

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Missouri National Recreation River visitors during July 19 - 25, 2012. A total of 467 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 256 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 54.8% response rate.

Group size and type	Thirty-eight percent of visitor groups consisted of two or three people and 35% were in groups of six or more. Sixty-four percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 29 states and comprised 99% of total visitation during the survey period, with 43% from Nebraska, and 34% from South Dakota. International visitors were from five countries and comprised 1% of total visitation during the survey period.
Frequency of visits	Thirty-four percent of visitors visit the park about once a year, 28% visited for the first time, and 22% visit several times a year.
Age, ethnicity, race, and preferred language	Thirty-three percent of visitors were ages 46-65 years, 20% were 31-45 years old, 21% were ages 15 years or younger, and 13% were 66 years or older. Two percent were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-six percent of visitors were White and 2% were American Indian or Alaska Native. Eighty-six percent of visitor groups preferred English for speaking and 88% preferred English for reading.
Educational level and income level	Thirty-one percent of respondents had completed a bachelor's degree, 24% had a graduate degree, and 24% had some college. Twenty-two percent of respondents had an income level of \$50,000-\$74,999 and 16% had an income of \$75,000-\$99,999.
Awareness of park prior to visit	Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups were aware that a recreational area called Missouri National Recreational River existed. Seventy-eight percent were aware that the park is a unit of the National Park Service. Sixty percent were aware that Missouri National Recreational River is a part of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Systems.
Information sources	Many visitor groups (71%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit through friends/relatives/word of mouth (57%) and previous visits (49%). Most visitors groups (97%) received the information they needed. Forty-six percent of visitor groups prefer to use the park website to obtain information for a future visit.
Park as destination	For 68% of visitor groups, the park was the primary destination, and for 20%, the park was one of several destinations.
Services used in nearby communities	Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups obtained support services in nearby communities. The community most often used to obtain support services was Yankton, SD (71%).
Length of stay	Of the visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours in the park, the average length of stay was 3.5 hours. Of the visitor groups that spent 24 hours or more, the average length of stay was 6.3 days. The average length of stay for all visitor groups was 63.3 hours, or 2.6 days.

Executive Summary (continued)

Locations visited in the 39 and 59-mile districts	The most commonly visited locations in the park were Lewis & Clark Visitor Center (42%), Riverside Park (27%), Ponca State Park (25%), and Chief White Crane Campground (20%).
Expected activities on this visit	The most common expected activities on this visit were enjoying natural quiet (65%), swimming/playing in the water (50%), and hiking (49%).
Activities on this visit	The most common activities were enjoying natural quiet (72%), swimming/playing in the water (49%), and viewing wildlife/birds (49%). The activity that was most important to visitor groups was camping (23%). Most visitor groups (84%) were able to do the activities they wanted to do. The most common reasons that prevented visitor groups from participating in activities were weather conditions (43%) and time constraints (35%). Three percent of visitor groups had difficulty accessing or participating in park activities or services.
Protecting park attributes, resources, and experiences	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park attributes and resources included clean air/visibility (91%), clear water (87%), and scenic views and natural landscapes (87%).
Extended programs on a future visit	Thirty-two percent of visitor groups were interested in attending extended programs on a future visit. The most common extended programs visitors were interested in attending were workshops/seminars/Park Institute programs (73%), citizen science programs (55%), and volunteer activities (53%).
Ranger-led programs on a future visit	Sixty-one percent of visitor groups were interested in attending ranger-led programs on a future visit. The most common ranger-led programs visitors would be interested in attending were stargazing/astronomy programs (50%), ranger-led outdoor hikes/walks/ talks (50%), and cultural demonstrations & story telling (48%). Sixty-one percent of visitor groups would like to be informed about the availability and schedule of ranger programs through the park website.
Preferred topics to learn on a future visit	Seventy-four percent of visitor groups were interested in learning about the park. The most common topics were birds and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, etc. (72%), early exploration, trade, and settlement along the Missouri River (64%), variety of recreational opportunities and activities available (46%), and Native American cultures of the area – current and past. (46%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (94%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Missouri National Recreational River as “very good” or “good.” Less than 1% of groups rated the overall quality as “poor,” and no visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very 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>.