

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

Visitor Study Spring 1998

Report 102
Visitor Services Project
Cooperative Park Studies Unit



Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Visitor Study

Spring 1998

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Report 102

December 1998

Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Nina Chambers, Rob Jensen, Karen Steer and the staff of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area 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
Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area during April 11-19, 1998. A total of 989 questionnaires were distributed. Visitors returned 704 questionnaires for a 71% response rate.
- This report profiles Chattahoochee River NRA visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.
- Forty-six percent of the visitors were alone and 29% were in family groups. Forty-six percent of Chattahoochee River NRA visitors were in groups of one; 44% were in groups of two or three. One percent of visitors were in organized tour groups; one percent were on a school field trip. Many visitors (68%) were aged 26-55 and 13% were aged 15 years or younger.
- Among Chattahoochee River NRA visitors, the number of international visitors was so small that it is unreliable. United States visitors were from Georgia (91%), Florida (1%), New York (1%), and California (1%), 24 other states and Washington, D.C.
- During the past twelve months, most of the visitors (84%) to Chattahoochee River NRA were repeat visitors. During the past five years, 88% were repeat visitors. Almost half of the visitors (49%) stayed one hour in the park; 45% stayed two to three hours. About two-thirds of the visitors (66%) visit the park on both weekends and weekdays. Common activities on this visit to Chattahoochee River NRA were walking/ hiking (55%), exercising (49%), sightseeing (37%) and viewing wildlife (36%). On past visits, common activities included walking/ hiking (64%), exercising (56%), viewing wildlife (46%), sightseeing (45%) and picnicking (31%).
- Prior to visiting, many visitors relied on previous visits (57%), friends/ relatives (41%) and area signs (27%) to obtain information about the park. Most visitors (83%) were able to find the park because they knew the location from previous visits. The most often listed reasons for visiting were walking/ hiking (53%), exercising (52%) and viewing scenery (39%).
- Visitors identified the most useful information they need as they arrive at any unit of the Chattahoochee River NRA: a map of the unit (66%), restroom locations (36%) and rules and regulations (28%). They prefer to get this information via signs (61%), bulletin boards (53%) and brochures (41%).
- On this visit, the most visited places were Cochran Shoals Unit North (31%) and Cochran Shoals Unit South (30%). In the past, Cochran Shoals Unit South (36%), Cochran Shoals Unit North (30%), Johnson Ferry Unit (30%) and Sope Creek Unit (27%) were the most visited units in the park.
- For the use, importance and quality of visitor services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups who responded to each question. The most used services and facilities by 639 respondents were the trails (78%), parking areas (72%) and restrooms (54%). According to visitors, trails (94% of 468 respondents), parking areas (88% of 442 respondents) and restrooms (88% of 328 respondents) were the most important services. The best quality services were trails (77% of 450 respondents), parking areas (68% of 428 respondents) and garbage cans/ recycling (62% of 164 respondents).
- Most visitors (79%), when asked their opinion about the parking fees (\$2/day or \$20/year) said the fee is "about right." Twenty percent felt the fee was too high and 2% felt the fee was too low. The visitors suggested many ways the fees should be used to improve services.
- Most visitors (81%) rated the overall quality of services in the park as "good" or "very good." Visitors made many additional comments.

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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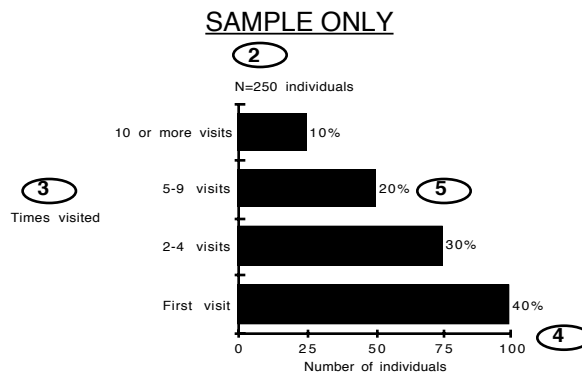
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors to Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (referred to as "Chattahoochee River NRA"). This visitor study was conducted during April 11-19, 1998 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 design used the standard format of previous Visitor Services Project studies. A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this report.

Interviews were conducted and questionnaires distributed to a sample of selected visitors visiting Chattahoochee River NRA during April 11-19, 1998. Visitors completed the questionnaire after their visit and then returned it by mail. Visitors were sampled as they entered eight units of the park (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Questionnaire distribution locations

<u>Location:</u>	<u>Questionnaires distributed</u>	
	Number	%
Cochran Shoals Unit South	359	36
Cochran Shoals Unit North	200	20
Paces Mill Unit	119	12
Island Ford Unit	75	8
Sope Creek Unit	75	8
Jones Bridge Unit	61	6
Vickery Creek Unit	53	5
Abbotts Bridge Unit	47	5
GRAND TOTAL	989	100

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

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

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

Data analysis

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 694 groups, Figure 5 presents data for 1,322 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

Sample size, missing data and reporting errors

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions create missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 704 questionnaires were returned by visitors, Figure 1 shows data for only 694 respondents.

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

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

Limitations

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

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of April 11-19, 1998. 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. If the sample size is less than 30, the word "**CAUTION!**" is included in the graph, figure or table.

Just prior to the study week, part of Atlanta was hit by severe weather including a tornado which caused damage to buildings and trees adjacent to some park units. Other than that, the weather was typical of spring with warm, sometimes rainy days.

Special Conditions

VISITOR RESULTS

Visitors contacted

At Chattahoochee River NRA, 1,127 visitor groups were contacted; 88% (989) accepted questionnaires. A total of 704 visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, a 71% response rate.

Table 2 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. The non-response bias is slightly significant for age--the visitors who returned questionnaires were slightly older than the visitors who accepted questionnaires.

Table 2: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	935	38.9	689	41.2
Group size	911	2.0	694	2.1

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 35 people. Almost half of visitors (46%) visited alone and 35% came in groups of two. Forty-six percent were alone and 29% were with families (see Figure 2). "Other" groups included alone with dog(s), track team and business associates. One percent of the visitors were traveling with an organized tour group (see Figure 3). One percent of the visitors were with a school field trip (see Figure 4).

The most common visitor ages were 26-55 years (68%), as shown in Figure 5. Thirteen percent of visitors were aged 15 years or younger. Most visitors (84%) said they were repeat visitors during the past 12 months (see Figure 6). During the past 5 years, 33% were first time visitors; 67% were repeat visitors (see Figure 7).

So few international visitors visited Chattahoochee River NRA that the number should be viewed with caution (see Table 3). United States visitors were from Georgia (91%), Florida (1%), New York (1%), 24 other states and Washington, D.C., as shown in Map 1 and Table 4.

