Visitor Services Project

Canyonlands National Park

Report Summary

• This report describes the results of a study of visitors to Canyonlands National Park during May 10-16, 1990. Four hundred and fifty-five questionnaires were distributed and 399 returned, an 88% response rate.

• This report profiles Canyonlands visitors. A separate Appendix has their comments about the park and their visit. A summary of these comments is included in this report and the Appendix.

• Visitors arrived commonly in families (53%); often in groups of two (59%). Thirty-six percent of visitors were 26-40 years old and 29% were over 55 years of age. Most (65%) were on their first Canyonlands visit.

• Foreign visitors comprised 11% of the total visitation and commonly came from Germany, Canada, and Switzerland. Americans came from Colorado (29%), California (15%), Utah (11%) and other states.

• Of the visitors spending less than one day in the park, 43% of the visitors spent four to six hours. Of the visitors who spent one day or more, 61% visited for two to three days. Most visitors viewed scenery (99%) and hiked less than four hours (65%).

• Most visitors were aware of commercial tours in the park prior to their visit (71%). Nine percent of the visitors took commercial tours. They most often relied on travel/tour books (41%) to find out about the tours.

• Of those visitors reporting expenditures on the day(s) they visited Canyonlands, the average visitor group spent $114.00 in the Moab/Monticello area; the average per capita expenditure was $46.00. Most visitors spent up to $100.00 (65%). Visitors spent the greater proportion of their money for food (32%), rather than lodging, travel or other expenses.

• The most important features to visitors during their Canyonlands' visit were scenic views, clean air, wilderness, and solitude. Commercial tours were the least important. Several educational topics--geology, archeology, and history were considered to be of about equal importance to visitors; biology was rated as somewhat less important.

• According to visitors, the most useful interpretive services were the park map/brochure, highway directional signs, visitor centers, and self-guided trail brochures. The least useful were evening campfire programs and ranger-led walks or tours.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843 or call (208) 885-7129.