

Visitor Services Project
White Sands
National Monument
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a study of visitors to White Sands National Monument during May 26 to June 1, 1990. Five hundred nineteen questionnaires were distributed and 431 returned, an 83% response rate.
- The report profiles White Sands visitors. A separate appendix has their comments about the park and their visits. A summary of these comments is included in both this report and the appendix.
- Fifty-nine percent of visitors were in family groups. Forty-five percent of visitors were 21 to 45 years old. Fifty-four percent of visitors were on their first visit to White Sands National Monument.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 8% of the visitation to White Sands National Monument. Fifty-seven percent of American visitors came from New Mexico and Texas.
- Seventy percent of visitors who were visiting for the day stayed four hours or less in the Alamogordo area, and 78% of visitors who were visiting for more than one day stayed 3 days or less. Playing in the sand (77%) and photography (72%) were the most common activities of visitors.
- Sixty-one percent of visitor groups visited the visitor center, 59% drove the Heart of Sands Loop Drive and 53% visited the picnic area.
- Forty-six percent of visitors obtained information about the park from friends and/or relatives, 44% from previous visits, and 37% from maps or guide books.
- Solitude/quiet (68%), plant life (66%), and the visitor center (64%) were rated extremely to very important to the visitors during their visit to White Sands National Monument.
- Seventy-six percent of the visitors reported that tourism was the primary purpose of their visit to the Alamogordo area.
- Forty-two percent of visitors visited the Sacramento Mountains (Cloudcroft/Ruidoso areas), 30% visited the International Space Hall of Fame, and 23% visited White Sands Missile Park.
- During their visit to the Alamogordo area, the average visitor group spent about \$124.00; the average per capita expenditure was about \$41.00. Seventy-three percent of visitors spent from \$1-100.00 . Visitors spent the greater proportion of their money for food (30%) and lodging (27%).
- Visitors made many more general comments about their visit to the monument.

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.