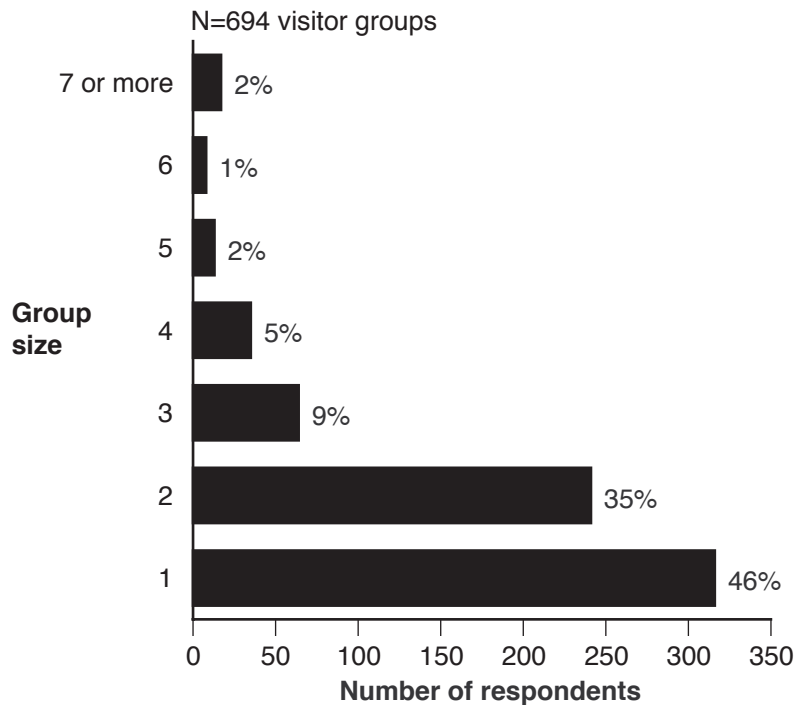


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

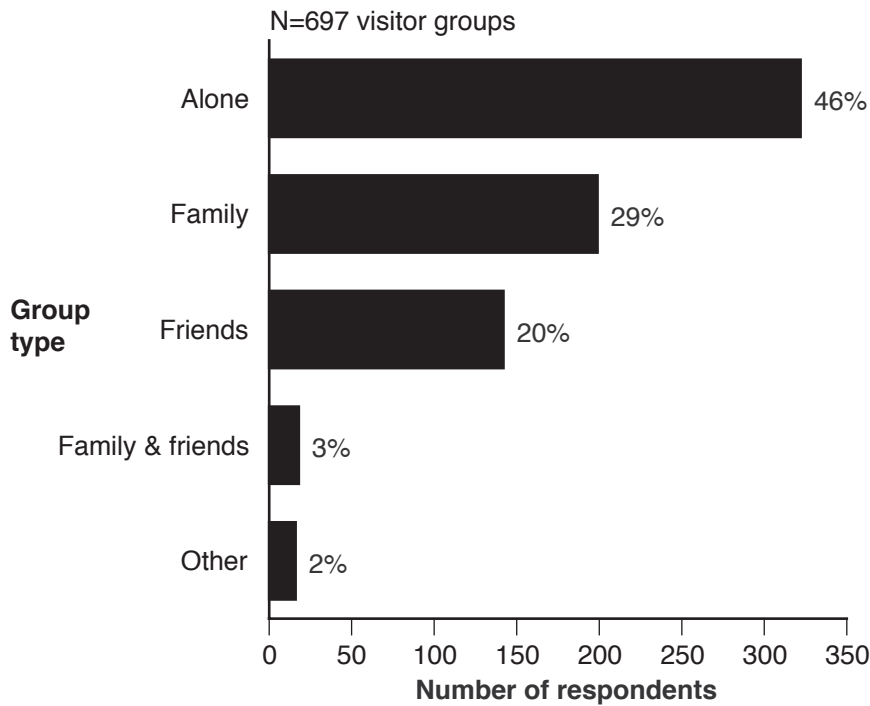


Figure 2: Group type

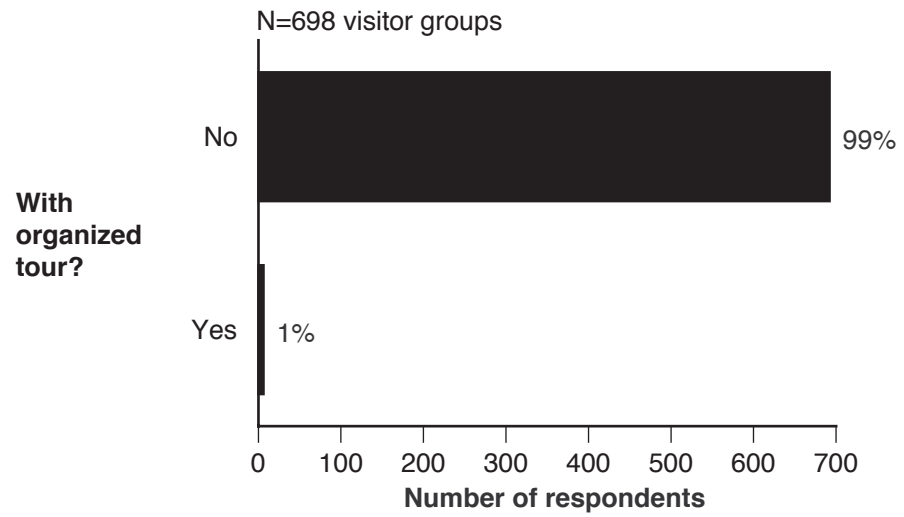


Figure 3: Organized tour groups

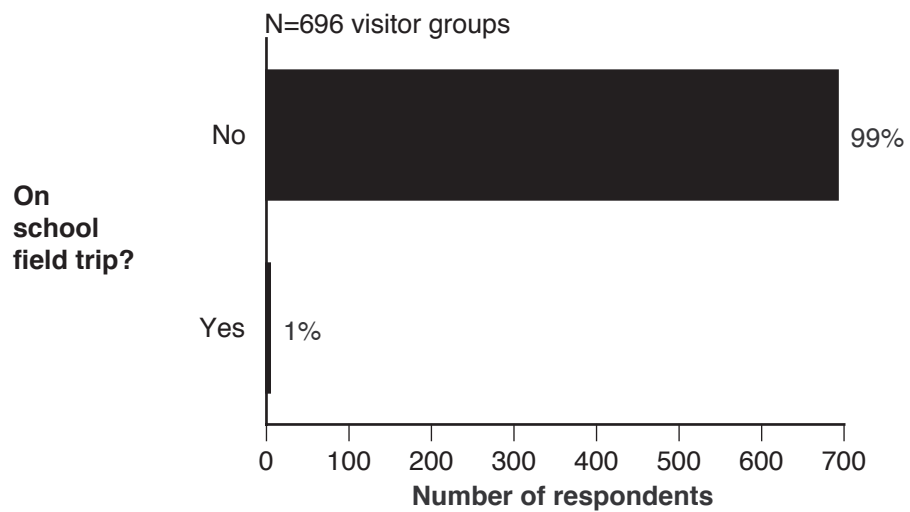


Figure 4: School field trips

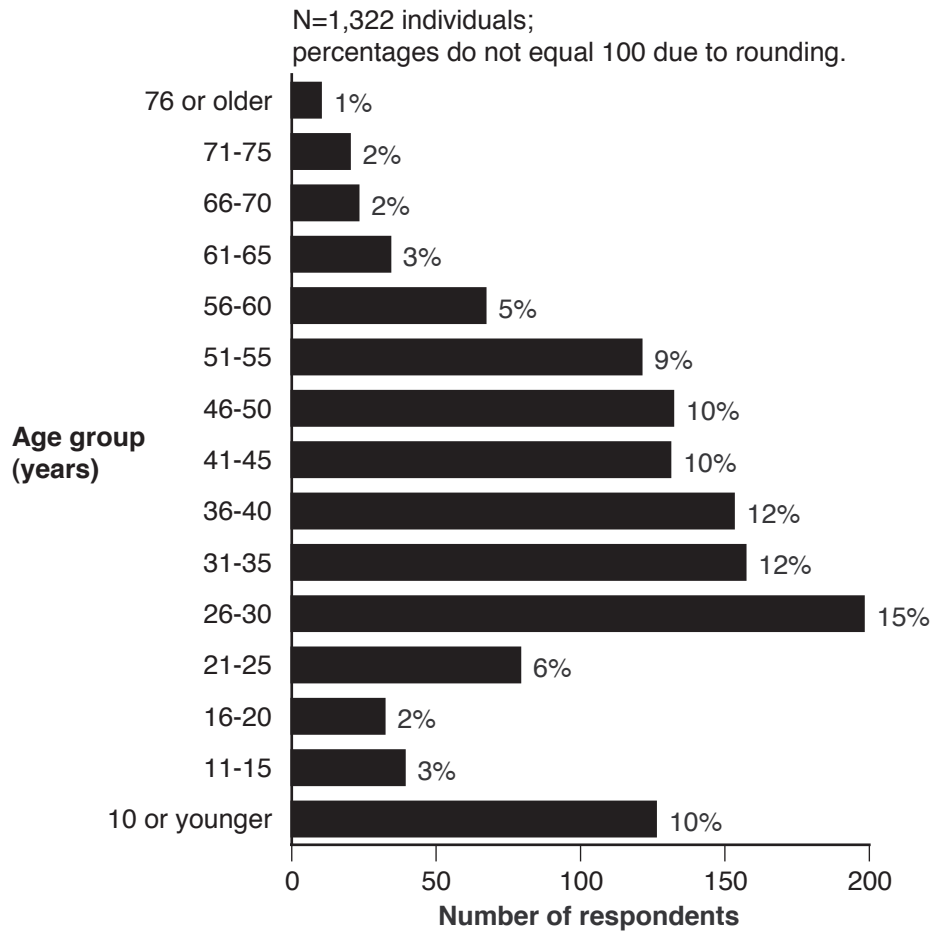


Figure 5: Visitor ages

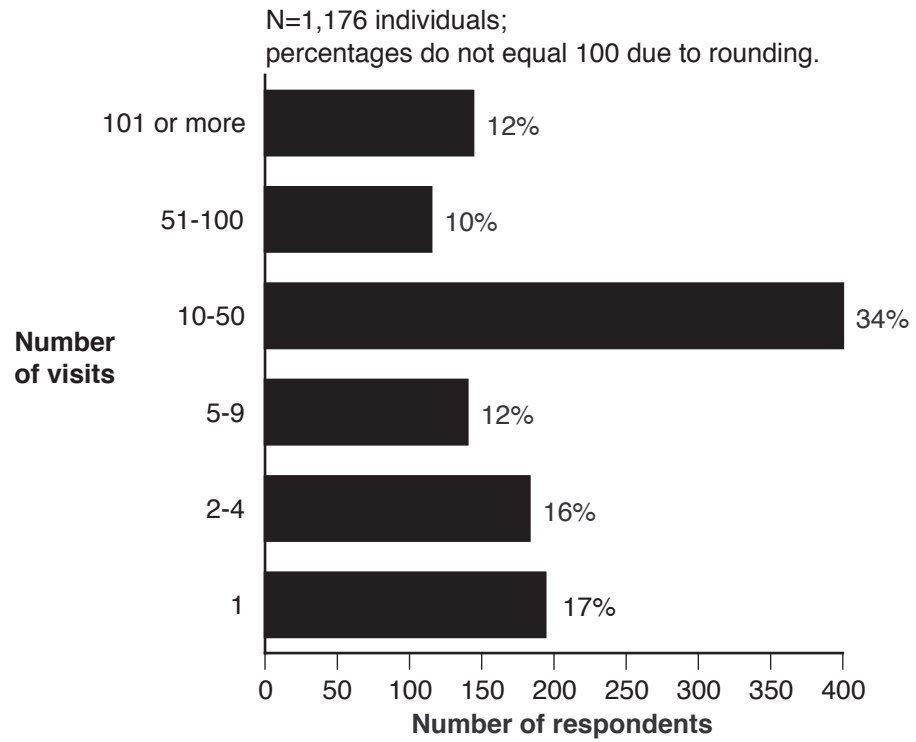


Figure 6: Number of visits during past 12 months

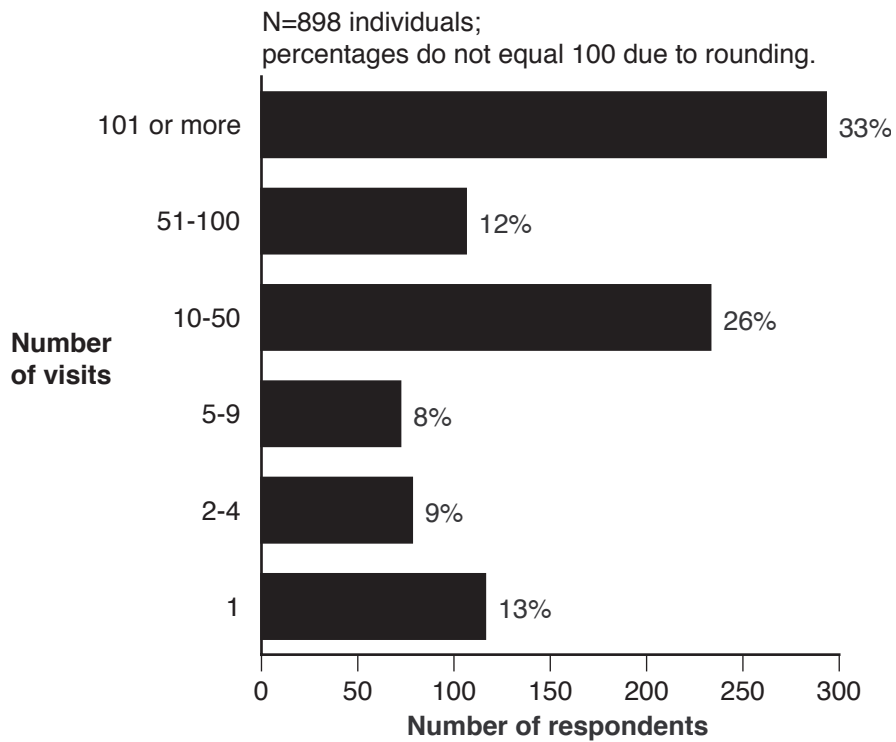


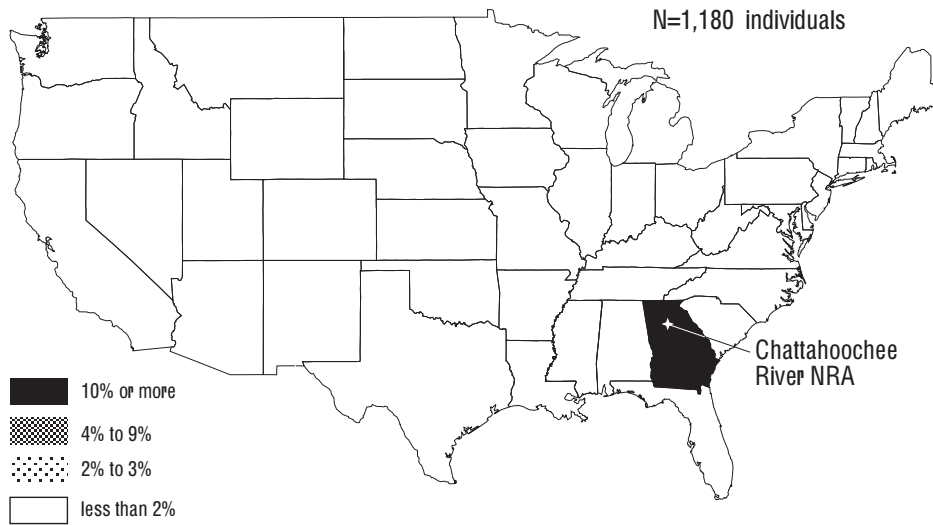
Figure 7: Number of visits during past 5 years

Table 3: Proportion of international visitors

N=17 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

CAUTION!

Country	Number of individuals	% of international visitors	% of total visitors
Poland	5	29	<1
India	4	24	<1
Japan	4	24	<1
Israel	2	12	<1
Canada	1	6	<1
Germany	1	6	<1



Map 1: Proportion of United States visitors from each state

Table 4: Proportion of United States visitors from each state

N=1,180 individuals;
 percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	% of U.S. visitors	% of total visitors
Georgia	1,076	91	90
Florida	16	1	1
New York	13	1	1
California	7	1	1
Massachusetts	5	<1	<1
Michigan	5	<1	<1
Missouri	5	<1	<1
Ohio	5	<1	<1
Tennessee	5	<1	<1
Alabama	4	<1	<1
Iowa	4	<1	<1
Wisconsin	4	<1	<1
Illinois	3	<1	<1
North Carolina	3	<1	<1
South Carolina	3	<1	<1
Virginia	3	<1	<1
Maryland	2	<1	<1
Minnesota	2	<1	<1
Pennsylvania	2	<1	<1
Texas	2	<1	<1
Colorado	1	<1	<1
Indiana	1	<1	<1
Louisiana	1	<1	<1
Maine	1	<1	<1
New Jersey	1	<1	<1
Oklahoma	1	<1	<1
Washington	1	<1	<1
Washington, D.C.	1	<1	<1
Other states	3	<1	<1

All visitor groups were asked how many hours they spent in the park on this visit. Figure 8 shows that 49% of the visitors spent one hour in the park. Another 45% of the visitor groups spent two to three hours in the park.

Length of stay

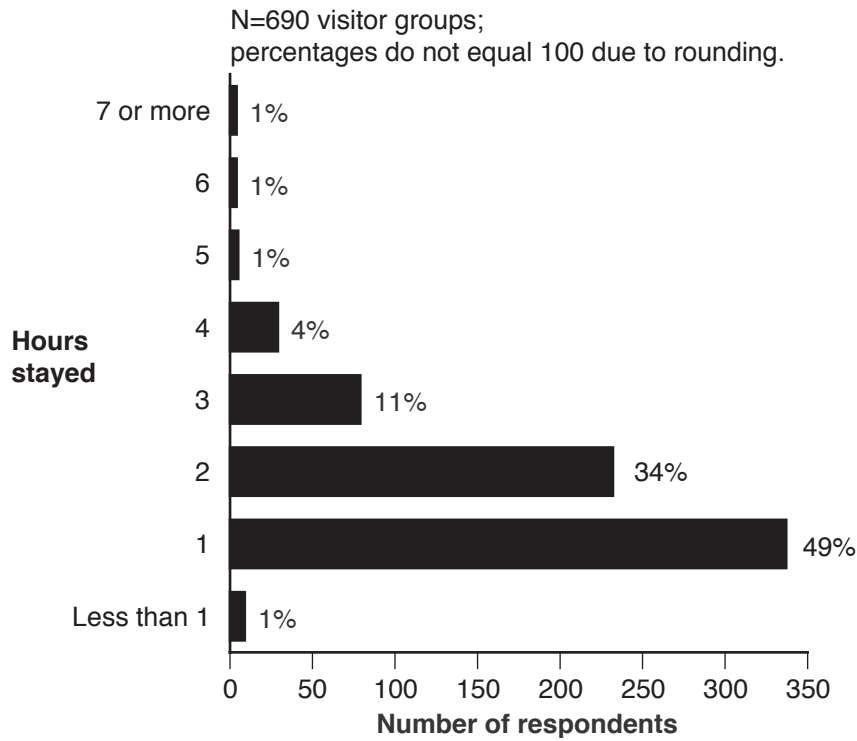


Figure 8: Length of stay in the park (hours)

**Activities -
this visit
and past
visits**

During this visit, common visitor activities included walking/ hiking (55%), exercising (49%), sightseeing (37%), and viewing wildlife (36%), as shown in Figure 9. The least common activity was attending ranger-led programs/ activities (<1%). On this visit, visitors identified "other" activities they did including exercising the dog(s), relaxing, reading and meditating.

During past visits, common visit activities included walking/ hiking (64%), exercising (56%), viewing wildlife (46%), sightseeing (45%), picnicking (31%), bicycling (26%), water sports (25%) and visiting historic ruins (24%), as shown in Figure 10. The least common activity was attending ranger-led programs/ activities (5%). On past visits, "other" activities included walking dog(s), relaxing, meditating, watching birds, reading and canoeing.

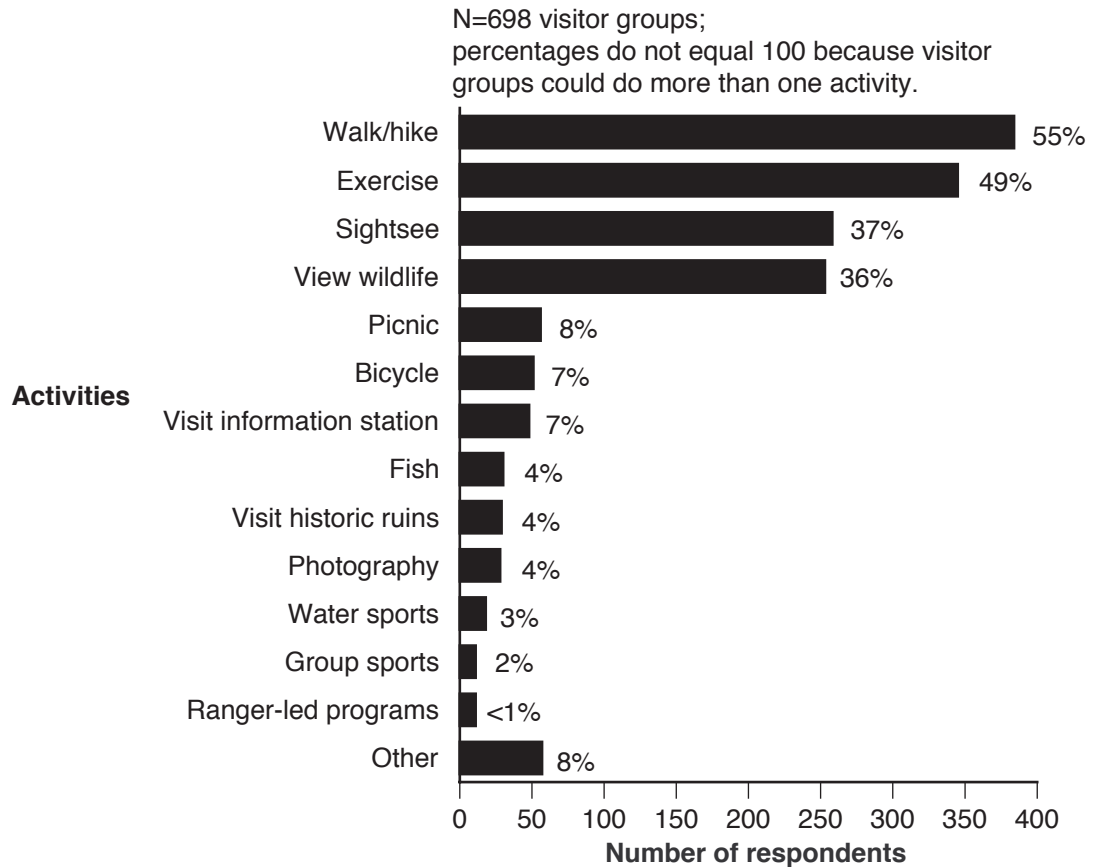


Figure 9: Visitor activities on this visit

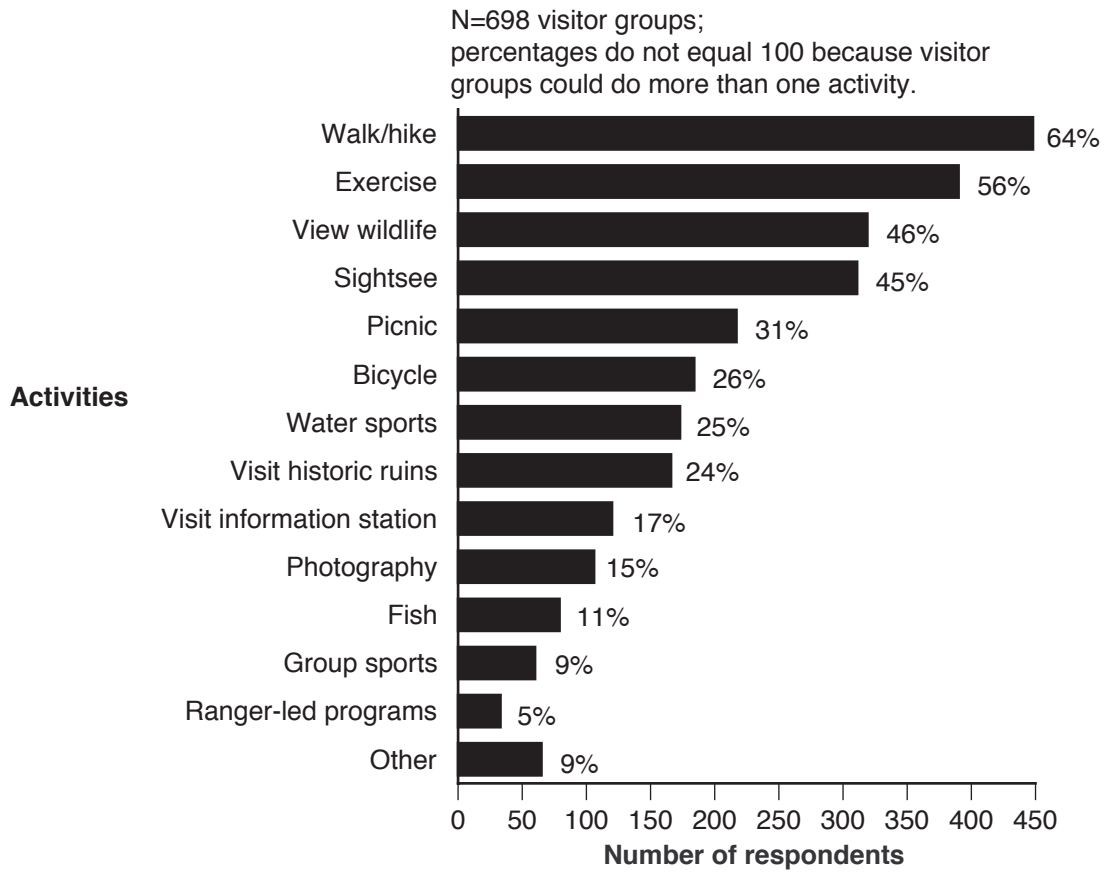


Figure 10: Visitor activities on past visits

Sources of information

Visitors were asked to identify the information sources they used to get information about Chattahoochee River NRA. The most used sources previous visits (57%), friends/relatives (41%), area signs (27%), as shown in Figure 11. Thirteen percent of the visitors did not received any information prior to their trip. The least used sources of information were tourist information at motel/ hotel and real estate companies (each <1%). Seven percent of the visitors listed "other" sources including living close to the park, word of mouth, driving by, city map and cross-country track team.

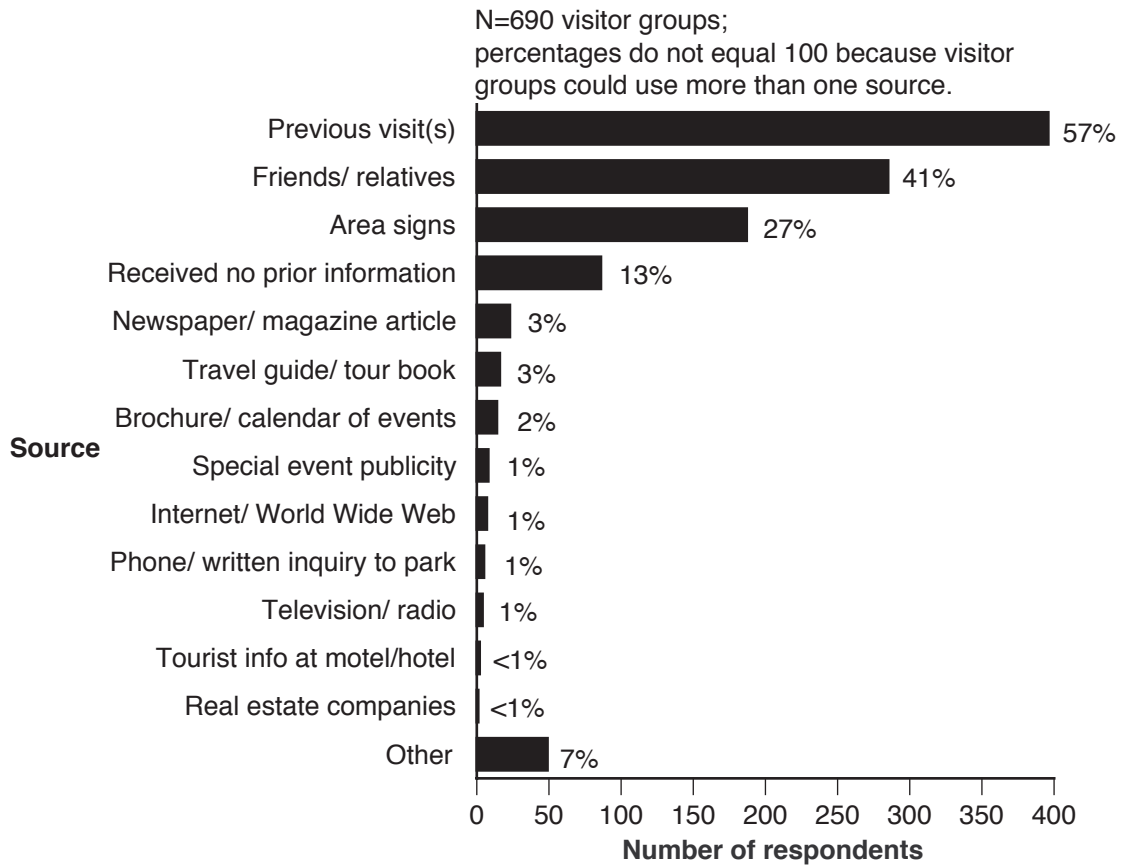


Figure 11: Sources of information

Visitors were asked, "On this visit, how did you and your group locate Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area?" Most visitors knew the location from previous visits or living in the area (83%), as shown in Figure 12. Road signs (23%) and maps (5%) were the next most used sources. "Other" sources which visitors used included friends, living nearby and previous visits.

Locating the park

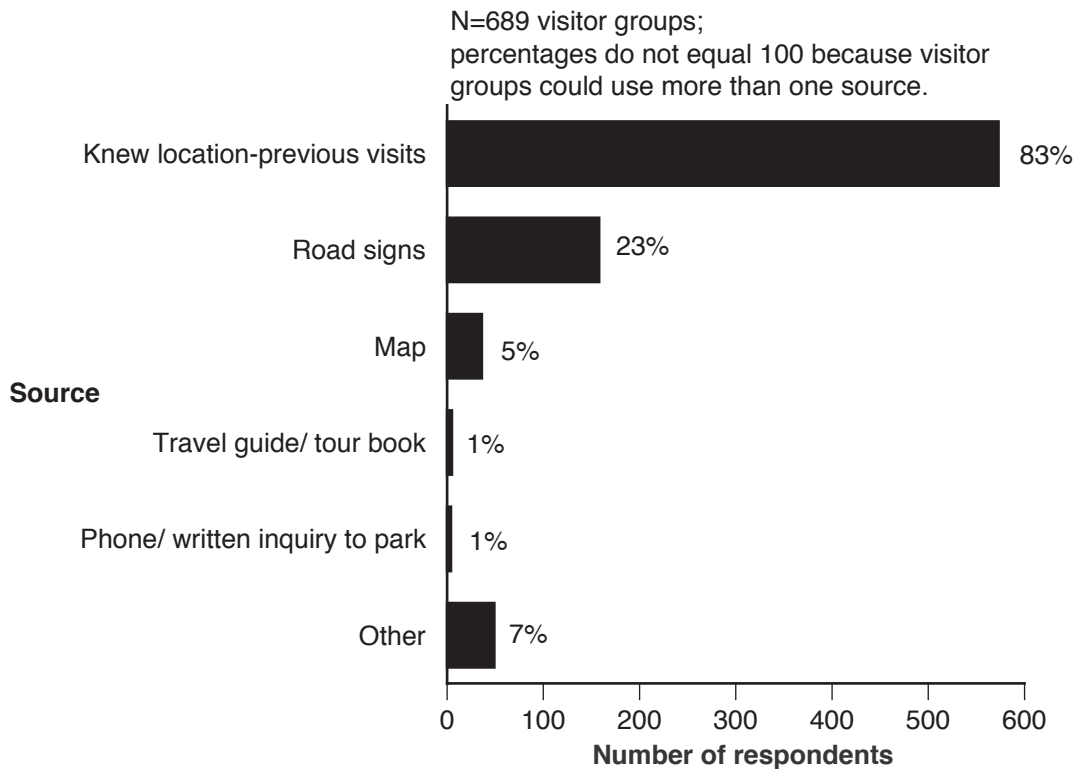


Figure 12: Sources used to locate the park

Park information desired Visitors were asked what types of information would be most useful as they arrived at any unit of the Chattahoochee River NRA. The most needed information was a map of the unit (66%), as shown in Figure 13. Visitors identified "other" information they needed (see Table 5).

