

**Visitor Services Project  
Great Smoky Mountains National Park  
Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Great Smoky Mountains National Park (NP) during June 22-28, 2008. A total of 1,147 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 748 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 65.2% response rate.
- This report profiles a systematic random sample of Great Smoky Mountains NP. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
- Thirty-eight percent of visitor groups were in groups of two and 46% were in groups of four or more. Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
- United States visitors comprised 98% of total visitors, from Tennessee (14%), Florida (11%), and 37 other states. International visitors represented 2% of total visitation, with 27% from United Kingdom, 22% from Canada, and seven other countries.
- Forty-two percent of visitors were ages 36-65 years, 10% were 66 years or older, and 22% were ages 15 years or younger. Eight percent of visitor groups reported physical conditions that made it difficult to access or participate in park services or activities.
- Fifty-two percent of visitors had visited the park once in their lifetime, while 38% had visited four or more times.
- Twenty-eight percent of visitors had a bachelor's degree and 22% had a graduate degree. Twenty-one percent of visitor groups had an annual household income from \$50,000 to \$74,999. Forty-three percent of visitor groups had two members in their household.
- Prior to this visit, 91% of visitor groups were aware that Great Smoky Mountains NP is a unit of the National Park System.
- Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about Great Smoky Mountains NP through previous visits (69%) and friends/relatives/word of mouth (44%). Ten percent of visitor groups did not obtain any information about the park prior to their visit. Sixty-two percent indicated they would prefer to obtain information for a future visit from the Great Smoky Mountains NP website.
- Visiting Great Smoky Mountains NP was the primary reason that brought 45% of visitor groups to the park area, while 19% came to view the mountain scenery.
- Of visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours visiting the park, 55% spent five or more hours. For those who visited for more than one day, 17% spent four days. The average length of stay, including hours and days was 44 hours (1.8 days).
- The most used information services/facilities included park brochure (85%) and the visitor center information desk (58%).
- The most used visitor services/facilities included restrooms (92%) and the trails (66%).
- Most visitor groups (96%) rated the overall quality of services, facilities, and recreational opportunities at Great Smoky Mountains NP as "very good" or "good." One percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as "very poor" or "poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-7863 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>