

Visitor Services Project (VSP)
Everglades National Park
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a study of visitors to Everglades National Park during February 26 - March 4, 1989. Five hundred and eighty-four questionnaires were distributed and 468 returned, an 80% response rate.
- Volume 1 profiles Everglades visitors. Volume 2 has their comments about the park and their visit. A summary of these comments is included in both volumes.
- Visitors are diverse, although several patterns exist. Sixty-five percent of visitors were in family groups. Thirty-nine percent of visitors were 56 to 70 years old. Fifty-four percent of visitors were on their first visit to Everglades NP.
- Floridians composed 24% of the visitors to Everglades NP. Forty-five percent of foreign visitors came from Germany.
- Seventy-one percent of visitors stayed less than one day in the park, and 41% of these visitors stayed from 3 to 4 hours. Bird watching (71%) and hiking for more than two hours (44%) were the most common activities of visitors.
- Fifty-three percent of visitor groups stopped at the Main Visitor Center, 47% stopped at the Flamingo Visitor Center and 46% stopped at the Royal Palm Visitor Center.
- The average visitor group expenditure inside the park for the day was approximately \$35.00; the average per capita amount spent was about \$15.00. The average visitor group expenditure outside the park for the day was approximately \$88.00; the average per capita amount spent was about \$38.00.
- Forty-four percent of visitors shopped at gift shops and 30% took boat tours. When asked to rate service quality, tram tours, boat tours and the lodge or cottages all received high ratings.
- Seventy-seven percent of visitors used the park folder/map and 64% used the Visitor Center exhibits. When asked to rate the usefulness of these information/interpretive services, tram tours, evening campfire programs and ranger-led walks/talks all received high ratings.
- Visitors liked observing plants and animals in their natural habitat, the unique wilderness setting and its natural beauty, and birdwatching. They disliked not having enough time to experience the park, the effect of the lack of water on wildlife and not being able to see more wildlife.
- Visitors made many more general comments about their visits to the park.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843 or call (208) 885-7129.