
Visitor Services Project
Cumberland Gap National Historical Park
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Cumberland Gap NHP (NHP) during October 9-16, 1999. A total of 678 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 520 questionnaires for a 76.7% response rate.
 - This report profiles Cumberland Gap NHP visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
 - Over one-half (65%) of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-four percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Fifty-seven percent of visitors were aged 40-65 years, while 13% were aged 15 years or younger.
 - Fifty-four percent of visitors were making their first visit to Cumberland Gap NHP. Most of the visitor groups (86%) spent less than a day at the park. Of those groups that spent less than a day at the park, 78% spent four hours or less.
 - United States visitors were from Kentucky (26%), Tennessee (21%), and 39 other states and Washington D.C. There were too few international visitors to provide reliable information
 - The sources of information most used by visitor groups were previous visits (32%), friends or relatives (31%), live in local area (24%), and travel guide/tour book (20%).
 - On this visit, the most common activities were viewing fall colors (88%), hiking (57%), studying history (37%), buying sales items in visitor center (25%), and viewing wildflowers (25%).
 - On this visit, the most commonly visited sites within Cumberland Gap NHP were the Pinnacle Overlook (81%) and the Visitor Center (73%). The least visited sites include Skylight Cave (4%) and Sand Cave (4%). During past visits, the most commonly visited sites were Pinnacle Overlook (88%), Visitor Center (78%) and the Iron Furnace (49%). The least visited sites during past visits were White Rocks (20%) and Skylight Cave (18%).
 - Visitors were asked to rate the importance of park qualities and activities at Cumberland Gap NHP. The qualities or activities which received the highest "extremely important" or "very important" ratings were scenic views (94%), air quality (86%) and wilderness (82%).
 - With regard to the use, importance, and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The services and facilities most used by 481 visitor groups were restrooms (85%), Pinnacle Overlook (77%), and parking lots (69%). According to visitors, the most important services and facilities were the fitness trail (97% of 44 respondents), park road directional signs (95% of 198 respondents), and roads (95% of 263 respondents). The highest quality services and facilities were the Pinnacle Overlook (97% of 332 respondents), the fitness trail (96% of 44 respondents) and the parking lots (94% of 306 respondents).
 - Eighteen percent of 503 visitor groups visited the Hensley Settlement at Cumberland Gap NHP. Forty-seven percent of 90 visitor groups said they would likely be willing to pay a fee to observe historic craft demonstrations.
 - Sixty-nine percent of the visitor groups indicated they visited the Visitor Center during this trip. The most common reasons for visiting the Visitor Center were to view the exhibits (79%), use the restroom (77%) and obtain information from park staff (71%).
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- Ninety-two percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services at Cumberland Gap NHP as "very good" or "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.