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## Visitor Services Project Prince William Forest Park Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Prince William Forest Park during October 7-13, 1996. A total of 395 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 337 questionnaires for an 85% response rate.
- This report profiles Prince William Forest visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Forty-six percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-two percent of visitor groups were groups of two. Thirty-five percent of visitors were aged 36-55.
- Forty-two percent of visitors were making their first visits to Prince William Forest. Sixty-nine percent of the visitor groups spent less than a day at the park and 17% spent one or two days. Of those groups that spent less than a day at the park, 55% spent two or three hours.
- United States visitors were from Virginia (57%), the District of Columbia (9%), Maryland (6%), Florida (5%) and 28 other states. There were not enough international visitors to provide reliable information.
- On this visit, the most common activities were walking or hiking (69%), driving the scenic loop road (49%) and camping in developed campgrounds (32%).
- Previous visits (49%), highway signs (27%), friends and relatives (22%) and camping guides or tour books (21%) were the most used sources of information by visitor groups.
- Forty percent of visitor groups indicated that recreation was a primary reason for visiting the Northern Virginia area. Another 35% reported that visiting Prince William Forest Park was a primary reason for visiting the area.
- The park features that received the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings were recreational opportunities (81%) and solitude (69%).
- The most commonly visited sites in the park were trails other than the Farms to Forest Trail (46%), the visitor center (33%), Travel Trailer Village (21%) and the Pine Grove Picnic Area (20%).
- In regard to the use, importance and quality of services, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The services that were most used by 228 respondents were the park brochure/map (72%) and park directional signs (56%). According to visitors, the most important services were self-guided trail signs (92% of 123 respondents) and garbage collection/recycling (89% of 44 respondents). The highest quality services were information from park personnel (95% of 65 respondents) and the park brochure/map (92% of 157 respondents).
- In regard to the use, importance and quality of facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The facilities that were most used by 275 respondents were trails (68%) and restrooms (63%). According to visitors, the most important facilities were campgrounds (96% of 95 respondents) and trails (95% of 186 respondents). The highest quality facilities were campgrounds (95% of 92 respondents) and trails (88% of 180 respondents).
- Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups spent no money on lodging, travel, food or "other" items such as souvenirs, film and gifts in Prince William County, while 28% spent from \$1 to \$50. Of the total expenditures by groups, 40% was for lodging and 31% was for food.
- Ninety-four percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services at Prince William Forest as "very good" or "good." Less than one percent of groups rated services as "very poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the  
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