Visitors were then asked how they would like to receive the needed information. Many visitor groups said signs (61%), bulletin boards (53%) and brochures (41%), as shown in Figure 14. "Other" methods wanted to receive information included newspapers, newsletters, rangers, telephone number for more information.

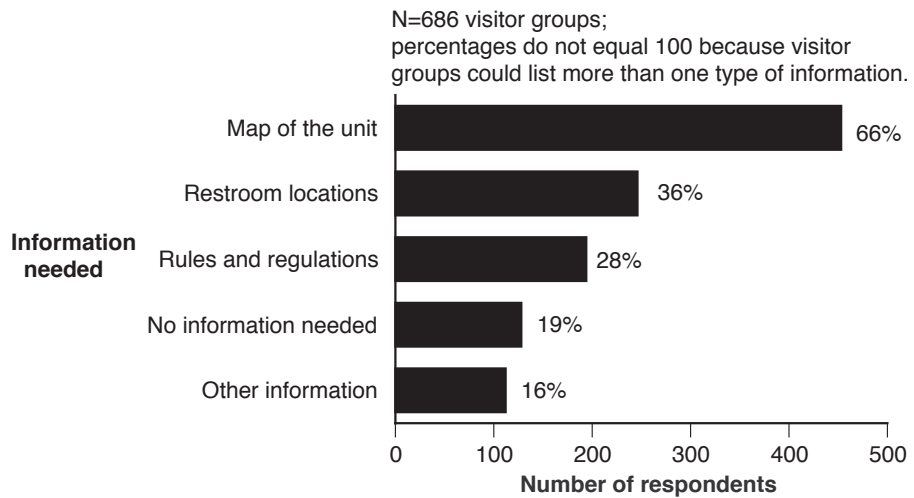


Figure 13: Park unit information desired

Table 5: Other park unit information desired

N=115 comments

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Trail maps with distance and difficulty ratings	39
Mile markers	8
Plant and tree identification	8
Hours open	7
Drinking water/ locations	7
Parking fee charges/annual pass information	6
List of attractions at that unit	5
Parking information	4
Activity options	4
Water spill schedule	3
Dogs on leash notification	2
Special events fliers	2
Site history	2
Improved road directional signs	2
Other suggestions	16

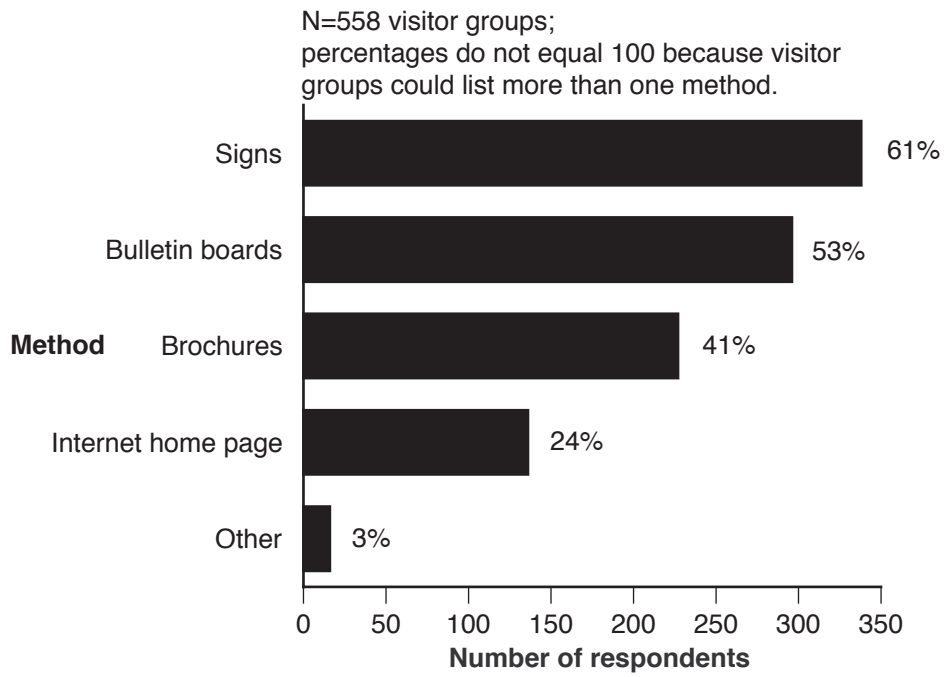


Figure 14: Methods preferred for getting information

Reasons for visiting

Visitors were asked to list their reasons for visiting Chattahoochee River NRA on this visit. The most frequently listed reason were viewing walking/ hiking (53%), exercising (52%), and viewing scenery (39%), as shown in Figure 15. The reason least often identified was to take advantage of group sports (2%). "Other" reasons that visitors came were to walk pets, relax with nature, fly kites, meditate, read, show friends or family and get information about other parks.

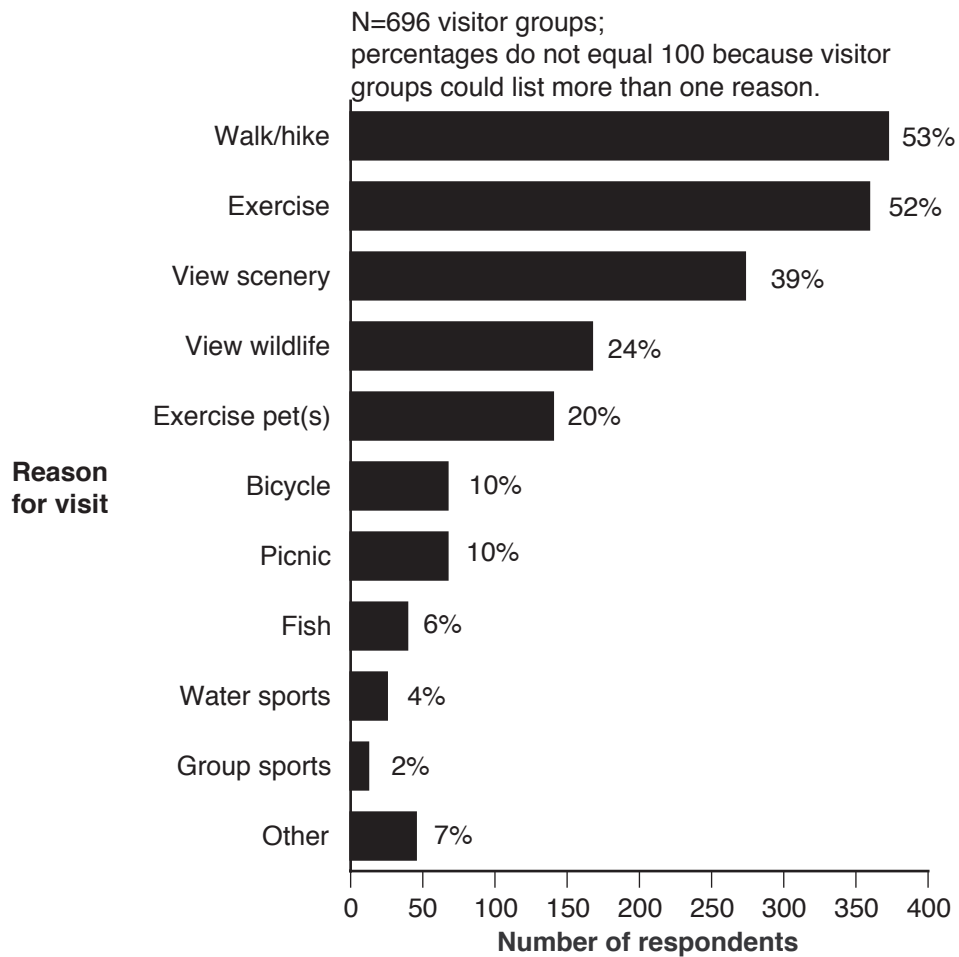


Figure 15: Reasons for visiting

Visitors were asked to list the places they visited in Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area on this trip. The most visited places were Cochran Shoals North Unit (31%), Cochran Shoals South Unit (30%), Sope Creek Unit (15%), Paces Mill Unit (13%), and Johnson Ferry Unit (10%), as shown in Figure 16. The least visited place was Bowmans Island Unit (<1%).

Places visited-- this visit and past visits

Visitors also listed the places they had visited during past visits. Cochran Shoals South Unit was the most visited place (36%), followed by Cochran Shoals North Unit (35%), Johnson Ferry Unit (30%), Sope Creek Unit (27%), Paces Mill Unit (23%) and Ackers Mill Unit (21 %), as shown in Figure 17. Bowmans Island Unit (2%) was also the least visited unit in the past.

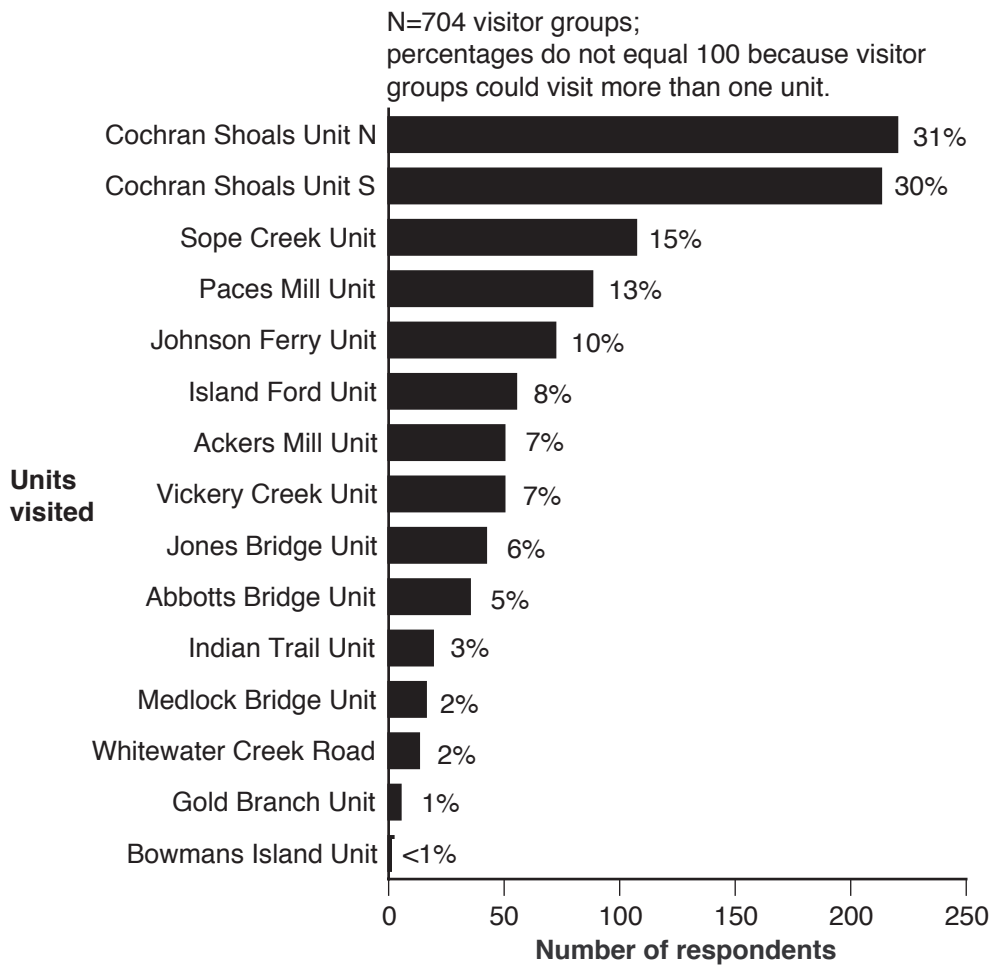


Figure 16: Places visited - this visit

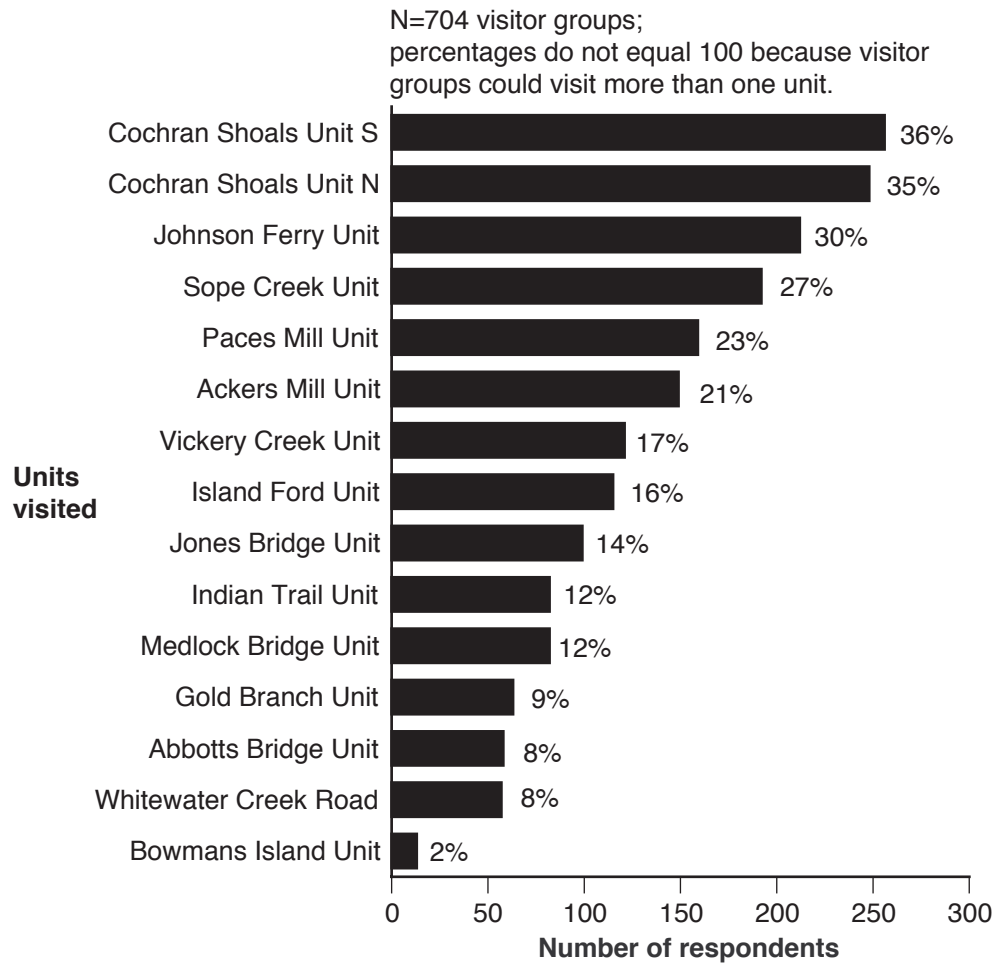


Figure 17: Places visited - past visits

Visitors were asked whether this was their first visit to Chattahoochee River NRA. First time visitors totaled 5% (see Figure 18). The majority of visitors (95%) were repeat visitors.

Park use on weekdays versus weekends

The repeat visitors were asked when they usually visit Chattahoochee River. About two-thirds of the visitors (66%) usually visit on both weekends and weekdays, as shown in Figure 19. Twenty-one percent usually visit on weekends and 13% visit on weekdays.

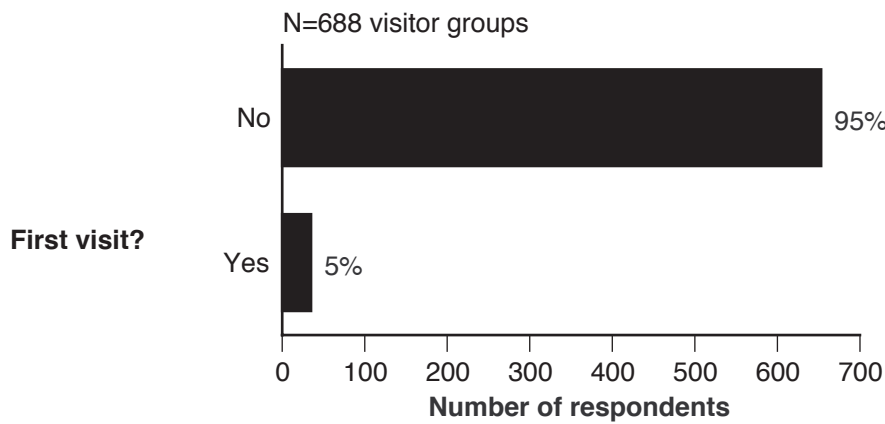


Figure 18: Visitors visiting the park for first time

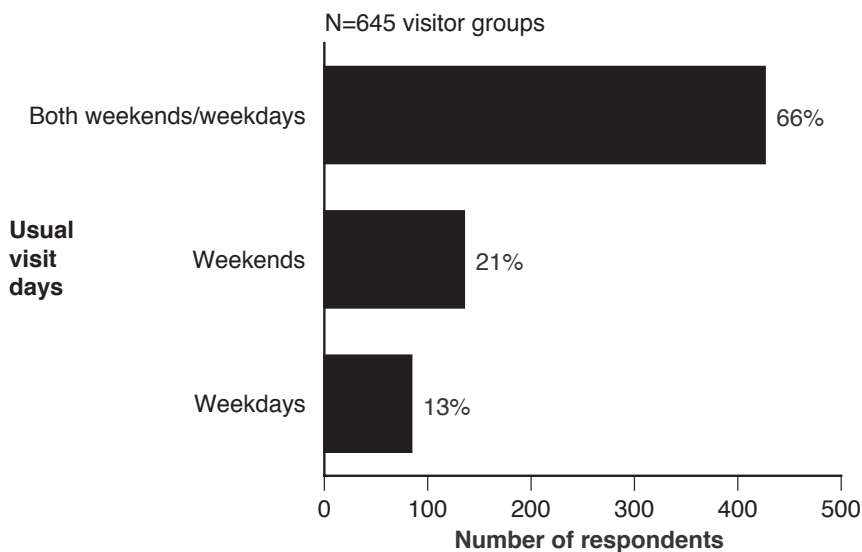


Figure 19: Park use on weekdays versus weekends

Visitor services and facilities: use, importance and quality The most commonly used visitor services and facilities at Chattahoochee River NRA were trails (78%), parking areas (72%), restrooms (54%), park brochure/ map (29%) and garbage cans/ recycling (28%), as shown in Figure 20. The least used service was ranger-led programs (<1%).

