

**Visitor Services Project**  
**Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve**  
**Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve during June 23-29, 2002. A total of 479 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 364 questionnaires for a 76.0% response rate.
- This report profiles Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Twenty-nine percent of visitor groups were groups of two; 36% were in groups of three or four. Sixty-nine percent of the visitors were family groups. Forty-percent of visitors were aged 31-55 years and 27% were aged 15 or younger.
- United States visitors were from Colorado (38%), Texas (13%), California (5%), 39 other states and Washington, D.C. Nearly 4% of all visitors were international, with 27% from Germany, 15% from Holland, and another 15% from England.
- Most visitors (91%) had visited the park once in the last 12 months. In the lifetime, 63% of visitors visited the park once and 16% visited the park 2 times. Ninety percent of visitor groups indicated no group members had disabilities or impairment that limited their ability to visit Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve. Of those with disabilities or impairments, 39% encountered access/service problems. Seventy-seven percent of visitors spent less than one day at the Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve.
- On this visit, the most common activities were climbing the dunes (80%), visiting the visitor center (74%), and scenic driving or photography (56%).
- The most used sources of information about the park prior to this visit were friends or relatives (46%), previous visits (44%), and maps and brochures (42%). Of those who obtained the information prior to this visit, 88% indicated that they received all needed information.
- The most commonly visited locations in the monument by hiking or horseback riding were High Dunes (67%) and Visitor center Loop Trail (29%). The most commonly visited locations in the monument by automobile this visit were the Dunes parking lot (91%) and visitor center (84%)
- Prior to this visit, 38% of visitor groups were aware of the Great Sand Dunes National Preserve. Seventy-seven percent of visitor groups were not aware of the newly designated wilderness area.
- Most visitor groups (73%) entered the monument only once during their stay in the area. The most common type of lodging used by visitor group inside the monument was the campground/trailer park. Seventy-three percent of visitor groups stayed in a lodge, motel, cabin, rented condo/home, or B&B in the area (within 1 hour outside monument).
- Denver, CO; Colorado Springs CO; and Alamosa, CO were the places that most visitor groups spent the night before arriving and night after leaving Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve.
- Most visitor groups (93%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve 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 or go to website:  
<http://www.nps.gov/socialscience/waso/products.htm>