This report describes the results of a visitor study at Valley Forge National Historical Park (NHP) during August 11-19, 2001. A total of 755 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 550 questionnaires for a 72.8% response rate.

This report profiles Valley Forge NHP visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.

Forty percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Forty-six percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Fifty-two percent of visitors were aged 31-55 years and 21% were aged 15 or younger.

United States visitors were from Pennsylvania (53%), New Jersey (6%), New York (4%), 34 other states and Washington, D.C. Four percent of all visitors were international, with 16% from France, 13% from England, and 11% from Taiwan.

Most visitor groups (68%) had visited the park previously. Of those visitor groups, 31% had visited several times a month in the last year. Most visitor groups (99%) visited the park in the summer during the last three years, 56% in spring and 55% in fall.

On this visit, the most common activities were walking/running/jogging/hiking (65%), visiting historic structures (60%) and driving for pleasure (40%).

Previous visits (53%), friends or relatives (42%), and travel guides/tour books (24%) were the most used sources of information about the park prior to visiting. On future trips to Valley Forge NHP, 47% of visitor groups said that the internet/web site would be their preferred method of obtaining information in planning their visit, 37% said they would use previous visit, and 35% would use travel guides/tour books.

Most visitor groups (79%) said they were aware of the National Park Service management of the site, 17% were not aware, and 4% were not sure.

Thirty-eight percent of visitor groups used Highway 23 (eastern side of park) to enter the park, 18% used Highway 23 (western side of park) and Trooper Road/Rt. 363, and 15% used Pawling's Road.

The most commonly visited sites in the park were the Visitor Center (55%), National Memorial Arch (45%), Washington’s Headquarters (43%) and Muhlenberg’s Brigade (37%). The sites most frequently visited first included the Visitor Center (49%), Schuylkill River Trail (14%), and Pawling’s Parking Area (11%).

Most visitor groups (86%) indicated that they felt "very safe" during their visit to Valley Forge NHP, 10% felt "somewhat safe," and 2% had "no opinion."

The average visitor group expenditure was $143. The average per capita expenditure was $56. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of group spent more, 50% spent less) was $19. Thirty-two percent of visitor groups spent no money and 39% spent between $1 and $100 in total expenditures in Valley Forge NHP. Of the total expenditures by groups, 47% was for lodging, and 23% was for restaurants and bars.

Most visitor groups (92%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at Valley Forge NHP as "very good" or "good." No visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services as "very poor."

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