

**Visitor Services Project
Shenandoah National Park
Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Shenandoah National Park during July 15-21, 2001. A total of 900 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 691 questionnaires for a 76.7% response rate.
- This report profiles Shenandoah National Park visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Over two-thirds of the visitor groups (70%) were family groups. Forty-nine percent of visitor groups were in groups of two; another 30% were in groups of three or four. Thirty-nine percent of visitors were aged 36-55 years, while 21% were aged 15 years or younger.
- United States visitors were from Virginia (29%), Maryland (8%), Pennsylvania (8%), Washington, D.C. (7%) and 34 other states. International visitors (8%) were from Canada (27%), England (25%), Germany (8%) and 19 other countries.
- The sources of information most used by visitor groups were previous visits (57%), travel guide/tour book (34%), and friends/relatives (33%). On future visits, the park internet/web site was the most preferred method to learn about the park (38%). For the greatest proportion of visitors (46%), the park was one of several destinations.
- Most visitors (72%) were visiting Shenandoah National Park for the first time during the past 12 months. Forty-two percent had visited more than once in the past two to five years. Most visitors (74%) spent less than one day (24 hours) at the park. The most important reasons for visiting the park were to view the scenic drive/overlooks (87%) and enjoy solitude/natural quiet (75%).
- With regard to use, importance and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The most used interpretive service by 614 respondents was the park brochure/ map (92%). The most important and best quality interpretive service was assistance from park staff (importance: 85%, N=246 respondents), (quality: 94%, N=242 respondents).
- Visitors were asked to rate the importance and quality of concession services they used for each location in the park.

Concession location	Most used	Most important	Best quality
Elkwhallow	restrooms—81%	restrooms—93%, N=128	assistance from staff—95%, N=39
Panorama	restrooms—80%	restrooms—86%, N=84	restrooms—78%; N=82
Skyland	restrooms—79%	lodging—92%, N=38	assistance from staff—86%, N=37
Big Meadows Lodge	restrooms—69%	restrooms—90%, N=97	assistance from staff—89%, N=38
Big Meadows Wayside	restrooms—74%	restrooms—93%, N=114	assistance from staff—93%, N=31
Lewis Mountain Campgrd	There were not enough respondents to provide reliable information.		
Loft Mountain	gift shop—53%	gift shop—38%, N=32	gift shop—69%, N=32

- Eighteen percent of visitors camped during their trip. Campers used tents (59%) and RV/campers (45%). Of those camping in the park, 52% stayed at Big Meadows. The median (50% stayed less, 50% stayed more) number of nights camped in the park was two. The most important campground characteristic was quiet at night (97%, N=81) and most important campground facility was showers (90%, N=54). The best quality campground characteristic was neatness of site (93%, N=83) and the best quality campground facility was paved parking pads (93%, N=43).
- Most visitor groups (97%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at Shenandoah National Park 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) 885-7863.
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