

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Fossil Butte National Monument visitors during August 1-8, 2010. A total of 340 questionnaires was distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 247 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 72.7% response rate.

Group size and type	Forty-five percent of visitor groups were in groups of two, 31% were in groups of four or more, and 14% were in groups of three. Seventy-two percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
State or country of residence	United States visitors comprised 92% of total visitation during the survey period, with 13% from Utah and smaller proportions from 40 other states. International visitors comprised 8% of total visitation during the survey period, with 19% from the United Kingdom and smaller proportions from 9 other countries.
Frequency of visits	Eighty-seven percent of visitors were visiting the park for the first time in their lifetime, while 92% were visiting for the first time in the past 5 years.
Age	Twenty-eight percent of visitors were ages 51-65 years, 23% were ages 15 years or younger, and 12% were ages 66 years or older.
Physical conditions	Five percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access or participate in activities and services.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (78%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit through maps/brochures (38%) and the park website (36%). Most (92%) received the information they needed. To obtain information for a future visit, 73% of visitor groups would use the park website.
Park website	Thirty-four percent of visitor groups obtained information from the park website.
Reason for visiting park area	For 46% of non-resident visitor groups, the primary reason for visiting the park area (within 30 miles) was traveling through/unplanned visit, and for 31%, the primary reason for visiting the area was to visit the park.
Services used in nearby communities	Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups used support services in nearby communities, and most (95%) were able to obtain needed services. The community most commonly used to obtain support services was Kemmerer/Diamondville, WY.
Overnight stays	Forty-four percent of visitor groups stayed overnight away from their permanent residence within 30 miles of the park. Of those groups, 60% stayed one night within 30 miles of the park.
Length of visit in park	Forty percent of visitor groups spent up to one hour visiting the park and 38% spent two hours. The average length of visit was 1.8 hours.
Sites visited in the park	The most commonly visited sites were the visitor center (98%), the 7.5 mile scenic drive (26%), and hiking trails (21%).

Executive summary (continued)

Activities on this visit	The most common activities were visiting the visitor center (91%) and viewing visitor center exhibits (87%). The most important activity was viewing visitor center exhibits (40%).
Ranger-led talks/ programs	Seven percent of visitor groups participated in the ranger-led talks/ programs. The most common reason that prevented visitor groups from participating in ranger-led talks/programs was they did not have time (63%).
Topics learned on visit	Sixty-five percent of visitor groups learned about topics related to geology and fossils. The topics visitor groups most commonly learned about were reasons for the variety of fossils (85%) and reasons fossils are so abundant in the park (83%).
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most commonly used were visitor center exhibits (90%), restrooms (80%), assistance from park staff (65%), and directional signs inside the park (64%).
Importance of protecting park attributes and resources	The attributes/resources that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings were fossils (98%), clean water (92%), and clean air (88%). Recreational opportunities (12%) received the highest “not important” rating by visitor groups.
Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 30 miles) was \$187. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$84, and the average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$75.
Future visits	Seventy-six percent of visitor groups would consider visiting the park again in the future, and 92% would recommend visiting the park to their friends/relatives. However, 76% would like to have additional facilities available, such as an expanded visitor center and nearby camping facilities.
Campgrounds	For 52% of visitor groups, campgrounds are a needed near the park. Thirty-three percent would be likely to use campgrounds on a future visit.
Learning methods in future	Most (97%) visitor groups were interested in learning about cultural and natural history/features in the future. Visitor groups would most prefer to learn through outdoor exhibits (63%) and self-guided tours (61%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (92%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Fossil Butte National Monument 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 .
