

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Pinnacles National Park (NP) visitors during April 5-11, 2013. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups (598 English and 2 Spanish). Of those, 439 questionnaires were returned (438 English and 1 Spanish), resulting in a 73.2% response rate.

Group size and type	Forty-four percent of visitor groups consisted of two people and 33% were visiting in groups of three or four. Fifty-nine percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 17 states and comprised 98% of total visitation during the survey period, with 94% from California. Eighteen percent of visitor groups were residents of the area (within 50 miles of the park). International visitors were from eight countries, but there were too few respondents (26) to have reliable data.
Frequency of visits	Fifty-four percent of visitors visited the park once in their lifetime. Twenty-five percent had visited two or three times, while 17% had visited five or more times.
Age, ethnicity, and race	Forty-five percent of visitors were ages 41-65 years, 19% were ages 15 years or younger, and 14% were 66 years or older. Eight percent were Hispanic or Latino. Eight-seven percent of visitors were White and 12% were Asian.
Physical conditions	Six percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access or participate in activities, facilities, or services. The activities, facilities, or services that visitors had difficulty accessing were trails/hiking and caves.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (92%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit, most often through the Pinnacles NP website (65%), friends/relatives/word of mouth (51%), and previous visits (37%). Most visitor groups (82%) would prefer to use the Pinnacles NP website to obtain information for a future visit.
Park as destination	During the on-site interview, 85% of visitor groups said the park was their primary destination, while 13% said it was one of several destinations.
Primary reason for visiting the area	The park was the primary reason that most nonresident visitor groups (81%) visited the area within 50 miles of Pinnacles NP.
Transportation	Sixty-nine percent of visitor groups used a car to travel most of the distance from their home to the area (within 50 miles of the park) and 13% used a SUV/truck/van. Eighty-five percent of nonresident visitor groups used one vehicle to arrive at the park, while 9% used two vehicles.
First arrival time/last departure time and day of week of visit	The greatest proportion of visitor groups first arrived at the park between 9 am and 10:59 am (27%), followed by 11 am and 12:59 pm (21%), and 1 pm and 2:59 pm (20%). The most common last departure time was between 3 pm and 4:59 pm (31%). The most common days of the week that visitor groups arrived were Friday (20%), Saturday (20%), and Sunday (17%).
Overnight stays	Forty-nine percent of visitor groups stayed overnight inside the park or in the area within 50 miles of the park.

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Overnight stays – number of nights	Of those visitor groups that stayed inside the park, 75% stayed two or three nights, Of those visitor groups that stayed outside the park within 50 miles, 81% stayed one or two nights.
Type of lodging used	Inside the park, 70% tent camped in a developed campground and 32% RV/trailer camped. Outside the park within 50 miles, 79% stayed in a lodge, hotel, motel, rented condo/ home, cabin, B&B, etc. while 15% RV/trailer camped.
Length of visit	Among visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours in the park (69%), the average length of stay was 5.7 hours. Of the visitor groups that spent 24 hours or more (31%), the average length of stay was 2.6 days. The average length of stay for all visitor groups was 23.1 hours or 1 day.
Places visited	The most common places visited in the park include Bear Gulch Caves (48%), Bear Gulch Reservoir (48%), Bear Gulch Picnic Area (45%), and Pinnacles Visitor Center (44%).
Activities on this visit	The most common activities were hiking/walking (96%), viewing wildflowers (68%), and viewing scenery/sightseeing/scenic drive (64%). The most common activities that were the primary reason for visiting the park were hiking/walking (61%) and camping (9%).
Viewing California condors	Over one-half of visitor groups (53%) viewed California condors during their visit. On a future visit, 76% of visitor groups would like to view California condors. Twenty-one percent of visitor groups were unable to view condors because they were not visible during their visit.
Climbing/hiking	Nine percent of visitor groups had some in their group that participated in climbing on this visit, most often in Bear Gulch (74%). Most visitor groups hiked (95%). The most common trailheads used were High Peaks and Bear Gulch Caves.
Information services and facilities	The information services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the park brochure/map (86%), assistance from park staff (65%), and Pinnacles Visitor Center - overall (59%).
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the park road (73%), other restrooms beside the campground (70%), and directional signs in the park (62%).
Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 50 miles of the park) was \$129. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$60. The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$53.
Preferred additional services/programs	Seventy-two percent of visitor groups were interested in additional services/ programs including an additional condor program (61%), night walks/night sky program (51%), and additional geology program (45%).

Executive Summary (continued)

Overall quality Most visitor groups (94%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Pinnacles NP as “very good” or “good.” Less than 1% of visitor groups rated the overall quality as “poor” and no groups rated 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>.