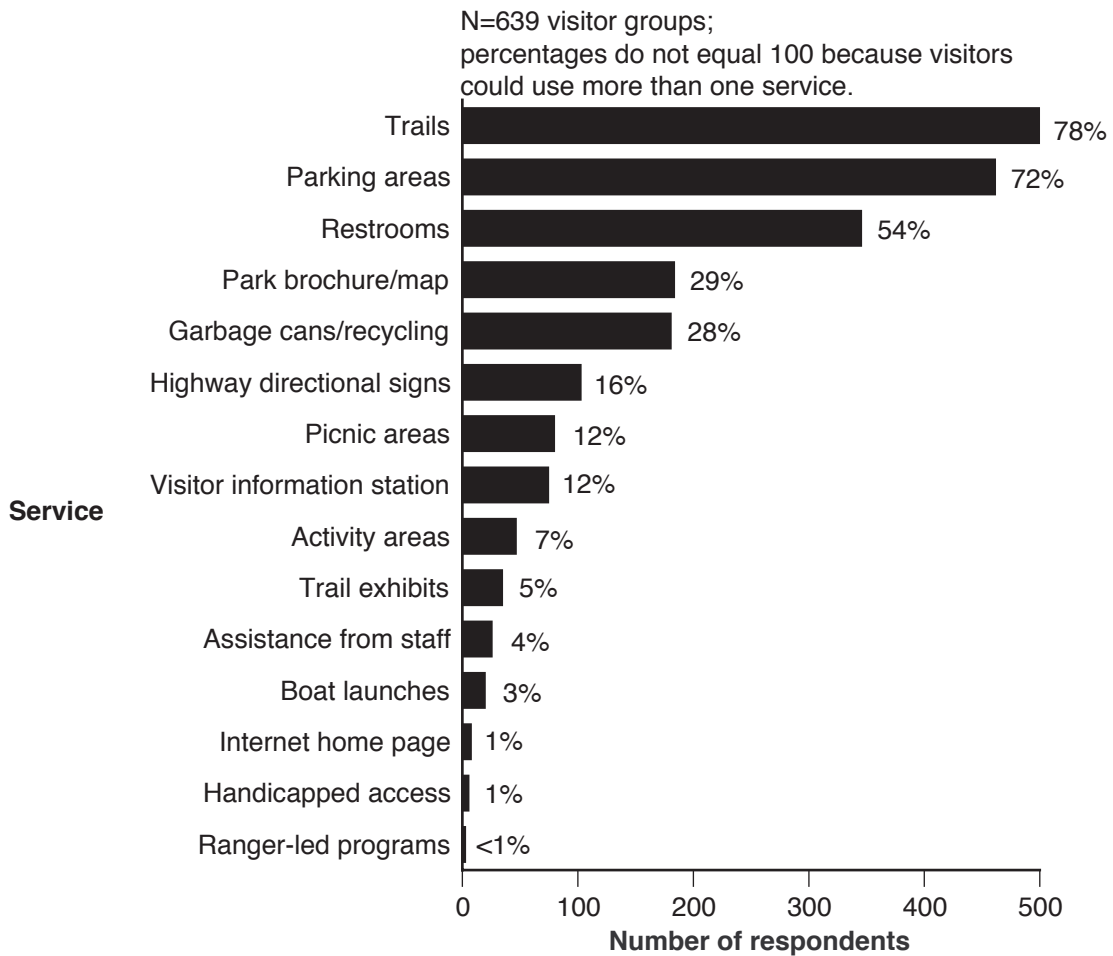


Figure 20: Visitor services and facilities used

Visitors rated the importance and quality of each of the visitor services and facilities they used. They used the five point scales below.

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

Figure 21 shows the average importance and quality ratings for each service and facility. An average score was determined for each service or facility based on ratings by visitors who used that service or facility. This was done for both importance and quality. The results were plotted on the grid shown in Figure 21. All services and facilities were rated above average in importance and quality. Note that handicapped access, boat launches, ranger-led programs, assistance from uniformed staff and the internet home page were not rated by enough visitor groups to provide reliable information.

Figures 22-36 show that several services and facilities received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: trails (94%), parking areas (88%), restrooms (88%) and garbage cans/ recycling (81%). The highest "not important" rating was for picnic areas (7%).

Figures 37-51 show that several services and facilities were given high "good" to "very good" quality ratings: trails (77%), parking areas (68%), garbage cans/ recycling (62%) and visitor information station (59%). The service which received the highest "very poor" quality rating was trail exhibits (10%).

Figure 52 combines the "very good" and "good" quality ratings and compares those ratings for all of the services and facilities.

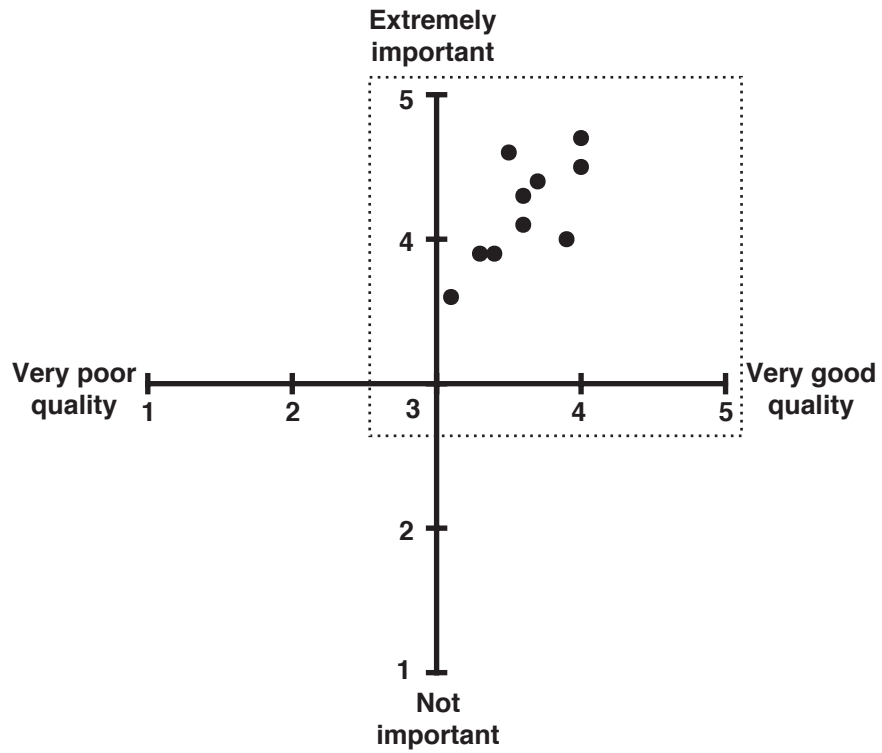


Figure 21: Average ratings of visitor services and facilities importance and quality

