

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Big Hole National Battlefield (NB) visitors during July 30-August 8, 2013. A total of 349 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 227 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 65% response rate.

Group size and type	Sixty-four percent of visitor groups consisted of two people, 20% were in groups of three or four, and 12% were visiting alone. Seventy percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups and 13% were with friends.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 36 states and comprised 93% of total visitation during the survey period, with 24% from Montana and 10% from Idaho. International visitors were from 10 countries and comprised 7% of total visitation during the survey period with 31% from Canada and 19% from Switzerland.
Frequency of visits	For 73% of visitors, this was their first visit in their lifetime, while 20% had visited two or three times, and 7% had visited four or more times.
Age, ethnicity, race, and income level	Fifty-eight percent of visitors were ages 51-70 years, 16% were 26-50 years old, 12% were 71 years or older, and 11% were ages 15 years or younger. One percent of visitors were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-five percent of visitors were White, 2% were American Indian or Alaska Native, and 2% were more than one race. Twenty-one percent of respondents reported an income level of \$50,000-\$74,999 and 16% had an income level of \$75,000-\$99,000.
Physical conditions	Seven percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access services or participate in activities.
Awareness of park prior to visit	Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups were aware that Big Hole NB is managed as a unit of the National Park System.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (65%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit most often through maps/brochures (39%), previous visits (32%), and friends/relatives/word of mouth (31%). Most visitor groups (90%) received the information they needed. Seventy percent of visitor groups prefer to use the Big Hole NB website to obtain information for a future visit.
Park as destination	During the on-site interview, 77% of visitor groups said the park was one of several destinations, 13% said the park was not a planned destination, and for 9%, the park was their primary destination. Of the visitor groups that returned their questionnaire, 20% indicated the park was their primary destination on this trip.
Primary reason for visiting the park	The most common primary reasons for visiting the park were to visit historic sites (52%), take a scenic drive/view scenery (47%), and travel through to other destinations (41%).
Services used in nearby communities	Eighty-six percent of visitor groups obtained support services in nearby communities. The communities most often used included Darby-Hamilton, MT (32%), Wisdom, MT (30%), and Salmon, ID (30%). Ninety-six percent of visitor groups were able to obtain all the services they needed in nearby communities.

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Transportation	Ninety-four percent of visitor groups used one vehicle to arrive at the park, while 5% used two vehicles.
Number of park entries	Ninety-four percent of visitor groups entered the park once, while 6% entered twice on this visit.
Overnight stays	Sixty-two percent of visitor groups stayed overnight, away from home, in the area within 90 miles of the park, of which 43% stayed one night, 34% stayed two or three nights, and 24% stayed four or more nights. Fifty-four percent of visitor groups stayed in lodges, motels, rented condos/homes, cabins, or bed and breakfast, while 27% were RV/trailer camping in a developed campground.
Length of visit	Fifty percent of visitor groups spent one hour visiting the park, 29% spent two hours, and 17% spent three or more hours. The average length of stay was 1.6 hours.
Local attractions visited	Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups visited other local attractions on this visit. Of those visitor groups that visited other local attractions, 50% visited Yellowstone National Park, 39% visited Glacier National Park, and 36% visited Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.
Expected activities on this visit	The most common activities visitor groups expected to participate in were visiting visitor center (86%), viewing exhibits (83%), and viewing film (43%).
Activities on this visit	The most common activities participated in were viewing exhibits (94%), visiting visitor center (89%), and viewing film (59%). Most important activity was viewing exhibits (28%).
Ranger-led programs	Twenty-four percent of visitor groups attended ranger-led programs. Ninety-three percent learned about the Big Hole battle of August 9-10, 1877, 91% learned about the Nez Perce Flight of 1877, 89% learned about the culture of the Nez Perce people, and 81% learned about contemporary American Indian connections to Big Hole NB.
Information services and facilities	The information services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the visitor center exhibits (90%), visitor center - overall (86%), and assistance from park staff (62%).
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were restrooms (88%), highway directional signs outside park (75%), and park road (68%).
Protecting park resources and attributes	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park resources and attributes included preservation of historic artifacts (96%), scenic views (88%), clean air - visibility (87%), and educational opportunities (86%).
Interactions with park staff	Eighty-eight percent of visitor groups had interactions with park staff. The interaction receiving the highest combined proportion of “very good” or “good” ratings was helpfulness (99%).

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Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 90 miles of the park) was \$193. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$74. The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$109.
Ranger-led programs on a future visit	Sixty percent of visitor groups were interested in attending ranger-led programs on a future visit. Of those visitor groups interested in attending ranger-led programs, 70% preferred a program length of 1-2 hours.
Methods of learning about the park on a future visit	Ninety-two percent of visitor groups were interested in learning about the park through indoor exhibits (79%), trailside exhibits (74%), self-guided tours with brochure (68%), and films, movies, videos (66%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (97%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Big Hole NB as “very good” or “good.”

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>.