Visitor Services Project  
Canyon de Chelly National Monument  

Report Summary

• This report describes the results of a visitor study at Canyon de Chelly National Monument during August 17-23, 1993. A total of 525 questionnaires were distributed and 428 returned, an 82% response rate.

• This report profiles Canyon de Chelly visitors. A separate appendix has visitors’ comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.

• Visitors were often in family groups (57%). Groups often consisted of two people (49%). Visitor ages varied: 41% of visitors were 36-55 years old; 17% were 21-30 years old; 16% were 15 years or younger. Most (86%) were first-time visitors to the park. International visitors comprised 32% of all visitors. Twenty-seven percent of international visitors came from France and 23% from Germany. United States visitors came from California (23%) and Arizona (19%) and many other states.

• Common activities for visitors were stopping at scenic overlooks (95%), photography (81%), viewing archeological sites (67%), shopping for Navajo arts and crafts (51%), hiking the White House Trail (46%) and experiencing Navajo culture (33%).

• The most visited sites were the White House Overlook (91%), Tsegi Overlook (77%), Sliding House Overlook (64%) and Spider Rock Overlook (51%). Most visitors also went first to Tsegi Overlook (37%) or to Cottonwood Campground (25%). Most visitors stayed less than one day in the Canyon de Chelly area (62%); 23% stayed 2 days.

• Prior to visiting, the most often used sources of information about the park were travel guide/tour books (59%). Visitors identified their reasons for visiting the park as enjoying the scenic beauty, viewing archeological/cultural site and learning about Indian culture.

• The most used interpretive services were visitor center exhibits and park brochure/map. The least used service was private guides. The most important services were the self-guided trails/rim drives (92%), private guides (89%) and park brochure/map (88%). The best quality services were visitor center sales publications (87%) and visitor center personnel (85%). The poorest quality service was bulletin boards (12%).

• The most used visitor service/facility was restrooms. The least used service was emergency services. The most important services/facilities were the campground/picnic areas (93%), backcountry trails (92%) and Thunderbird truck tours (92%). The best quality services/facilities were backcountry trails (87%), Thunderbird Lodge (86%) and Thunderbird truck tours (85%). The poorest quality service was restrooms (21%).

• Visitors reported their expenditures in and outside the park during their park visit. In the park, the average visitor group expenditure was $92. The average per capita expenditure was $36. Outside the park (within a one hour drive of Chinle), the average visitor group expenditure was $88. The average per capita expenditure was $30.

• Most visitors think access to the canyon which is owned by the Navajo tribe, should be limited (86%). Indian culture is the topic visitors would most like to learn about on a future visit (84%).

• Visitors made many additional comments.

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 83844-1133 or call (208) 885-7129.