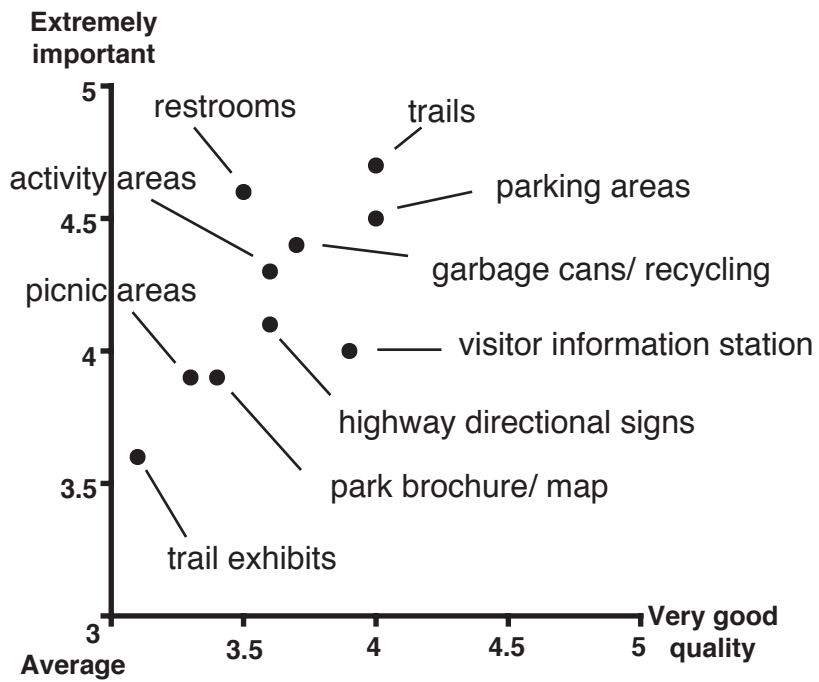


Figure 21: Detail

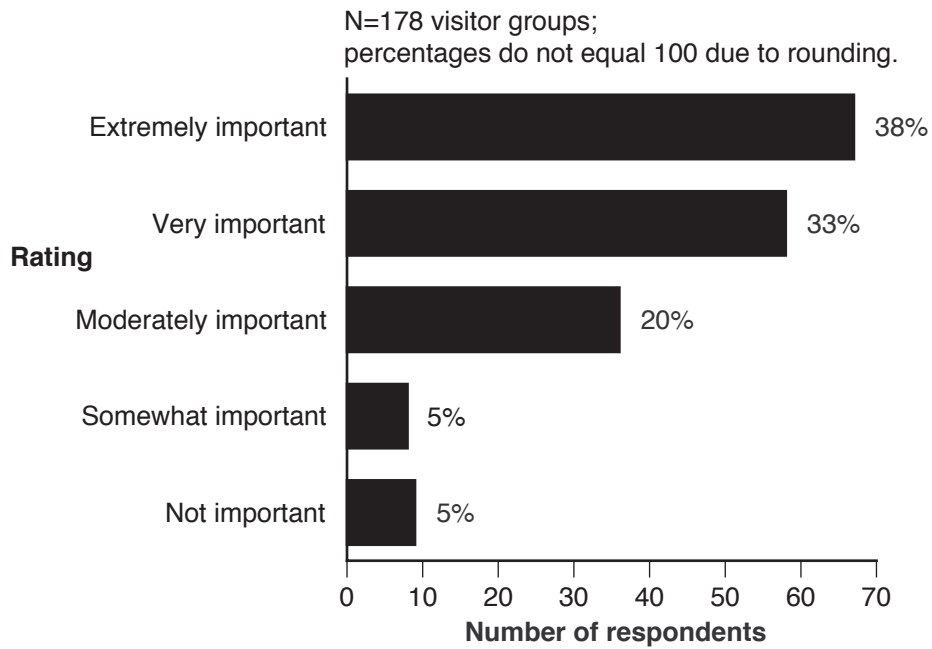


Figure 22: Importance of park brochure/map

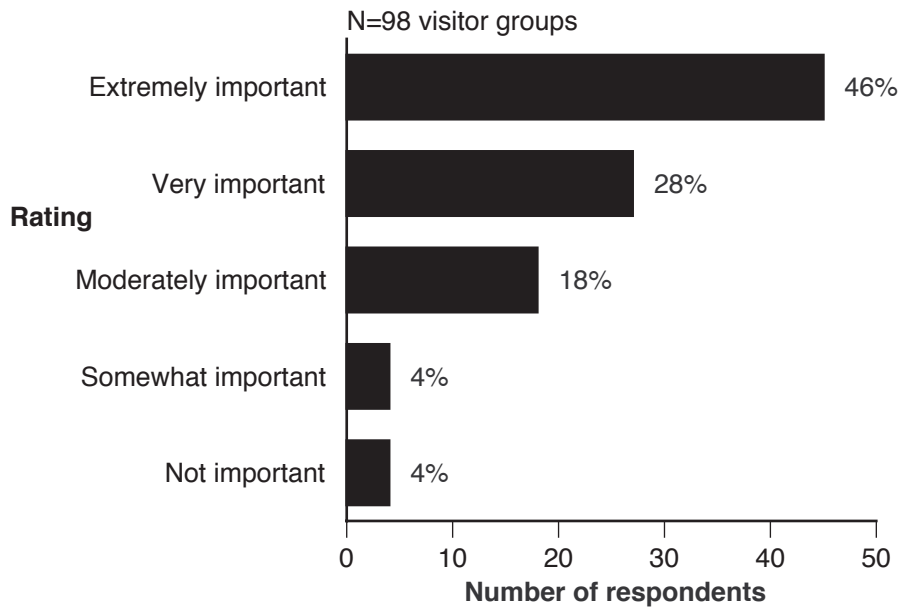


Figure 23: Importance of highway directional signs

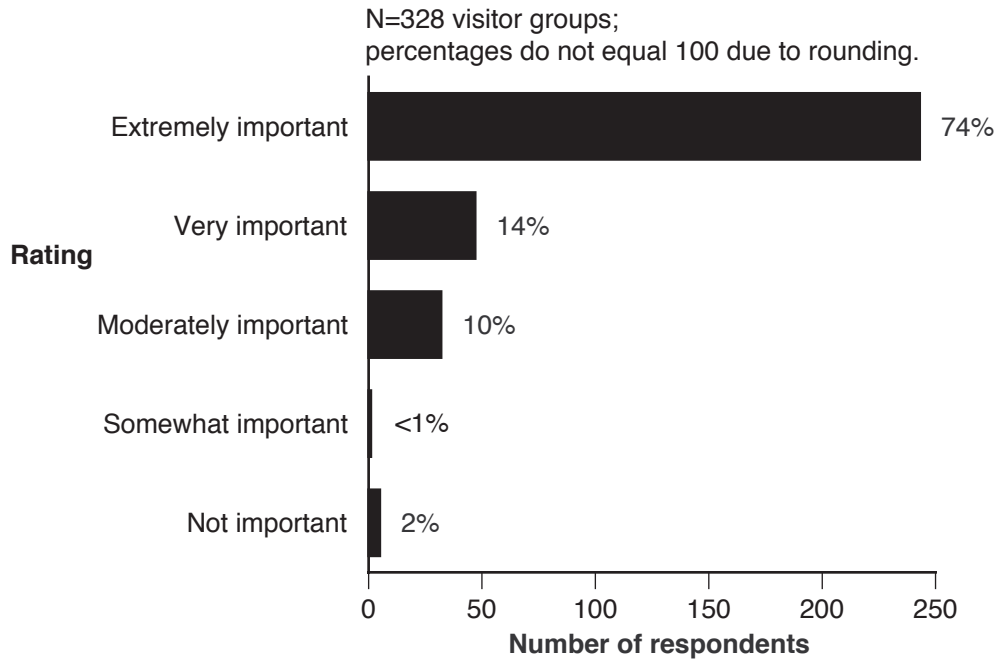


Figure 24: Importance of restrooms

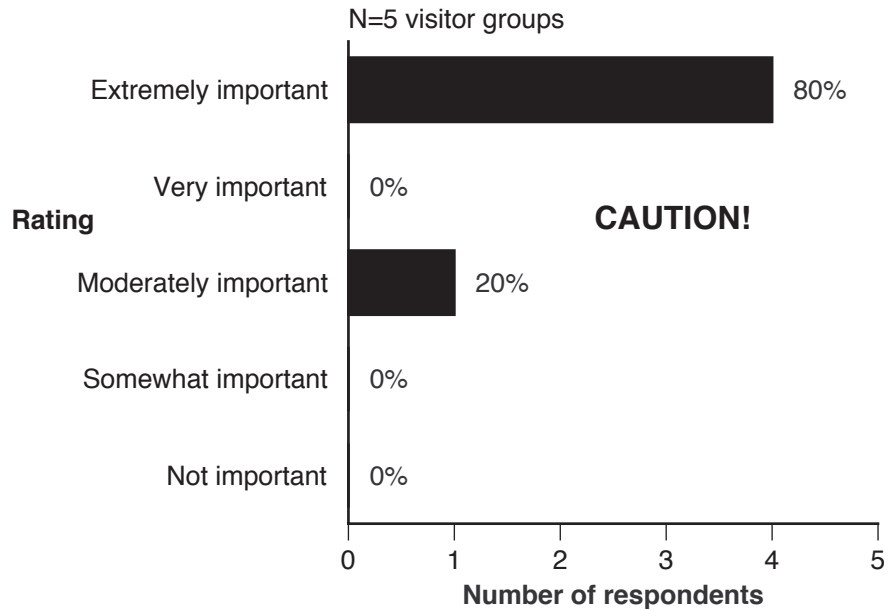


Figure 25: Importance of handicapped access

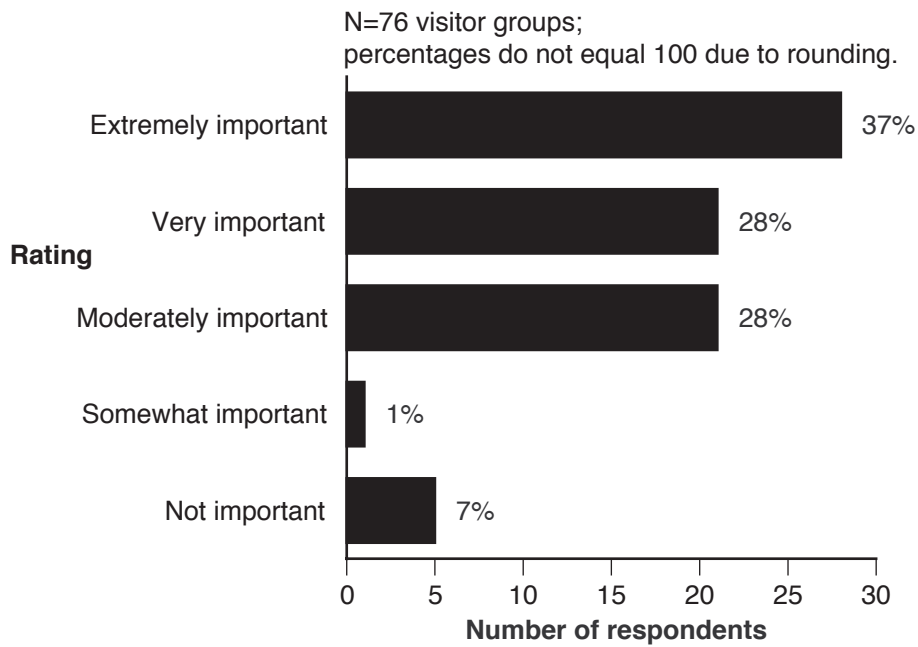


Figure 26: Importance of picnic areas

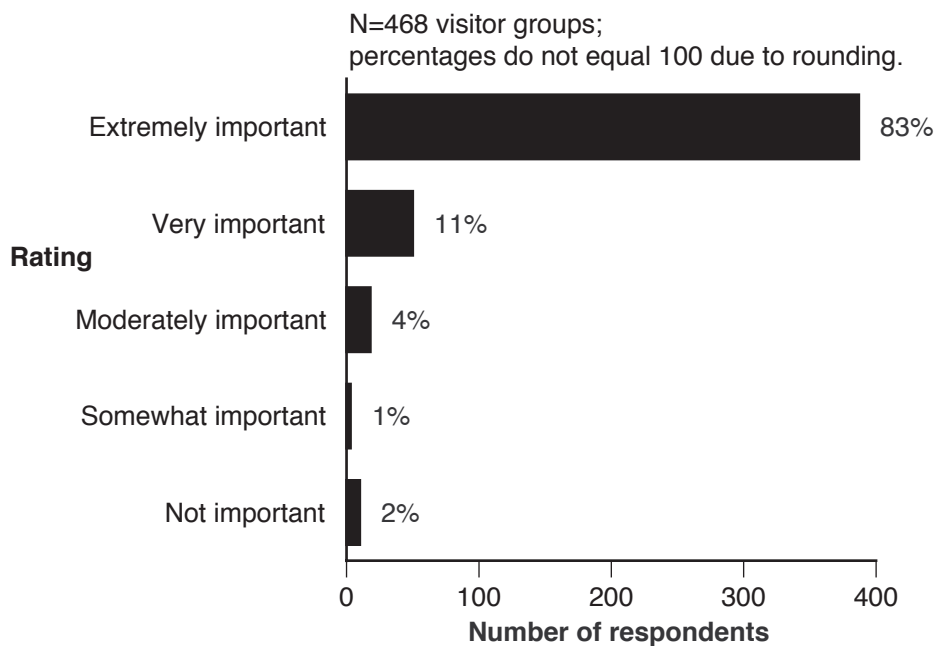


Figure 27: Importance of trails

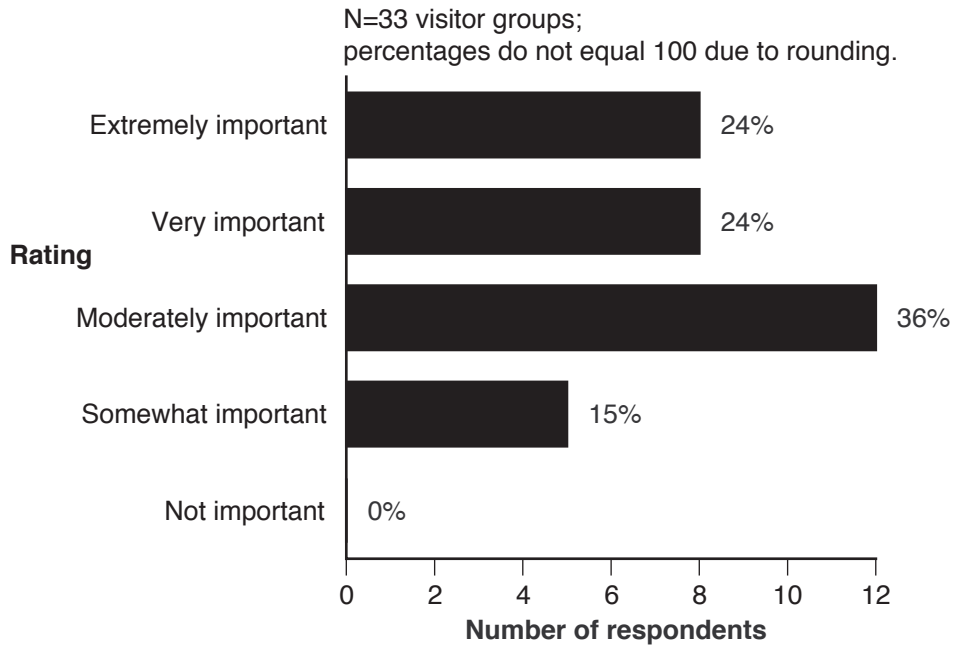


Figure 28: Importance of trail exhibits

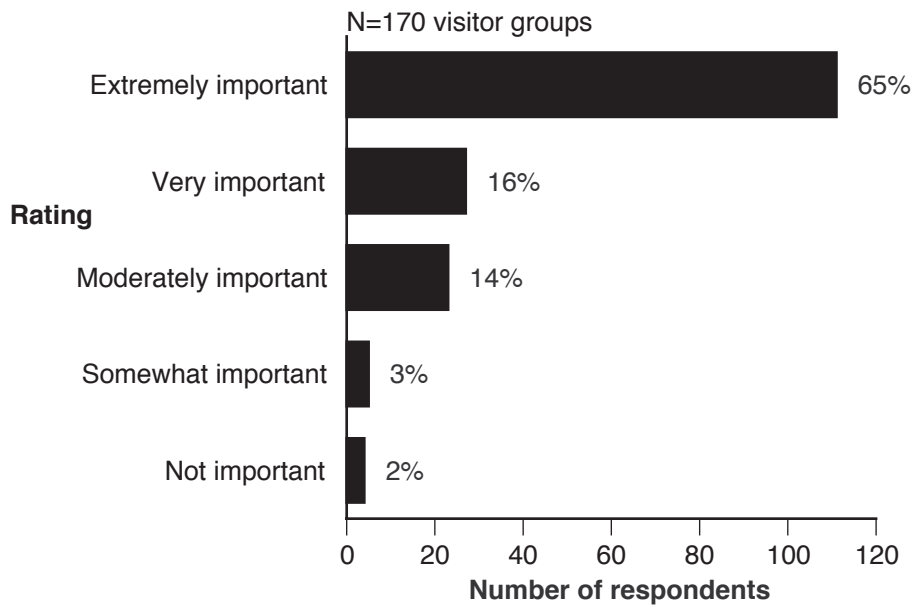


Figure 29: Importance of garbage cans/ recycling

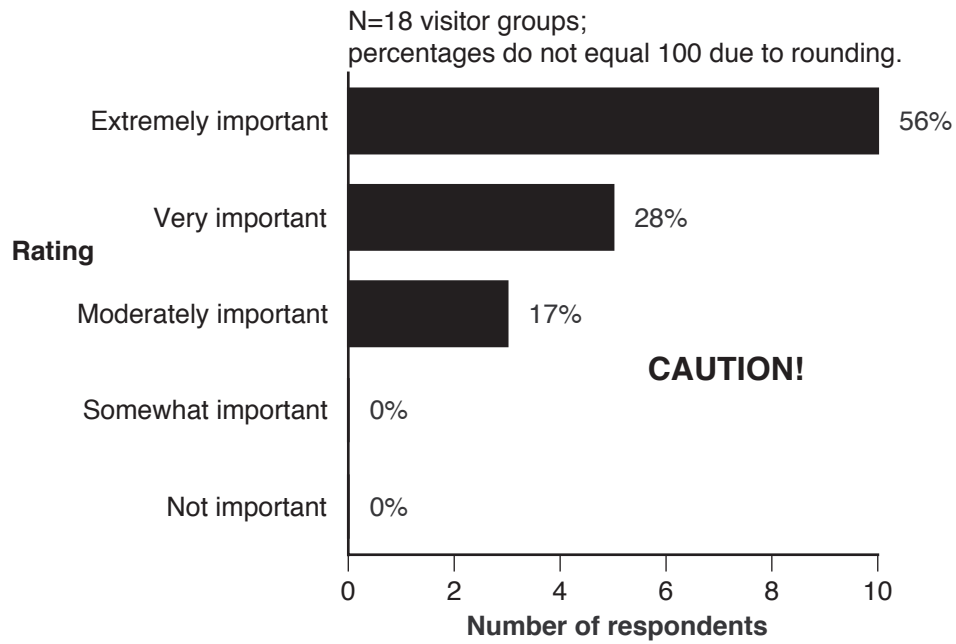


Figure 30: Importance of boat launches

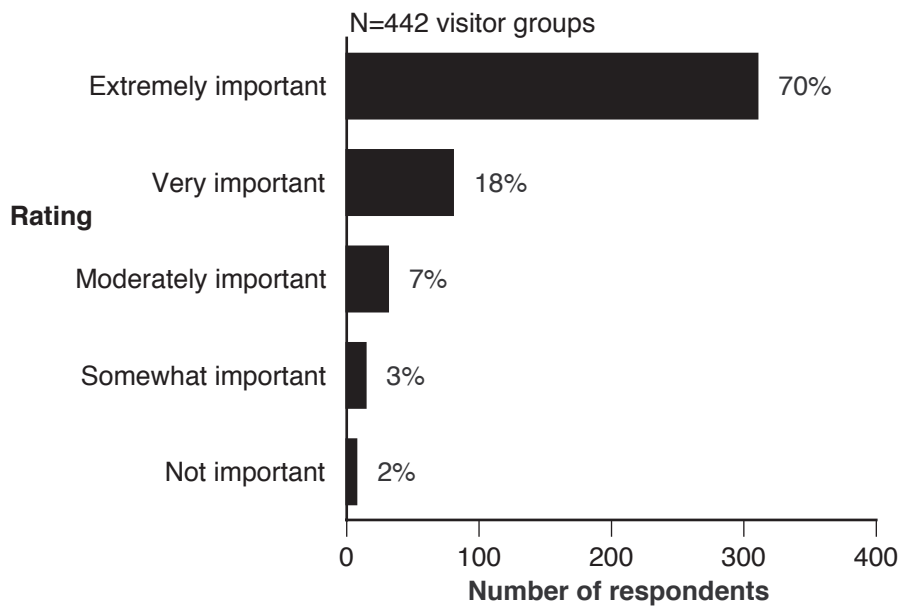


Figure 31: Importance of parking areas

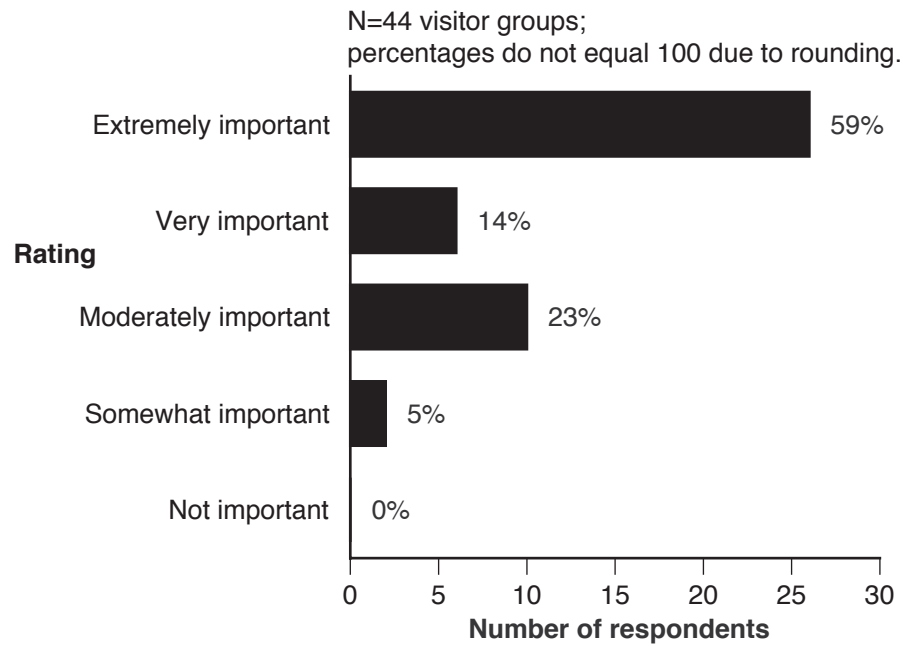


