

Visitor Services Project
National Monuments and Memorials
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at National Monuments and Memorials in Washington, D.C. during June 21-27, 1998. A total of 1,198 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 874 questionnaires for a 73% response rate.
- This report profiles visitors to the National Monuments and Memorials. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Sixty-six percent of the visitor groups were family groups. One-fourth (25%) of visitor groups were groups of two; 38% were in groups of three or four. Over one-fourth of the visitors (28%) were children aged 15 years or younger; 25% were adults aged 36-45. Seven percent of visitors were from foreign countries, of which 14% were from Germany. United States visitors were from California (9%), Virginia (6%), Florida (6%), Pennsylvania (6%), as well as 45 other states and Washington, D.C.
- Over one-half of the visitors (56%) were visiting the National Monuments and Memorials for the first time. Sixty-nine percent of the visitors planned to stay up to 4 hours. Sixty-four percent of the visitors actually stayed up to 4 hours. Over half of the visitor groups (51%) arrived in the morning. Over half of the visitor groups visited on more than one day (57%).
- Eighty-four percent of the groups stayed overnight in the Washington, D.C. area. They stayed in the Virginia Metro area (42%), within the District of Columbia (38%) and the Maryland Metro area (22%).
- Prior to their visit, over one-half of the visitors (55%) were aware that the sites are managed by the National Park Service. In planning their visit, visitors relied on friends or relatives who had visited (53%) and travel guidebooks (43%) and many other sources.
- Visitors' most common reasons for visiting were "wanting to see this site" (71%), learning about U.S. history (64%) and showing friends/relatives the Monuments and Memorials (45%).
- Walking (75%) was the most used form of transport, followed by Metrobus or Metrorail (36%) and Tourmobile (17%).
- Many visitors (64%) received information from a ranger/ employee. In over one-half of the cases (52%), the ranger did not start the conversation with the visitor; 40% of the conversations were started by rangers. Most visitors (91%) rated the ranger as "extremely courteous" or "very courteous." The same proportion rated the ranger as "extremely helpful" or "very helpful."
- 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 information services that were most used by 712 respondents were the color site brochures (52%), assistance from ranger staff (56%) and "Welcome to Washington" brochure (42%). According to visitors, the most important services were "Welcome to Washington" brochure (87% of 285 respondents), outdoor maps (83% of 264 respondents) and ranger-led walks, talks and tours (80% of 67 respondents). The highest quality services were assistance from ranger staff (93% of 294 respondents) and ranger-led walks, talks and tours (92% of 65 respondents) and color site brochures (88% of 341 respondents).

- Twenty-three percent of the visitors had children who would be interested in attending a Junior Ranger Program. Of those, most visitors (75%) said they would prefer a program which also involved the parents. The largest proportion (29%) of visitors prefer a 1-1/2hour program.
- Most visitor groups (89%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at National Monuments and Memorials as "very good" or "good." 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.