

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Fort Union National Monument visitors during July 1-23, 2010. A total of 341 questionnaires was distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 262 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 77.0% response rate.

Group size and type	Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups were in groups of two, 14% were in a group of one, and 21% were in groups of three or four. Seventy-four percent of visitor groups were in a family group.
State or country of residence	United States visitors comprised 99% of total visitation during the survey period, with 29% from New Mexico and smaller proportions from 39 other states and Washington, D.C. International visitors comprised 1% of total visitation during the survey period, with 1% from the Czech Republic and smaller proportions from 2 other countries.
Frequency of visits	Eighty-two percent of visitors were visiting the park for the first time in their lifetime, and 90% were visiting for the first time in the past 5 years.
Age	Fifty-two percent of visitors were ages 51-70 years, 11% were ages 15 years or younger, and 12% were ages 71 years or older.
Physical conditions	Nine percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access or participate in activities and services; walking was the most common activity that was difficult to participate in.
Level of education	Thirty-five percent of visitors held a graduate degree, while 35% held a bachelor's degree. And 22% had some college education.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (73%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit through maps/brochures (30%) and the park website (29%). Most visitor groups (94%) received the information they needed. To obtain information for a future visit, 64% of visitor groups would use the park website.
Park website	Twenty-six percent of visitor groups obtained information from the park website, and 81% rated its quality as "good" or "very good." Ninety-four percent of visitors found the information they needed on the park website.
Reason for visiting park area	For 97% of non-resident visitor groups, the primary reason for visiting the park area (within 50 miles) was to visit the park (38%), and for 37%, the primary reason was traveling through-unplanned visit.
Services used in nearby communities	Seventy-six percent of visitor groups used support services in nearby communities, and the most commonly used services were buying gasoline (34%) and eating meals in restaurant (30%).
Overnight stays	Forty-six percent of visitor groups stayed overnight away from their permanent residence within 50 miles of the park. Of those groups, 52% stayed one night within 50 miles of the park.

Executive Summary (continued)

Length of visit in park	Fifty-five percent of visitor groups spent up to two hours visiting the park, and 30% spent up to one hour. The average length of visit was 1.8 hours.
Local and regional attractions	The most commonly visited local and regional attractions were Las Vegas (47%), the Santa Fe Trail (44%), and Pecos National Historic Park (33%).
Activities on this visit	The most common activities were viewing outdoor exhibits (88%), viewing indoor exhibits (87%), and taking self-guided tour of fort (83%). The most common primary activity was taking self-guided tour of fort (59%).
Topics learned on visit	On this visit, 99% percent of visitor groups learned about topics related to the function of Fort Union as a military outpost, 96% learned about the Santa Fe Trail, and 94% learned about U.S. military history.
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most commonly used were visitor center (89%), visitor center restrooms (84%), and visitor center exhibits (84%).
Importance of protecting park resources and experiences	The park resources/attributes/experiences that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings for protection were historic structures (98%), archeology (92%), and scenic views without development (90%). Dark, starry night sky received the highest “not important” rating (10%) by visitor groups.
Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 30 miles) was \$218. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$90, and the average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$93.
Future visits	Sixty percent of visitor groups would consider visiting Fort Union National Monument again in the future. The most common incentives for returning to the park in the future were being in the area again and bringing friends/relatives to the park.
Learning methods in future	Most visitor groups (93%) were interested in learning about the park’s cultural and natural history/features in the future. Visitor groups would most prefer to learn through outdoor exhibits (78%) and self-guided tours (75%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (94%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Fort Union National Monument as “very good” or “good.” Two percent of 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 .