Figure 32: Importance of activity areas/ playing fields

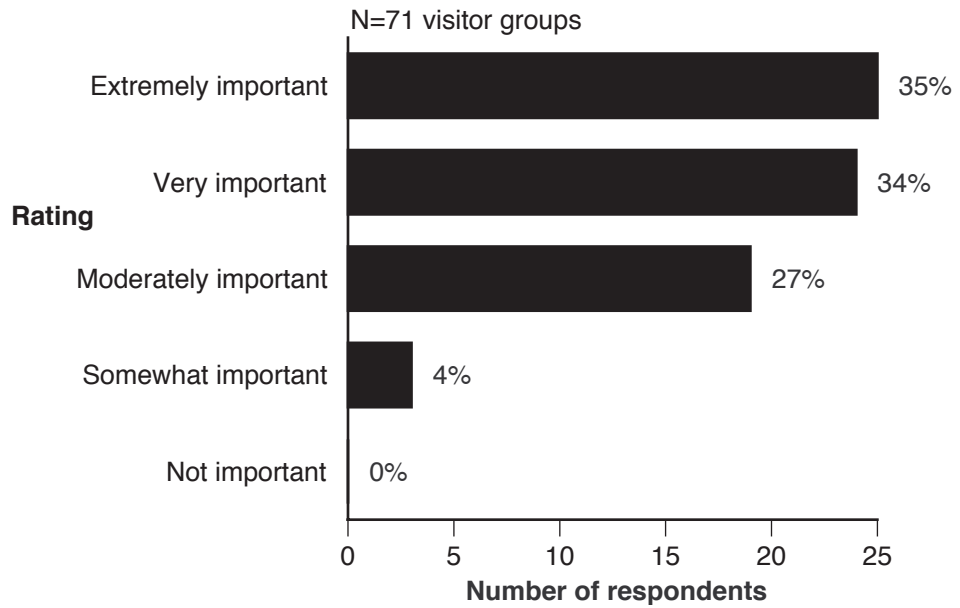


Figure 33: Importance of visitor information station

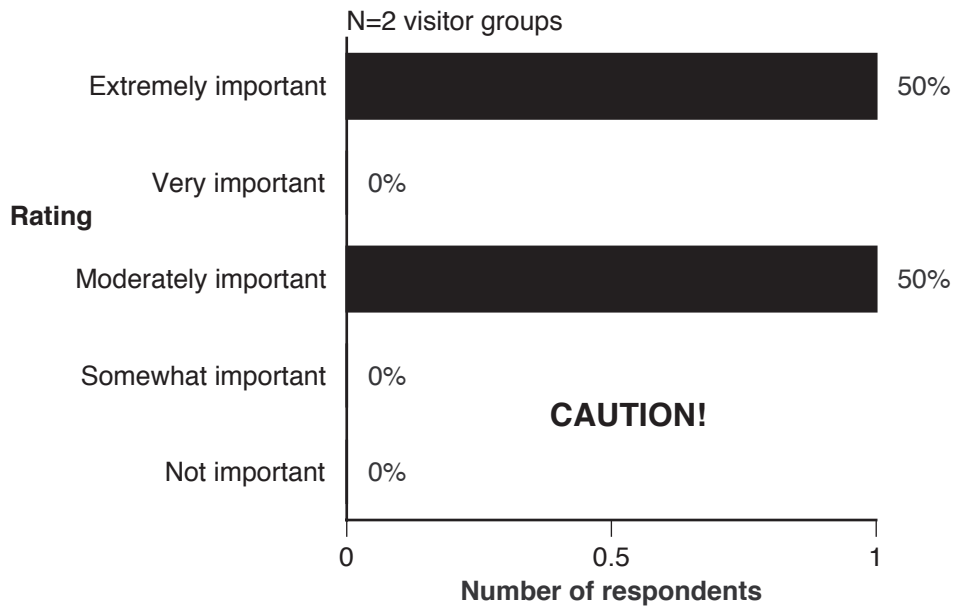


Figure 34: Importance of ranger-led programs/ activities

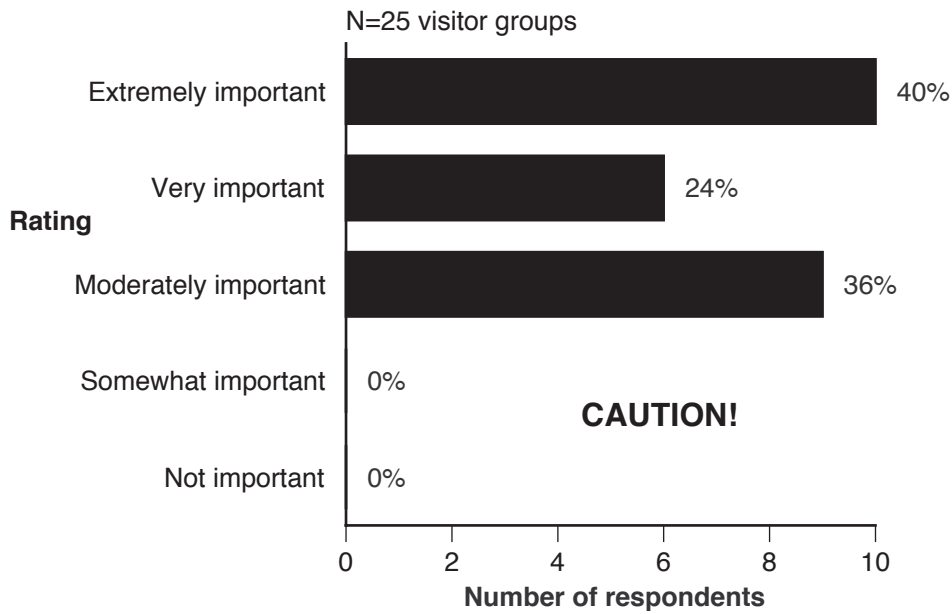


Figure 35: Importance of assistance from uniformed park staff

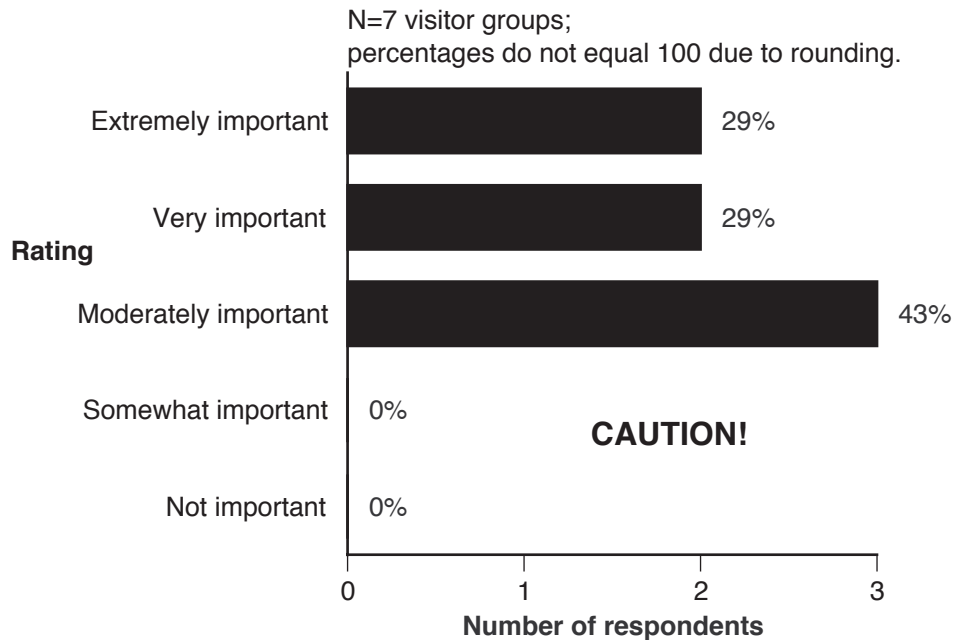


Figure 36: Importance of Internet home page

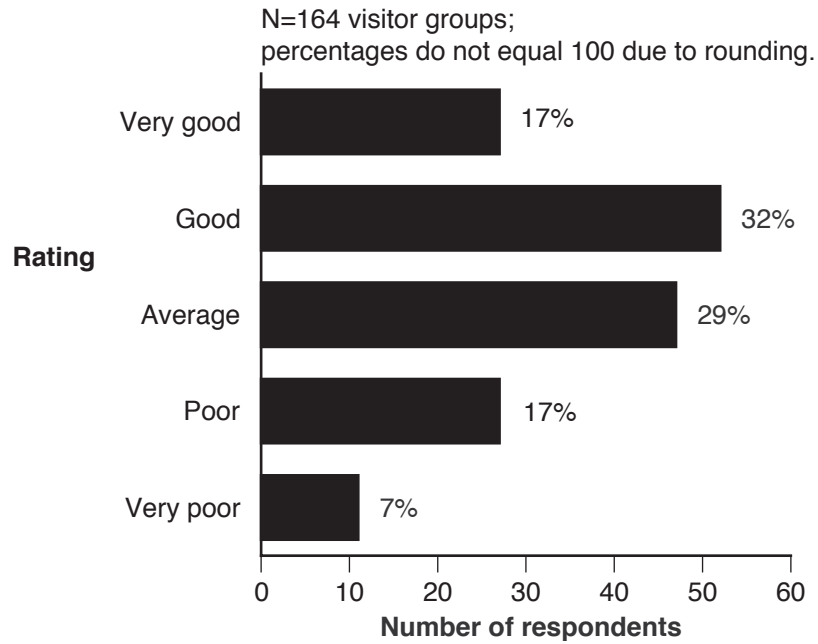


Figure 37: Quality of park brochure/map

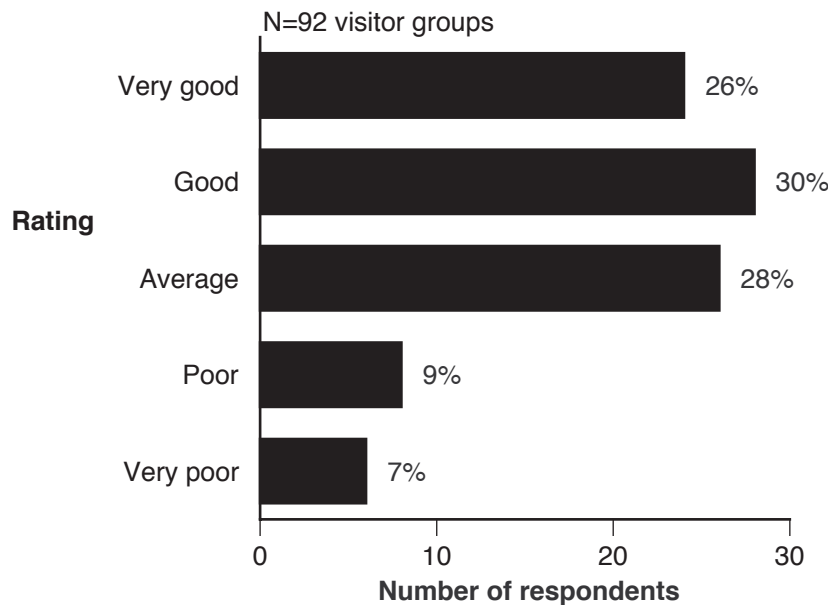


Figure 38: Quality of highway directional signs

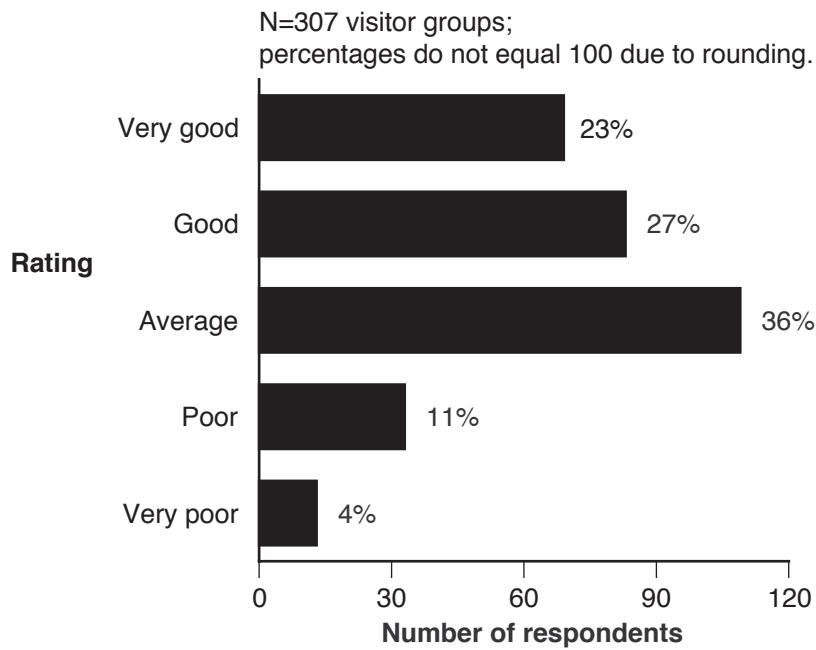


Figure 39: Quality of restrooms

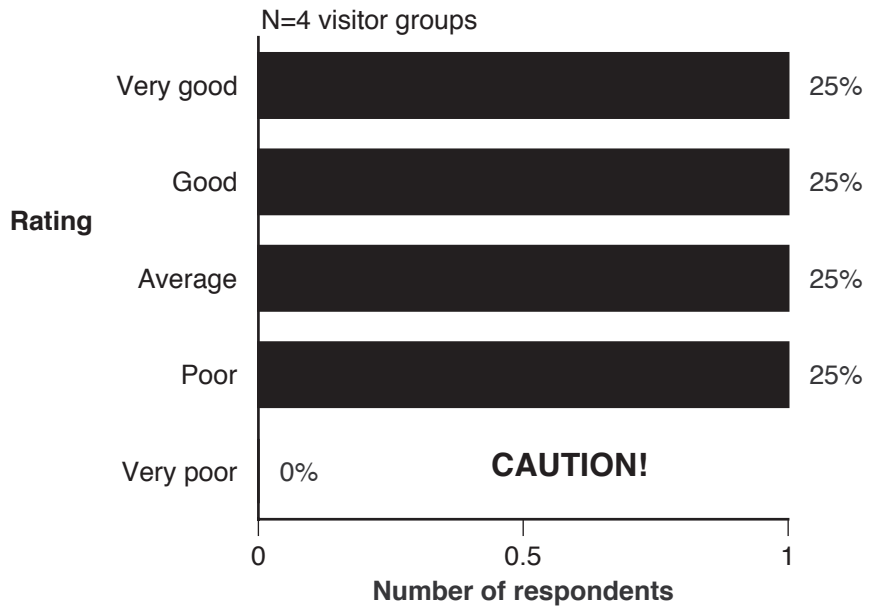


Figure 40: Quality of handicapped access

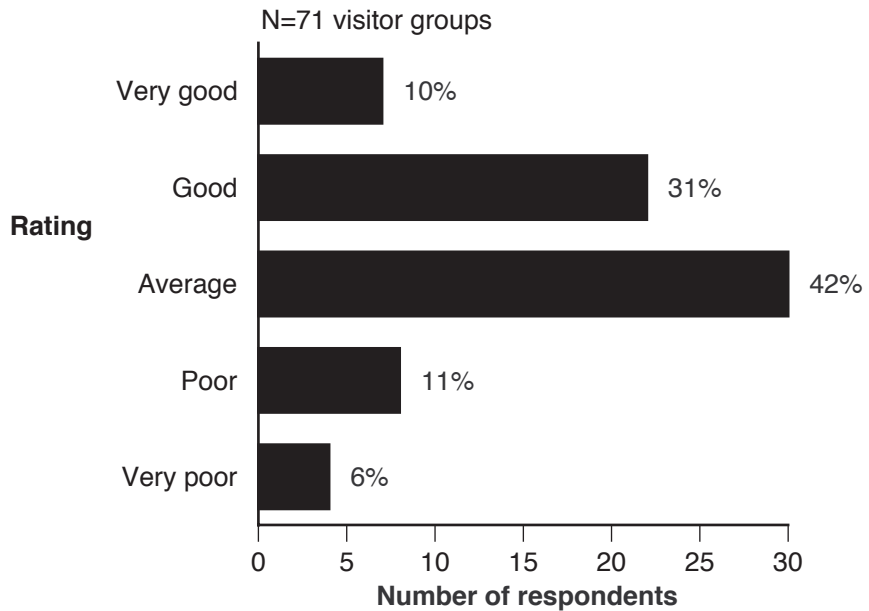


Figure 41: Quality of picnic areas

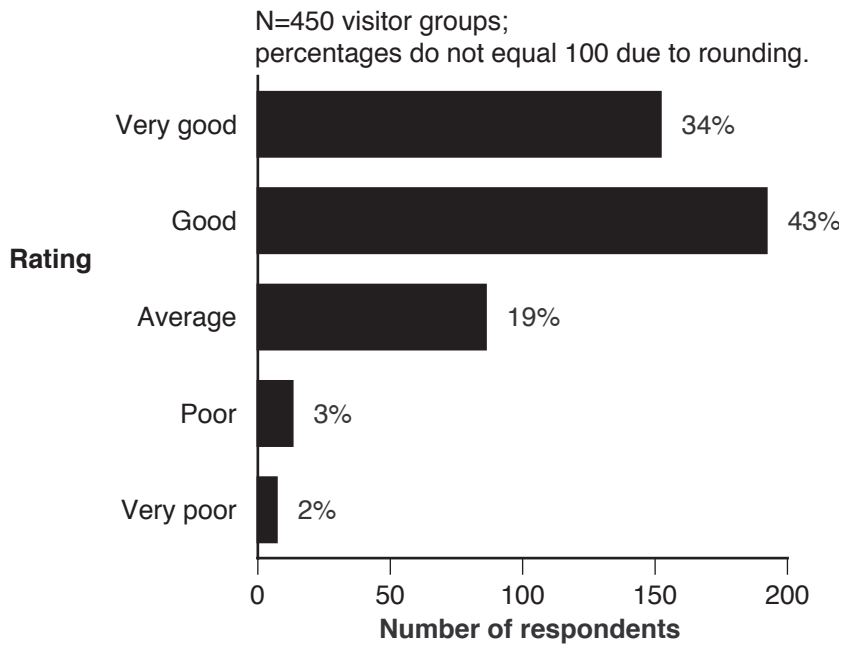
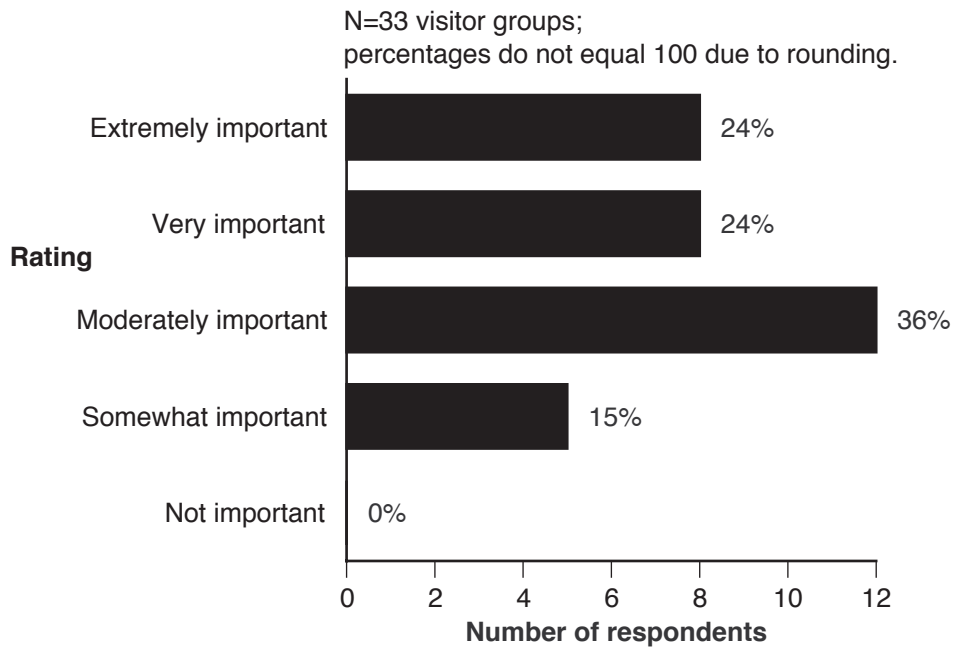


