
Visitor Services Project Nez Perce National Historical Park

Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Nez Perce National Historical Park during July 17-23, 1994. A total of 1178 questionnaires were distributed and 899 returned, a 76% response rate.
- This report profiles Nez Perce 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 (69%). Groups often consisted of two people (50%); over one-fourth were three or four people (27%). The most common visitor ages were 46-70 years old (32%), and 15 years or younger (18%). Most (79%) were first time visitors to the park. International visitors comprised 4% of all visitors. Twenty-eight percent of international visitors came from Canada and 27% from Germany. United States visitors came from Idaho (18%), Washington (15%), California (13%), Oregon (13%) and 44 other states.
- Common activities for visitors were visiting the visitor center (76%), learning Nez Perce history (52%), taking photographs (46%) and visiting historical or archeological sites (41%). Most visitors stayed two hours or less at the site where they received the questionnaire.
- Almost two-thirds of the visitors (64%) cited learning Nez Perce history as a reason for visiting the park. Seventy-four percent of visitors said they visited to learn about history. Two topics were of primary interest: history of the Nez Perce region and the Nez Perce tribe and people, each selected by 69% of the visitors.
- Over one-third of the visitors (36%) had received no information about the park prior to their visit. Previous visits, maps and brochures were the most used sources of information.
- The most visited park sites were Lolo Pass Visitor Center area (32%), Big Hole Battlefield (31%), White Bird Battlefield (29%), and Spalding (21%).
- The most used services were the visitor center exhibits (75%), park brochure/map (63%) and information from park employees (51%). Ranger-led programs/tours was the service which received the highest ratings in importance and quality.
- The most used facilities were the highway historical signs (71%), highway directional signs to park sites (65%) and restrooms (63%). Interpretive trail signs was the service which received the highest ratings in importance and quality.
- In the future, the educational subjects visitors would most like to learn about are history of the Nez Perce, Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Nez Perce War of 1877 and pioneers/settlers. Half of the visitors (50%) said they would like more contact with the Nez Perce tribe/people in the future.
- Visitors' most frequent starting locations on the day they received the questionnaire were Lewiston, Idaho; Missoula, Montana and Joseph, Oregon. These three towns were also visitors' most often listed destinations on the day they received the questionnaire.
- Visitors made many additional comments.

<p>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.</p>
