

Visitor Services Project
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at John Day Fossil Beds National Monument (NM) during August 29-September 4, 2004. A total of 396 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Visitor groups returned 310 questionnaires for a 78% response rate.
- This report profiles John Day Fossil Beds NM visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Sixty-four percent of visitor groups had two people and 20% were groups of three or four. Sixty-seven percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Most visitors (99%) were not with a guided tour group. Fifty-one percent of visitors were male and 49% were female. Sixty-nine percent of visitors were aged 36-70 years and 12% were children aged 15 years or younger. Most visitor groups (76%) reported that this was the first visit to John Day Fossil Beds NM in their lifetime.
- International visitors from England (18%), Canada (15%), Holland (15%), and seven other countries comprised 6% of the total number of visitors to the park. United States visitors were from Oregon (61%), Washington (14%), California (7%), and 24 other states.
- Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about John Day Fossil Beds NM through maps/brochures (46%), friends/relatives/word of mouth (35%), and highway signs (33%).
- Thirty percent of visitor groups' primary reason for visiting this part of eastern Oregon was to visit John Day Fossil Beds NM. Viewing scenery (41%), seeing fossils (21%), and visiting Thomas Condon Paleontology Center (14%) were the most common reasons for visiting John Day Fossil Beds NM.
- On this visit, the most common activities that visitor groups participated in were viewing scenery (90%), taking photographs (66%), and visiting Thomas Condon Paleontology Center (61%). Thomas Condon Paleontology Center (63%) and Painted Hills Overlook (54%) were the most visited sites by visitor groups.
- The average visitor group expenditure during this visit to John Day Fossil Beds NM was \$108. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of group spent more, 50% spent less) was \$58. The average per capita expenditure was \$50.
- In regard to use, importance, and quality of park services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The most used visitor services and facilities by the 269 respondents included highway directional signs (87%), visitor center exhibits (60%), and brochure/map (51%). The visitor services and facilities that received the highest combined "extremely important" and "very important" ratings included Thomas Condon Center exhibits (90%, N=152), trail exhibits (82%, N=100), and assistance from park staff (80%, N=93). Assistance from park staff (94%, N=87), Thomas Condon Center exhibits (92%, N=140), and trail exhibits (85%, N= 92), were the services that received the highest combined "good" and "very good" quality ratings.
- Most visitor groups (93%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at John Day Fossil Beds NM as "very good" or "good." Two percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services as "very poor" or "poor."