Department of Justice when relevant to litigation or anticipated litigation, or to appropriate Federal, State, local or foreign agencies responsible for investigating or prosecuting a violation of law.

Burden estimate statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 12 minutes per response. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127; and to the Office of Management and Budget. Paperwork Reduction Project, 1024-0191, Washington, D.C. 20503.

4	Visiting Prince William Forest Park
1.	Prior to this visit, were you and your group aware that Prince William Forest Park is a National Park Service site?
	YESNONOT SURE
2.	Prior to this visit, how did you and your group get information about Prince William Forest Park? Please check (1) all that apply.
	RECEIVED NO INFORMATION PRIOR TO VISIT → GO ON TO
٠	FRIENDS/ RELATIVES QUESTION 3
	PREVIOUS VISITS
	CAMPING GUIDES/ TOUR BOOKS
	MAPS/ BROCHURES
	HIGHWAY SIGNS
	NEWSPAPER
	VIRGINIA WELCOME CENTER
	BROCHURE: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE KIOSK
	WROTE/ PHONED PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK
	PARK INFORMATION RADIO STATION (1610 AM)
	OTHER (Please describe:)
3.	a) On this visit, did you and your group visit any additional attractions in Prince William County?
	YESNO → GO ON TO QUESTION 4
	b) If yes, how did you learn about these attractions?
4.	a) On this visit, how much time did you and your group spend at Prince William Forest Park?
	If less than 24 hours: NUMBER OF HOURS
	If 24 hours or more: NUMBER OF DAYS (List partial days such as 1/4, 1/2, etc.)

		ers of your group live in Prince William County? YES • GO ON TO QUESTION 5
	c) On this visit, how mu	ch time did you and your group spend outside Princ within 35 miles of the park?
	If less than 24 hours:	NUMBER OF HOURS
	If 24 hours or more:	NUMBER OF DAYS (List partial days such as 1/4, 1/2, etc.)
5.	On this visit, what were and/or Washington, D.C	your primary reasons for visiting the northern Virgin \cdot area? Please check (\checkmark) all that apply.
	VISIT PRINCE	WILLIAM FOREST PARK
	TOUR WASHI	NGTON, D.C. AREA
	LEARN ABOU	THISTORY
	VISIT FRIEND	S/ RELATIVES
	RECREATION	(walk, bike, picnic, camp, etc.)
	VISIT A NATIO	NAL PARK SERVICE SITE
	BUSINESS	
	TRAVEL BREA	κ
	OTHER (Please	specify:
6.	Please rate the important to you and your group du	ce (from 1 to 5) of the following features or qualities ring this visit to Prince William Forest Park.
vot mpo	ow important? Extremely rlant important 2 3 4 5	•
	RECREATIONA	AL OPPORTUNITIES (hiking, biking, camping, etc.)
	EDUCATIONAL	·
	SOLITUDE	
	FACILITIES (vis	sitor center, restrooms, cabin camps, etc.)
		ON TO NEXT PAGE

7. On the list below, please check (v) all of the activities that you and your group participated in during this visit to Prince William Forest Park?

DRIVE SCENIC LOOP ROAD

VISIT VISITOR CENTER

ATTEND RANGER-LED WALKS/ TALKS

PHOTOGRAPHY

WALK/ HIKE

VIEW HISTORIC SITES (Pyrite Mine, cemeteries, Civilian Conservation Corps buildings and bridges)

CAMP IN DEVELOPED CAMPGROUND

BACKPACK OVERNIGHT

FISH

MOUNTAIN BIKE

	Office (Flease Specify	
В.	a) Did you have any difficulty locating Prince William Forest Pari	k?

BICYCLE (other than mountain biking)

PICNIC

OTHER (Places eposite:

____ NATURE STUDY/ WILDLIFE OBSERVATION

YES ____ NO → GO ON TO QUESTION 9

CONDUCT RESEARCH ON NATURAL/ HISTORIC SUBJECTS

b) If YES, how could locating the park be made easier?
--

9. On the list below, please mark the sites you and your group visited at Prince William Forest Park during this trip. Simply check the line beside each place you visited. Use the map below to help you locate the sites.

VISITOR CENTER

CHOPAWAMSIC
BACKCOUNTRY AREA

PINE GROVE PICNIC AREA

CABIN CAMPING

TRAVEL TRAILER
VILLAGE

OAK RIDGE CAMPGROUND

TURKEY RUN RIDGE
CAMPGROUND

PYRITE MINE TRAIL

OTHER TRAILS (other than Farms to Forest Trails)

FARMS TO FOREST TRAIL



PLEASE GO ON TO NEXT PAGE



You and Your Opinions

10.	On this visit, how many people were in your group (including yourself)? NUMBER OF REODLE				1	 a) Please check (√) the visitor this visit to Prince William F 	r services w orest Park.	s which you or your group used during irk.			
						 b) Next, for only those services which you or your group used, please rate their importance from 1-5. c) Finally, for only those services which you or your group used, please rate their quality from 1-5. 					
11.											
	YES		NO		a	i) Use service?	ł	b) If used, low important?	c) if used, what quality?		
12.	On this visit, what k	ind of group	were you with? Please	check (√) only one.	C	Check (√)	Not		Very Very poor good 1 2 3 4 5		
	ALONE				_	PARK BROCHURE/MAP					
	FAMILY FRIENDS		,			OTHER PRINCE WILLIAM FO	REST PAR	К	·		
	FAMILY A	ND FRIENDS	3		_	VISITOR CENTER			-		
	OTHER (Please describe:				_	VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS					
				/	_	VISITOR CENTER SLIDE PRO	OGRAM		****		
13.	For you and each	member of y	your group, please indic	ate:		BOOKSTORE SALES ITEMS					
		CURRENT AGE	U.S. ZIP CODE OR NAME OF FOREIGN COUNTRY	NUMBER OF VISITS TO THIS PARK (INCLUDING THIS VISIT)		RANGER-LED PROGRAMS					
	VOUDDELE					INFORMATION FROM PARK	PERSONN	EL			
	YOURSELF				_	SELF-GUIDED TRAIL SIGNS	•				
	MEMBER #2 MEMBER #3				* _	OUTDOOR EXHIBITS/BULLE	TIN BOAR	os			
	MEMBER #4				·**	PRE-VISIT INFORMATION (by mail from park)	y phone or		***************************************		
	MEMBER #5			_		GARBAGE COLLECTION/ RE	CYCLING				
	MEMBER #6			-		PARK DIRECTIONAL SIGNS			-		
	MEMBER #7	***				PLEASE GO ON TO	NEXT PA	GE 📥			

18.	a) What did you like most about your visit to Prince William Forest Park?
	b) What did you like least about your visit to Prince William Forest Park?
19.	If you were a park manager planning for the future of Prince William Forest Park, what would you propose? Please be specific.
20.	Is there anything else you and your group would like to tell us about your visit to Prince William Forest Park?
	Thank you for your help! Please seal the questionnaire with the sticker provided and drop it in any U.S. mailbox.

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Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-6 (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.

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
- 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

199

- 38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
- 39. Joshua Tree National Monument
- 40. The White House Tours, President's Park (spring)
- 41. Natchez Trace Parkway
- 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

1992 (continued)

- 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 Battlefield

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