

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Washita Battlefield National Historic Site (NHS) visitors during May 20 – July 2, 2013. A total of 338 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 229 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 67.8% response rate.

Group size and type	Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups consisted of two people and 23% were in groups of three or four. Seventy-six percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups and 15% were visiting alone.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 39 states and the Virgin Islands, and comprised 98% of total visitation during the survey period, with 31% from Oklahoma. Twelve percent of visitor groups were residents of the area (within 75 miles of the park). There were too few international visitors to provide reliable data.
Number of visits to the park	Eighty-seven percent of visitors visited the park once and 10% visited two or three times.
Age, ethnicity, race, and income level	Forty-one percent of visitors were ages 56-70 years, 18% were 41-55 years old, 16% were ages 15 years or younger, and 12% were 71 years or older. Six percent were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety percent of visitors were White, 4% were American Indian or Alaska Native, and 4% were more than one race. Twenty-one percent of respondents reported an income level of \$50,000-\$74,999.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (82%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit most often through the Washita Battlefield NHS website (44%), maps/brochures (35%), and friends/relatives/word of mouth (24%). Most visitors groups (92%) received the information they needed. Sixty-five percent of visitor groups prefer to use the Washita Battlefield NHS website to obtain information for a future visit, while 32% prefer to use maps/brochures.
Park website	Fifty-two percent of visitor groups have used the park website. The most common types of information visitor groups searched for were trip planning (93%), things to do at the park (78%), and history of the park (73%).
Park as destination	During the on-site interview, 62% of visitor groups said the park was one of several destinations and for 24%, the park was their primary destination.
Primary reason for visiting the area	The most common primary reasons for visiting the park area among non-resident visitor groups were to visit the park (47%), visit friends/relatives in the area (16%), and on a road trip (15%).
Services used in nearby communities	Thirty-seven percent of visitor groups needed support services, of which 95% were able to obtain needed services. The nearby communities most often used to obtain support services included Cheyenne, OK (95%) and Elk City, OK (35%). The support services most often used were food (80%), gas (69%), and lodging (51%).

Executive Summary (continued)

Transportation	Seventy-six percent of nonresident visitor groups used a car to travel most of the distance from their home to the park area (within 75 miles of the park), and 13% used a SUV/truck/van. Ninety-seven percent of visitor groups used one vehicle to arrive at the park.
Adequacy of directional signs	Ninety-two percent of visitor groups felt the directional signs in the park were adequate, and 85% felt the state highway signs directing them to the park were adequate.
Mapping devices	Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups used mapping devices for directions to the park. The mapping devices most often used were printed maps/brochures (70%) and GPS devices (47%). Seven percent of visitor groups had difficulty locating the park using mapping devices.
Number of park entries	Ninety percent of visitor groups entered the park once, while 7% entered twice on this visit.
Overnight stays	Forty-seven percent of visitor groups stayed overnight in the area within 75 miles of the park, of which 65% stayed one night and 23% spent two or three nights. Sixty-four percent of visitor groups stayed in a lodge, motel, hotel, rented condo/home, cabin, or bed and breakfast, etc., while 18% were RV/trailer camping.
Length of visit	Seventy-four percent of visitor groups spent one or two hours at the park, while 26% spent three or more hours. The average length of stay was two hours.
Local attractions visited	Forty-two percent of visitor groups visited other local attractions on this visit. Of those visitor groups that visited other local attractions, 48% visited Black Kettle National Grasslands, 46% visited Route 66 Museum, and 21% visited Washita National Wildlife Refuge.
Sites visited	The most common sites visited in the park were the visitor center (35%), overlook (29%), and nature trail (22%). Ninety-one percent of visitor groups visited the visitor center first.
Activities on this visit	The most common activities were viewing exhibits in the museum (93%), learning history (85%), and visiting the visitor center (71%). The most common activities that were the primary reason for visiting the park were learning history (59%) and viewing exhibits in the museum (13%).
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the visitor center -overall- (95%), museum exhibits (89%), and assistance from park staff (84%).
Topics learned	The most common topics visitor groups learned about were events of the battle (100%), natural setting where the events occurred (87%), and the impact of the Indian Wars on Cheyenne and Arapaho history (82%).
Protecting park resources and attributes	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park resources and attributes included historic sites and buildings (94%), educational opportunities (90%), and clean water (88%).

Executive Summary (continued)

Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 75 miles of the park) was \$121. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$70. The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$59. Nine percent of respondents had forgone income to make this trip.
Additional services or programs on a future visit	Fifty-two percent of visitor groups desired additional services or programs on a future visit. Of those visitor groups, the most common services/programs included additional hiking trails (59%), night sky programs (39%), and birdwatching programs (20%).
Methods of learning about the park on a future visit	Ninety-two percent of visitor groups were interested in learning about the park through films, movies, videos (78%), indoor exhibits (72%), self-guided tour using printed materials (64%), and trailside exhibits (64%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (96%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Washita Battlefield NHS as “very good” or “good.” One 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) 885-2585 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.