

Visitor Services Project

Catoctin Mountain Park

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Catoctin Mountain Park during August 3-11, 2002. A total of 604 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 470 questionnaires for a 77.8% response rate.
- This report profiles Catoctin Mountain Park visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Forty-one percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Fifty-two percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-seven percent of visitors were aged 31-55 years and 21% were aged 15 or younger.
- United States visitors were from Maryland (64%), Pennsylvania (10%), Washington D.C. (8%), and 26 other states. There were too few international visitors to provide reliable information.
- This visit was the only time that most visitors (61%) had visited the park in the last 12 months. During their lifetime, 38% of visitors visited the park one time and 29% visited six times or more. Most visitor groups (78%) visited Catoctin Mountain Park for less than 24 hours on this visit. Of those, 70% spent two to four hours in the park.
- On this visit, the most common activities were viewing wildlife and scenery (82%), driving through (61%), and hiking for 1 hour or more (46%). Visitor groups also identified these activities as the three most common activities on past visit(s). In Catoctin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park, the most visited locations were Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Center (80%) and Cunningham Falls (57%).
- Previous visit(s) (53%) and word of mouth/friends/relatives (31%) were the most used sources of information about the park prior to visiting.
- Most visitor groups (77%) indicated that Catoctin Mountain Park was the primary reason for visiting the area. Most visitor groups (68%) did not stay overnight in the Catoctin Mountain Park area (within 50 miles). Of those who stayed overnight inside the park, 53% stayed 2 nights and 18% stay 1 night. Of those who stayed overnight outside the park (within a 50-mile area), 46% stayed 2 nights and 19% stayed 1 night. Campgrounds/trailer parks were the most common type of lodging both inside the park (51%) and outside the park (45%).
- The majority of visitor groups (98%) used personal or rental vehicles as their form of transportation to arrive and visit the park. Thurmont (78%) was the most-used community for support services (groceries, ice, gas, etc.).
- In and outside the park, the average visitor group expenditure was \$117. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of groups spent more, 50% spent less) was \$25. The average per capita expenditure was \$34. Forty-six percent of groups spent up to \$100 in total expenditures. Of the total expenditures by groups, 26% was for lodging, and 19% was for groceries and take-out foods.
- Most visitor groups (64%) felt "very safe" concerning personal property safety from crime; 70% felt "very safe" concerning personal safety from crime; and 52% felt "very safe" concerning personal safety from accident in Catoctin Mountain Park.
- Most visitor groups (97%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at Catoctin Mountain Park 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 Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7863 or go to website: <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>