

## Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Chickasaw National Recreation Area (NRA) visitors during June 12-18, 2012. A total of 687 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 279 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 40.6% response rate.

<b>Group size and type</b>	Forty-four percent of visitor groups consisted of five or more people and 19% consisted of two people. Sixty percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups.
<b>State or country of residence</b>	United States visitors were from 14 states and comprised almost 100% of total visitation during the survey period, with 89% from Oklahoma. Thirty-seven percent of visitor groups were residents of the area (within 50 miles of the park). International visitors were from 2 countries and comprised less than 1% of total visitation during the survey period.
<b>Frequency of visits</b>	Thirty-six percent of visitors visited the park five or more times in the past 12 months and for 31% this was their first visit. Forty-five percent had visited 21 or more times in their lifetime.
<b>Gender, age, language used</b>	Fifty-one percent of visitors were female. Twenty-seven percent of visitors were ages 15 years or younger, 26% were 21-40 years, 18% were 56-70 years, and 3% were 71 years or older. Most visitor groups preferred English for speaking (89%) and reading (91%).
<b>Awareness of park prior to visit</b>	Most visitor groups (82%) were aware that Chickasaw NRA is a unit of the National Park System prior to their visit.
<b>Park as destination</b>	During the on-site interview, 90% of visitor groups indicated that the park was their primary destination, and 6% indicated the park was one of several destinations.
<b>Primary reason for visiting the area</b>	For 65% of visitor groups, Chickasaw NRA was the primary reason for visiting the area.
<b>Services used in nearby communities</b>	Seventy-five percent of visitor groups obtained support services in the “gateway” communities of Sulphur, Davis, Ada, and Ardmore. The services most often used included buy gasoline (73%), eat a meal (69%), and shop (57%).
<b>Transportation</b>	Fifty-eight percent of visitors used one vehicle to arrive at the park. Six percent of visitor groups drove a recreational vehicle and 35% were in a vehicle pulling a trailer or another vehicle.
<b>Number of entries</b>	On this trip, 49% of visitor groups entered the park once, 19% percent entered two times.
<b>Overnight stays</b>	Forty-nine percent of visitor groups stayed overnight inside Chickasaw NRA or in the nearby area (within 50 miles of the park). Of these, 32% stayed two nights inside the park and 25% stayed four or more nights in the area. Inside the park, 59% of visitor groups tent camped in a developed campground. In the area outside the park, 29% stayed in a lodge, hotel, motel, vacation rental or bed and breakfast.

## Executive Summary (continued)

<b>Length of stay</b>	Of the visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours in the park, the average length of stay was 4.3 hours. Of the visitor groups that spent 24 hours or more, the average length of stay was 9.1 days. The average length of stay for all visitor groups was 84.26 hours, or 3.5 days.
<b>Sites visited</b>	The most commonly visited sites in the Platt District were Little Niagara (67%), Travertine Nature Center (59%), and swimming areas without lifeguards (55%). The most commonly visited sites in the Arbuckle District were Lake of the Arbuckles (58%), Buckhorn (49%), and boat launches (47%).
<b>Activities on this visit</b>	The most common activities were swimming (66%), walking/hiking (49%), and picnicking (40%).
<b>Activities on a future visit</b>	Sixty-six percent of visitor groups were interested in swimming on future visits and 58% were interested in camping. Most visitor groups (82%) were interested in learning about the park on future visits.
<b>Information services and facilities</b>	The information services and facilities most commonly used by visitor groups were Nature Center exhibits (other than living) (54%), Nature Center living exhibits (52%), and park brochure/map (51%).
<b>Visitor services and facilities</b>	The visitor services and facilities most commonly used by visitor groups were restrooms (72%), parking (69%), and directional signs in park (47%).
<b>Protecting park attributes, resources, and experiences</b>	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings for the importance of protecting park attributes and resources included clean water (98%), clean air/visibility (92%), and recreational opportunities (85%).
<b>Expenditures</b>	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 50 miles) was \$187. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$68, and the average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$51.
<b>Commercial services on a future visit</b>	Seventy-two percent of visitor groups were interested in commercial services on future visits. Of those, 46% would like to have a sit-down restaurant available and 46% would like a bait/tackle shop.
<b>Overall quality</b>	Most visitor groups (92%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Chickasaw NRA as “very good” or “good.” One percent of groups rated the overall quality as “poor.”

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-2585 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.