Figure 42: Quality of trails



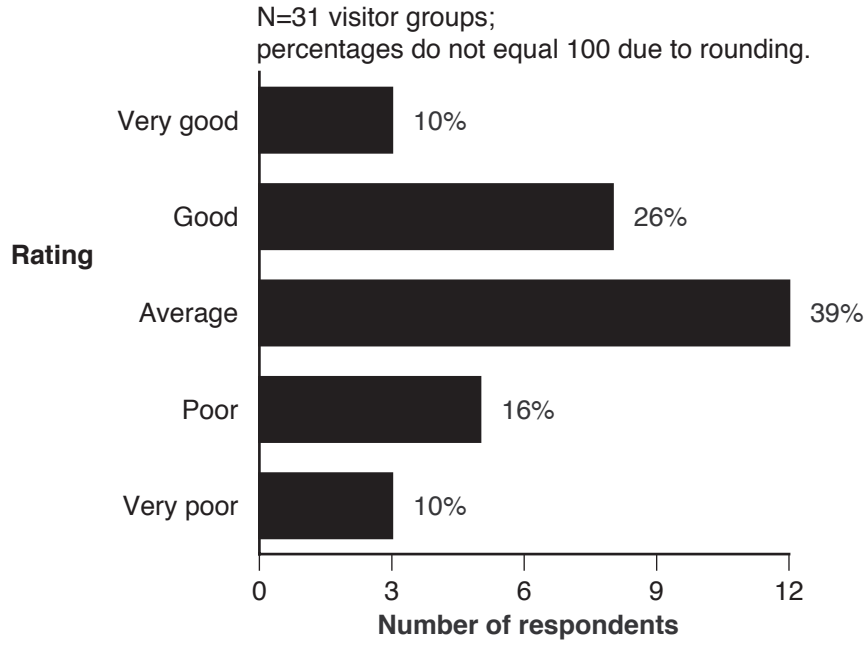


Figure 43: Quality of trail exhibits

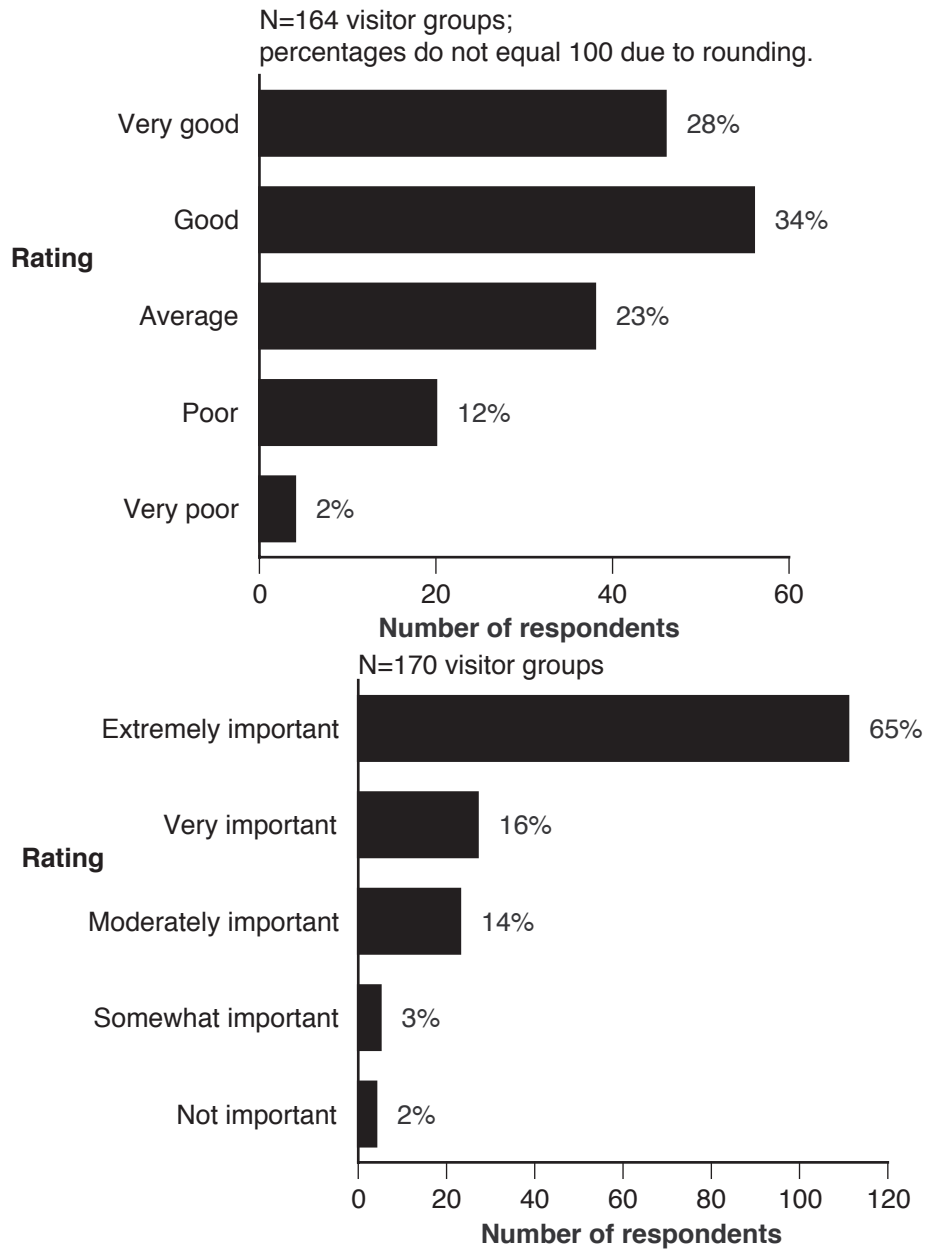


Figure 44: Quality of garbage cans/ recycling

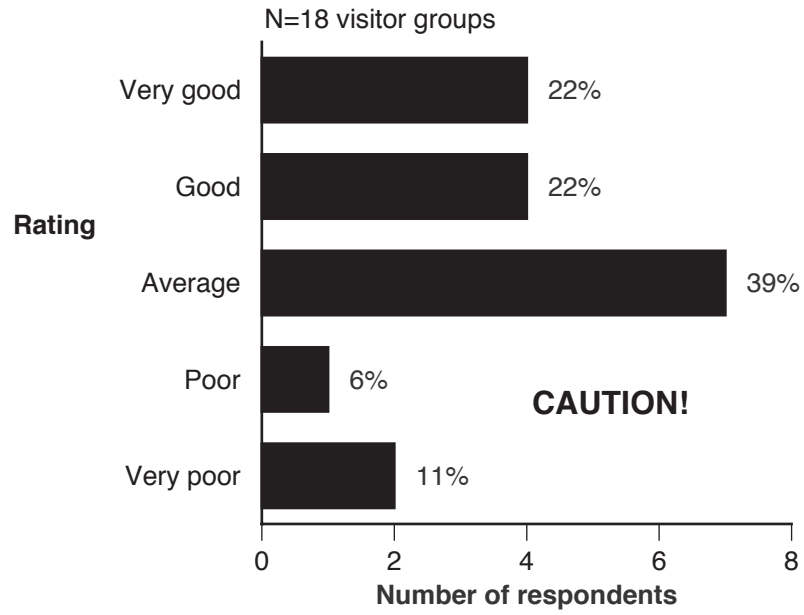


Figure 45: Quality of boat launches

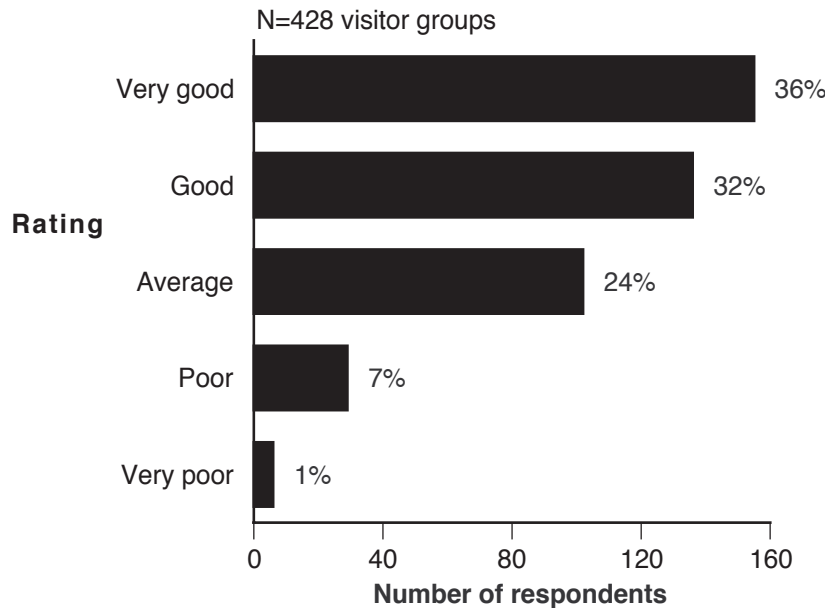


Figure 46: Quality of parking areas

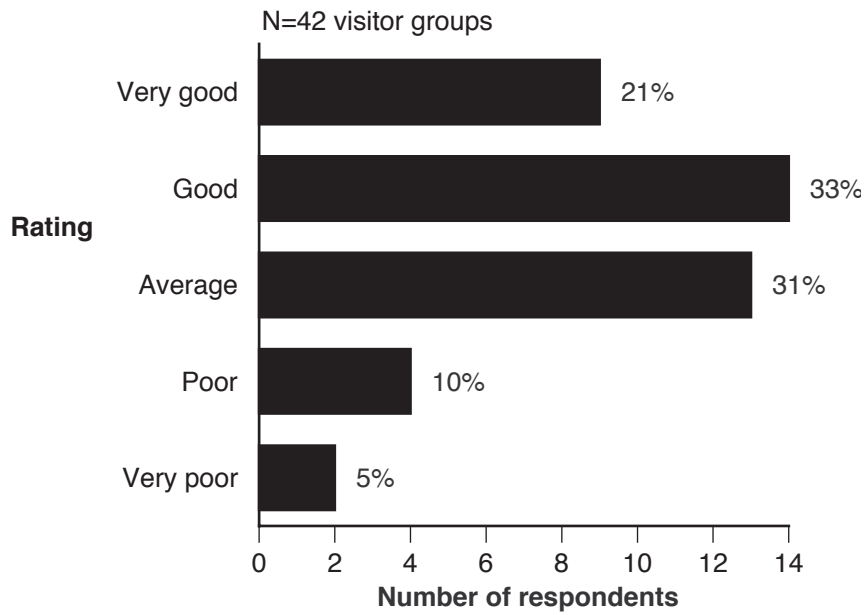


Figure 47: Quality of activity areas/ playing fields

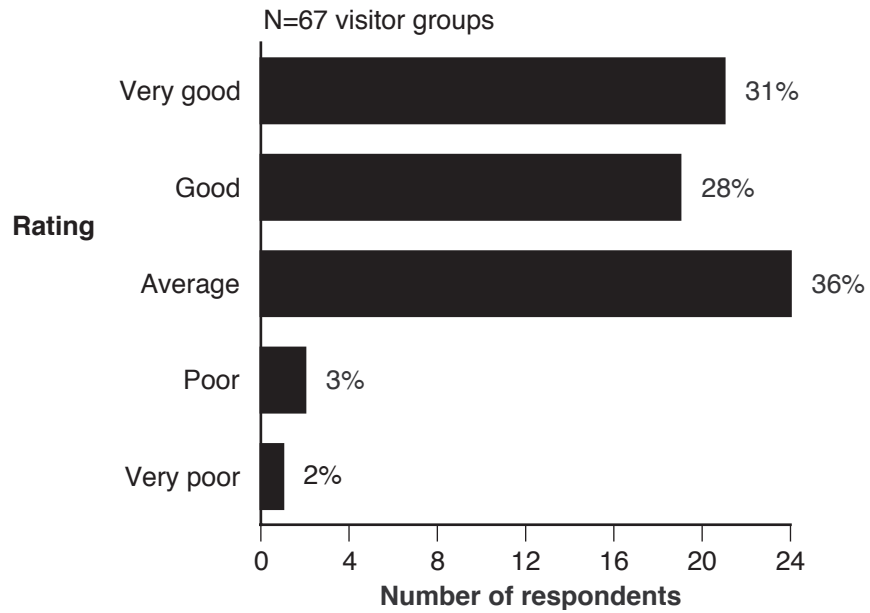


Figure 48: Quality of visitor information station

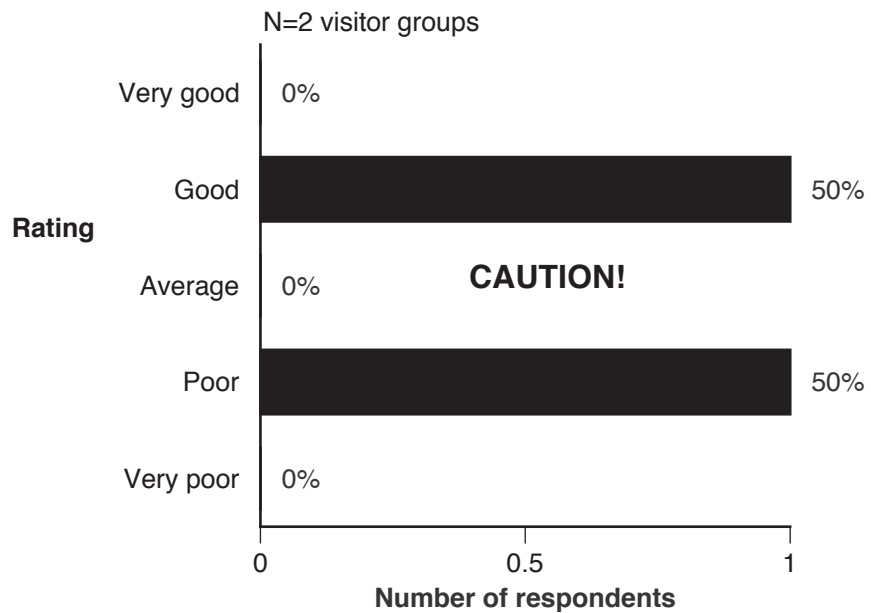


Figure 49: Quality of ranger-led programs/ activities

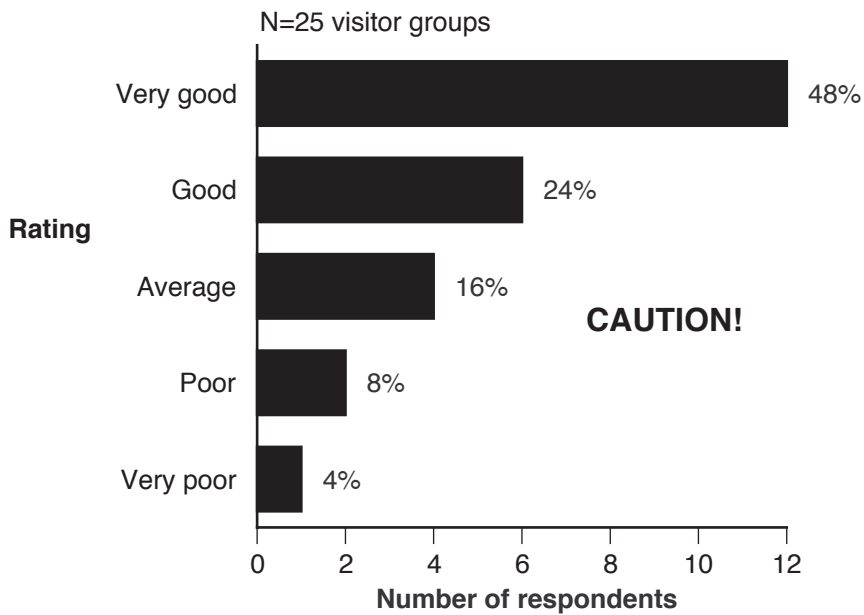


Figure 50: Quality of assistance from uniformed park staff

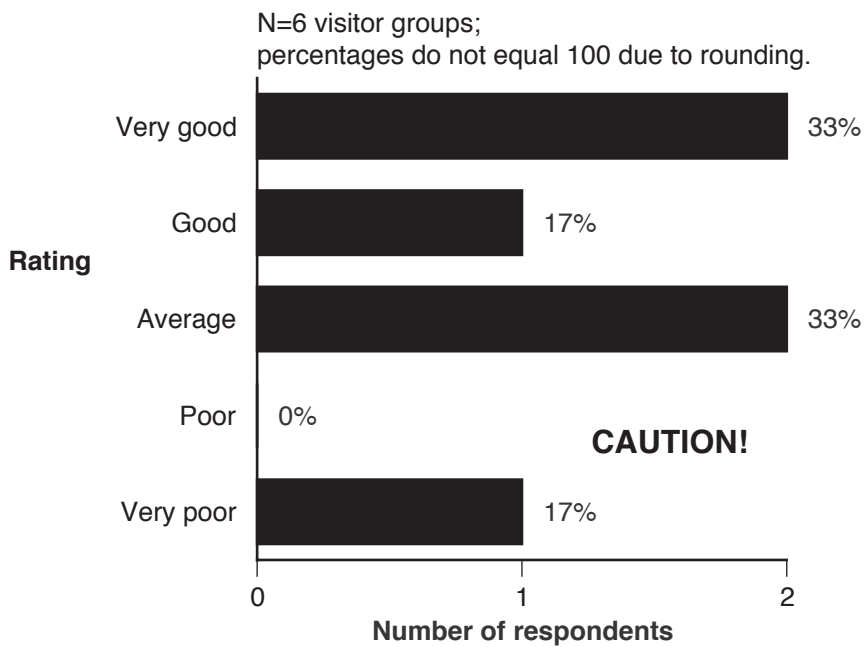


Figure 51: Quality of internet home page

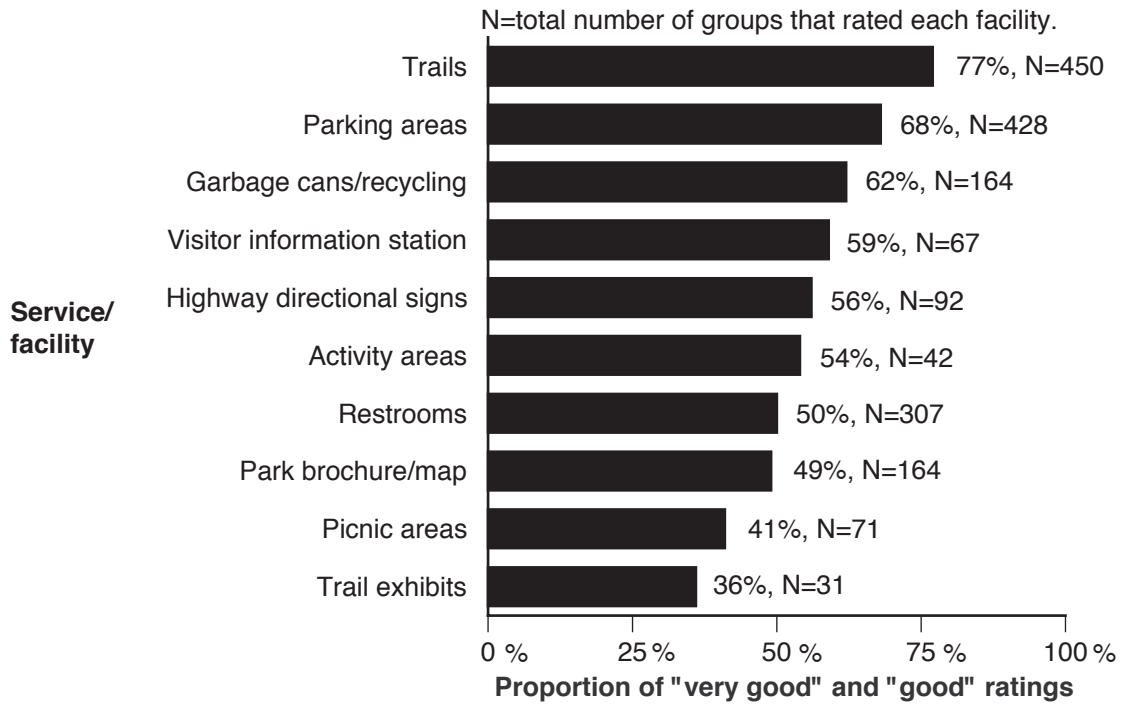


Figure 52: Combined proportions of "very good" and "good" quality ratings for visitor services and facilities used by visitors

Importance of park issues

Using an importance scale from one to five or "don't know," visitors were asked to rate the importance of selected park issues during their visit. The issues included clean water, clean air, views from the park, land development adjacent to park and conflicts between park users.

Visitors' opinions about the importance of these issues can be compared by looking at the combined "extremely important" and "very important" ratings: clean air (95%), clean water (91%), views from the park (73%), land development adjacent to the park (67%), and conflicts between park users (46%), as shown in Figures 53-57. The highest "not important" rating was for conflicts between park users (6%).

