

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a qualitative study of the recreational behaviors and preferences of the Hispanic/Latino community in the Tucson AZ area, and this community's potential barriers to and opportunities for visiting Saguaro National Park. Following a single case study methodological approach, focus group was applied as an appropriate data collection method. Eight focus group sessions of five to nine participants each, totaling forty-three individuals, were conducted in Tucson between February 25th and February 29th, 2012. Sixty-five percent of participants were bilingual or spoke only English and 35% spoke Spanish only. Focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed. Thematic coding using grounded theory approach was applied to analyze the qualitative data. The emerging themes indicating potential barriers to park visitation included economic constraints, lack of information/knowledge about the park, perceived lack of adequate facilities and activities, and perceived racial discrimination. Focus group participants also addressed certain behaviors such as high level of awareness of the health benefits of outdoor activities, highly family oriented culture, high desire for learning, and positive images of national parks. These can be viewed as opportunities that park managers may use to attract greater Hispanic/Latino visitation. Participants suggested advertisement, special programs, and promotion of the park via Spanish media, particularly television and radio, as means for making meaningful connections between the park and its local communities.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-7863 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.

