

Visitor Services Project
Acadia National Park
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Acadia National Park during August 2-8, 1998. A total of 1,255 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 1,065 questionnaires for an 85% response rate.
- This report profiles Acadia National Park visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Seventy-one percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups were groups of two; 37% in groups of three or four. Forty-two percent of visitors were aged 36-55 and 23% were aged 10 or younger. Most visitors (95%) speak English as their primary language.
- United States visitors were from Massachusetts (14%), New York (12%), Pennsylvania (11%), Maine (10%), 39 other states and Washington, D.C. International visitors comprised 5% of Acadia's visitation with 29% from Canada, 16% from England and 18 other countries.
- Over one-half of the visitors (52%) were making repeat visits to Acadia National Park. Over one-half of the visitors (58%) stayed from one to three days in the park.
- On this visit, the most common activities were sightseeing/ driving for pleasure (86%), hiking on trails (72%), picnicking (43%) and walking on carriage roads (40%). Over one-half of the visitors (58%) visited Acadia NP Visitor Center. The most common commercial activities were boat cruises (52%) and sea kayaking tours (26%).
- Previous visits (51%), travel guide/ tour book (41%), and friends and relatives (40%) were the most used sources of information by visitor groups.
- The most commonly visited sites in the park were Cadillac Mt. summit (76%), Sand Beach/ Thunder Hole (75%), Jordan Pond House (61%), Visitor Center (59%) and Seawall area (55%).
- 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 most used service by 927 respondents was the park brochure/map (92%). According to visitors, the most important services were the park brochure/ map (92% of 831 respondents) and self-guided trail signs (92% of 408 respondents). The highest quality services were visitor center staff (92% of 332 respondents) and ranger-led programs (91% of 155 respondents).
- The facilities that were most used by 981 respondents were Park Loop Road (86%), parking lots (82%) and park road directional signs (82%). According to visitors, the most important facilities were campgrounds (95% of 146 respondents), hiking trails (95% of 653 respondents) and restrooms (94% of 719 respondents). The highest quality facilities were the Park Loop Road (92% of 798 respondents), hiking trails (91% of 640 respondents) and carriage roads (90% of 466 respondents).
- Visitors were asked to rate the importance of park features and qualities. The features and qualities which received the highest "extremely important" and "very important" ratings were scenic views (99%), clean air (97%) and clean water (96%).
- Visitors were asked about their willingness to ride a free island transport bus. Forty-eight percent of visitors said they would be willing to ride a bus. When asked if they would be willing to pay to ride the bus, 51% of visitors said it was unlikely they would pay to ride and 25% said they would be willing to pay to ride. Most visitors (87%) support the charging of an entrance fee at Acadia. Almost three-fourths of the visitors (74%) feel that a per vehicle fee is the fairest way to charge entrance fees.

- Ninety-six percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services at Acadia National Park 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.