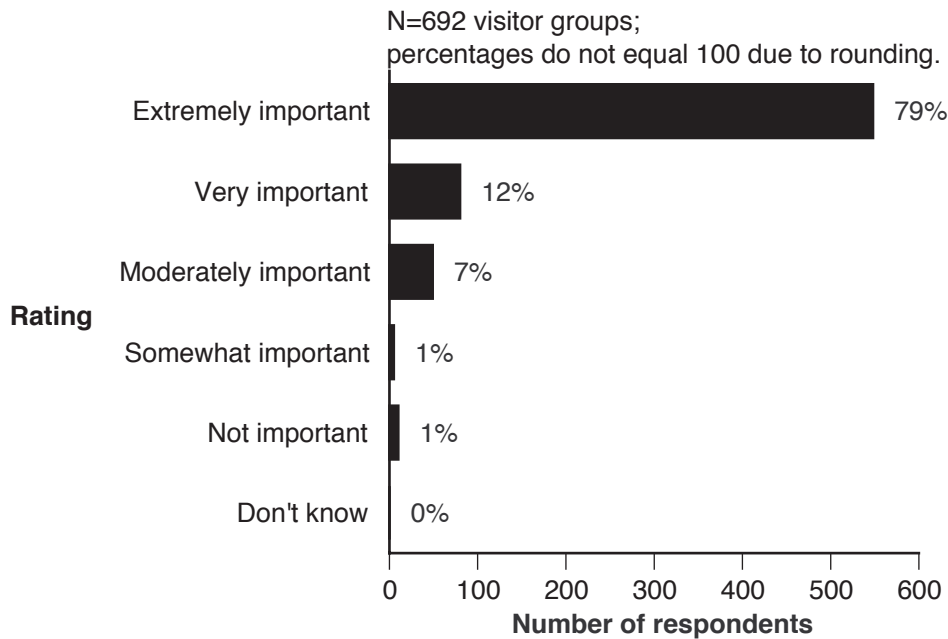


Figure 53: Importance of clean water

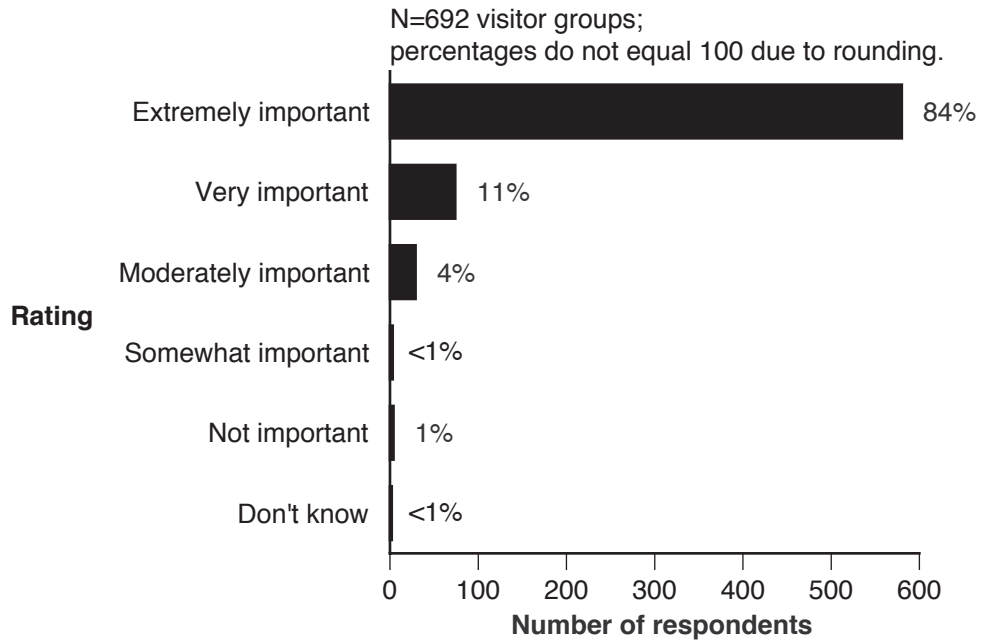


Figure 54: Importance of clean air

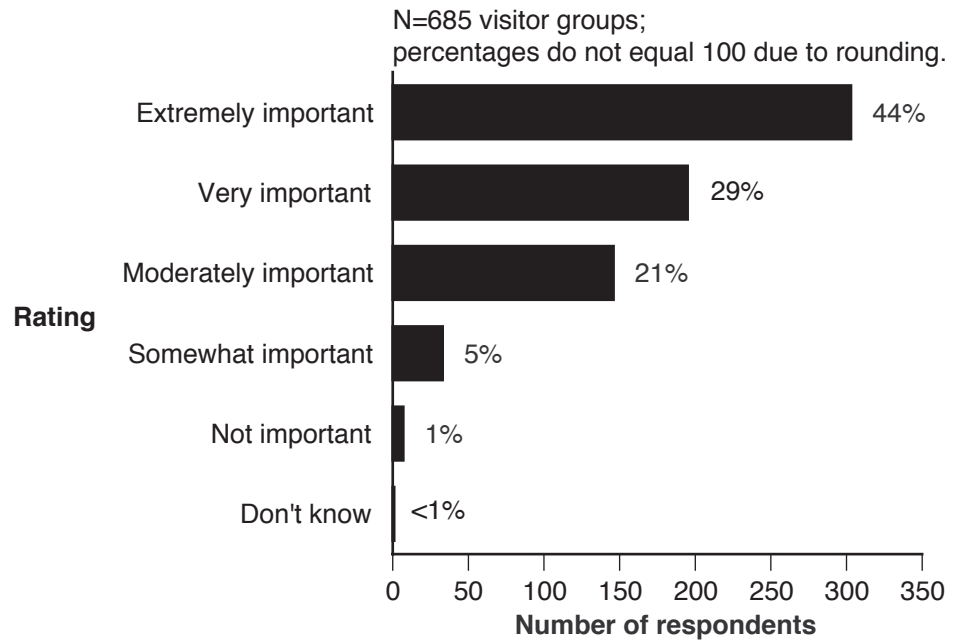


Figure 55: Importance of views from the park

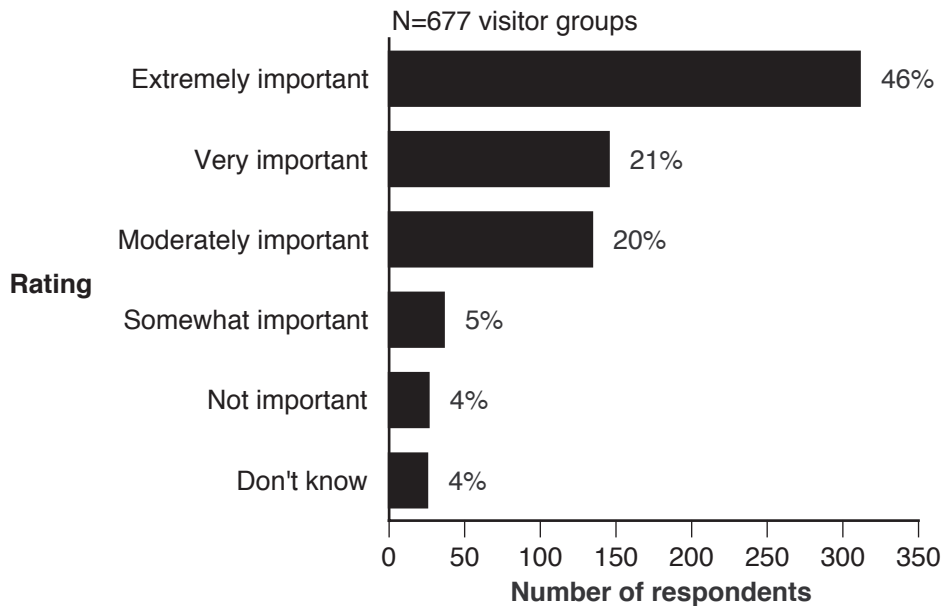


Figure 56: Importance of land development adjacent to park

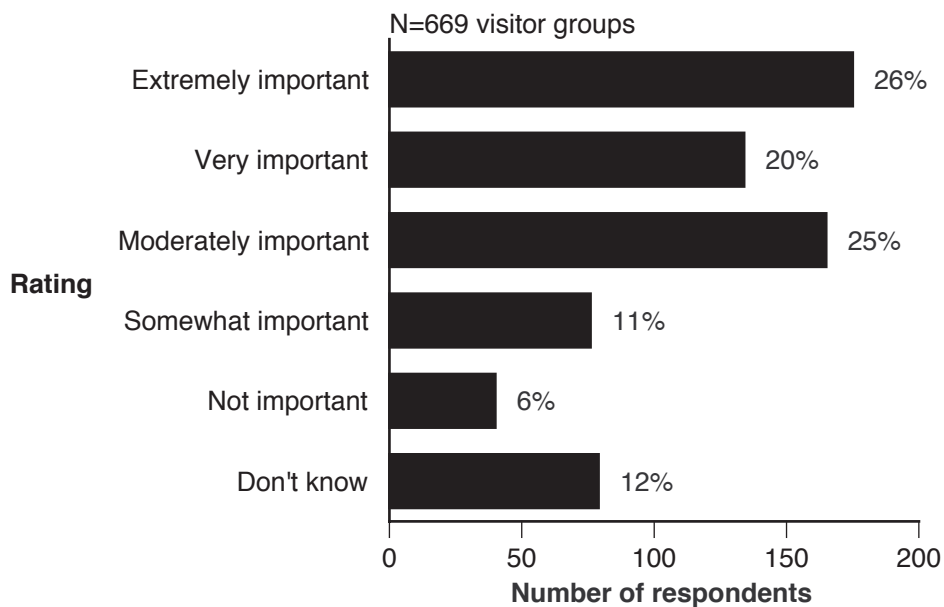


Figure 57: Importance of conflicts between park users

**Opinions
about
parking fee**

Visitors were asked to circle the answer which best describes their opinion about the parking fees (\$2/day or \$20/year) currently charged at Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. Most visitor groups felt the fee is about right (79%), as shown in Figure 58. Twenty percent felt the fee is too high and 2% felt the fee is too low.

Visitors were then asked to list the services they would improve using the fee monies. The responses from 704 groups are listed in Table 6.

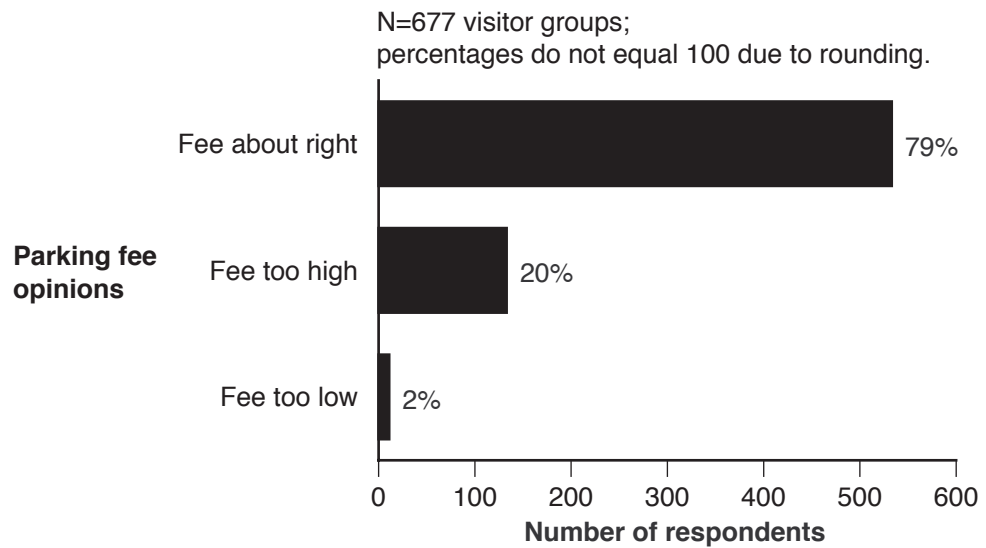


Figure 58: Opinions about parking fee

Table 6: Recommended services funded by fees

N=803 comments

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Provide more drinking fountains	53
Provide more parking	44
Improve trail maintenance/erosion control	42
More rangers patrolling/ available	28
Provide more restrooms	27
Clean restrooms/ pit toilets more frequently--keep stocked	27
Keep park clean	26
Enforce pet clean-up rule	25
No fee	23
Provide water fountains at entrances/ parking lots	21
Improve trails	20
Improve restrooms/ pit toilets	20
Trail maps/ brochures with distances/ difficulty ratings	19
Keep trails clean/ provide adequate trash collection	18
Maintain park/ facilities	17
Clean up river pollution	16
Improve trail signs	15
Provide more picnic tables/ picnic areas	14
More bike trails	13
Enforce bike speed limit	13
More trails	12
Provide more trash cans	12
Enforce pets on leash rule	12
Designated off-leash pet areas	11
Keep same services as now	11
Provide better maps	10
Keep trails well maintained	10
Provide restrooms at each end of Cochran Shoals (at parking lots)	10
Separate trails for bicycling only	9
Keep trails from getting too muddy	9
Provide benches	9
Distance markers on trails	8
Increase land holdings/ more parks	8
Provide play area for children	8
Eliminate bumps from trail	6
Provide plant/ tree identification	6
Provide more interpretive signs/ services	6
Plant trees/grass in bare spots--improve landscaping	6
Improve lighting for nighttime use	6
Restrooms need longer hours	5
Improve parking areas	5
Enforce parking regulations	5
Mow more often	4
Widen trails	4
Improve maintenance	4
Improve access roads	4
Provide pay phones	4
Protect wildlife	3
Provide more trail signs	3
Prohibit bikes on hiking trails	3
Provide maps with "you are here" on bulletin boards	3

Table 6: Recommended services funded by fees (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Repair eroded/ washed out areas on trail	3
Improve facilities	3
Keep as natural as possible	3
Have concession--provide drinks	3
Provide more trails for jogging	3
Add trails along river	3
Need traffic light or police/ ranger at park entrance during rush hours	3
Improve parking lot maintenance	2
Keep parking from getting muddy	2
Less is better	2
Ban bicycles	2
Improve bicycle trails	2
Need better rule enforcement	2
Remove poison ivy on trails	2
Add nature trails	2
Provide more hiking trails	2
Keep out graffiti	2
Enforce litter rules	2
Clean up fallen trees	2
Improve path surface to reduce mud	2
Improve road signs	2
Plant wildflowers	2
Improve picnic areas (cover)	2
Stay open for longer hours	2
Clean banks for fishing opportunities	2
Add and improve boat ramps	2
Add covered gazebo rest area	2
No more construction--don't add facilities	2
Other comments	43

Visitors were asked to rate the overall quality of the visitor services provided at Chattahoochee River NRA during this visit. Most visitors (81%) rated the services as "good" or "very good," (see Figure 59). One percent of visitors said the overall quality of services was "very poor."

**Overall
rating of
service
quality**

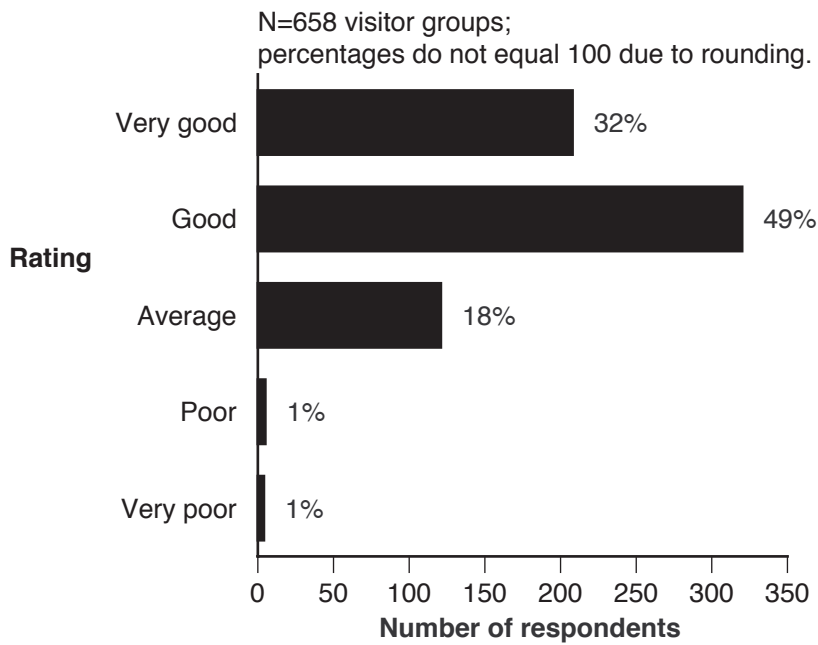


Figure 59: Overall quality rating of services

**Planning
for the
future**

Visitors were asked, "If you were a manager planning for the future of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, what would you propose? Please include any services/facilities you would like to have available which are not currently available. Please be specific." A summary of the responses from 507 groups is listed in Table 7 below and in the appendix.

Table 7: Planning for the future

N=1,028 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
More rangers, more visible	21
More rangers on trails	6
Rangers friendly	4
Less rangers	2
Need parking help during busy times	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Provide wildlife/ nature exhibits on trails	18
Provide more guided activities/ programs	14
Improve maps--show distances	14
Provide more detailed trail maps	10
Provide more maps	9
Provide historic exhibits about sites	7
Provide more nature learning opportunities--e.g. nature center	3
Provide trail maps at entrances	3
Maps difficult to understand--got lost	3
Provide more birdwatching opportunities	2
Provide more topographical maps of the area	2
Provide more information on fishing	2
Provide information boards with park events	2
Advertise park events (e.g. newsletter)	2
Other comments	7
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
More drinking fountains	46
More parking spaces	40
Provide more and better trail directional signs	29
Provide designated "off-leash" area for dogs	26
Provide separate trails for bicycling	25
More restrooms	25
Improve trail maintenance (e.g. erosion)	25
Provide more bicycle trails	20
Provide more trails	20
Provide drinking fountains at each parking area	18
Provide restrooms at parking areas	18
Provide more garbage cans	16

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Provide more playgrounds	14
Maintain park at current level/ quality	14
Provide drink concessions (water, fruit juice, etc.)	12
Keep restrooms clean	11
Provide pay phones at restrooms and other locations	11
Connect trails to make longer trail system	11
Provide more picnic areas/ tables	9
Provide emergency call boxes	9
Provide rentals (boat/ raft/ canoe/ bicycle/ fishing)	8
Provide elevated river viewing/ fishing points (docks, decks)	8
Provide better water access	8
Provide more benches along trails/ river (including covered)	7
Mow grass more often (including fields)	7
Information stations needed at each unit	6
Improve restrooms	6
Provide lights along trails	6
Organize volunteer clean-up days	6
Provide more trails/ boardwalks along river/ wetlands	6
Improve trail surfaces (too muddy)	6
Provide more shaded picnic areas	5
Expand parking at Cochran Shoals Unit South	5
Better signs/ painted spaces/ arrows in parking areas	5
Provide more playing fields (soccer, softball, volleyball, etc.)	5
Provide vending machines	5
Provide more directional signs on trails	4
Keep restrooms open year round	4
Provide footbridge over river	4
Keep park clean	4
Provide more jogging trails	4
Improve/ widen access roads	4
Provide water fountains along trails	3
Restrooms should stay open 24 hours	3
Pave gravel parking areas	3
Provide more boat/ canoe ramps/ launches	3
Improve parking	3
Widen some trails	3
Clean up trash along river	3
Separate lanes for different users	3
Don't remove trees for open grassy areas	3
Provide recycling bins	2
Remove poison ivy from trails	2
Grade trails	2
Improve bicycle trails	2
Provide grills	2
Provide more camping opportunities	2
Provide first aid services	2
Provide water for dogs	2
Build no more facilities	2
Prevent river bank erosion	2
Remove dead trees/ tree roots from trails	2
Post right-of-way rules on trails	2
Provide wheelchair access at additional locations	2
Have noticed recent improvements	2
Other comments	36

Comment	Number of times mentioned
POLICIES	
Enforce dog clean-up rules	26
Enforce leash laws	17
Enforce bicycling regulations (e.g. speed)	13
No fees	12
Enforce parking fee	7
Ban bicycles at least from some trails	7
Make yearly passes easily available (e.g. at parking lots, internet)	7
Ban dogs	4
Restrict parking to restrict number of visitors	4
Often feel unsafe	4
Designate areas where pets are not allowed	3
Enforce "no littering"	3
Enforce park rules	3
No dog leash requirements	2
Reduce fees	2
Keep fees reasonable	2
Other comments	28
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Clean up river/ water pollution	27
Keep undeveloped and natural	26
Expand park--buy more land on river--connect units	24
Don't allow development so close to park	18
Protect more varied habitats for wildlife	2
Establish wildlife preserve area	2
Other comments	8
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Continue good job	17
Beautiful park	8
Provide rafting launches and shuttles	2
Other comments	4

Many visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. The comments made by 371 groups are summarized in Table 8 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 8: Visitor comment summary

N=446 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Park rangers friendly, professional	9
Provide more rangers with more visibility	5
Need more enforcement	2
Other comments	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Provide clearer, more detailed unit and trail maps	5
Liked nature boardwalk	2
Other comments	5
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Park is currently well maintained	12
Park trail maintenance has improved recently	12
Provide more bicycle trails	9
Improve trail maintenance--especially erosion control	8
Dislike sewage smell at river	5
Provide more and better trail directional signs	4
Keep trails clean	4
Provide trail surface to reduce mud	4
Glad dog cleanup bags are provided	3
Keep restrooms clean	3
Provide more parking spaces	2
Provide restrooms close to parking areas	2
Restrooms should stay open year round	2
Provide more drinking fountains	2
Provide more river/ wetland access	2
Remove dead trees	2
Provide more picnic tables/ areas	2
Plant more wildflowers	2
Provide more trails	2
Other comments	10

Comment	Number of times mentioned
POLICIES	
Enforce dog cleanup rules	15
Charge no fees	7
Enforce rules	6
Make it easier to obtain annual pass	6
Enforce leash laws	5
Enforce parking fee	4
Fee is modest--can charge more	3
Enforce bicycle rules, especially speeding	3
Ban dogs	3
Too many bicycles	3
Provide more signs with fee information, rules and regulations	2
No dog leash requirements	2
Felt unsafe, was "flashed"	2
Other comments	17
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Work to get river pollution cleaned up	15
Acquire more adjacent land as park	7
Prohibit more development around park	4
Leave park undeveloped/ natural	4
Stop river bank erosion	2
Stock fish in lake/ river	2
Bicycles have damaged trails	2
Other comments	14
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Enjoyed/ appreciated park	111
Beautiful/ great place	30
Good work	17
Enjoy running at park	11
Enjoyed walking trails	5
Do fund raising (sponsor races, clean-up days, sell souvenirs)	3
Disappointed in Georgia state parks	3
Provide rentals (bicycles, rafts, canoes, etc.)	2
Dogs enjoy park	2
Enjoyed bicycling	2
Other comments	10

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Additional Analysis Report 102

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

Additional Analysis:

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

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Source of information | • Usual days of visit | • Zip code of residence |
| • Locating the park | • Length of stay | • Country of residence |
| • Type of information needed | • Activities - this visit | • Number of visits-past 12 months |
| • Method to receive information | • Activities - past visit | • Number of visits-past 5 years |
| • Reasons for visiting | • Group size | • Visitor services/facilities used |
| • Parking fee opinions | • Organized tour group | • Visitor service/facility importance |
| • Units visited - this visit | • School field trip | • Visitor service/facility quality |
| • Units visited - past visits | • Group type | • Overall quality of services |
| • First visit? | • Age | • Importance of park issues |

Database

The VSP database contains all the VSP visitor studies results from 1988 through the present. To use the database, you need 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 can be used to return the answer to you. Through the database, you can learn how the results of this VSP visitor study compare with those across the nation, or within a specific region, with other natural areas, or sorted in many other ways.

Phone/send database 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
e:mail: vspdatabase@uidaho.edu**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-6 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All other VSP reports listed are available from the parks where the studies were conducted.

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
11. Grand Teton National Park
12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
13. Mesa Verde National Park
14. Shenandoah National Park
15. Yellowstone National Park
16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study

1988

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

1989

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

27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

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

1991

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

1992

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

1993

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

Visitor Services Project Publications (continued)

1994

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

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
- 92. Great Smoky Mountains National Park (summer & fall)

1997

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

1998

- 101. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve
- 102. Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

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

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