

**Kenai Fjords National Park
Exit Glacier Area
Visitor Study
Summer 1999**

**Report 115
Visitor Services Project
Cooperative Park Studies Unit**



Kenai Fjords National Park Exit Glacier Area

Visitor Study Summer 1999

Terry Bergerson

**Visitor Services Project
Report 115**

June 2000

Terry Bergerson is a Research Support Scientist based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. The VSP would like to thank Mike Meehan, Leigh Blackburn, Jen Rogers, Jeff Troutman and the staff of Kenai Fjords National Park for their assistance with this study. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Visitor Services Project Kenai Fjords National Park - Exit Glacier Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at the Exit Glacier Area of Kenai Fjords National Park during August 5-11, 1999. The report contains two separate results sections. A section entitled *General Visitor Population Results* contains information on the general visitor population to the Exit Glacier Area. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to visitors at the Exit Glacier parking lot. Visitors returned 331 questionnaires for an 83% response rate for this portion of the study. A second section entitled *Harding Icefield Trail Oversample Results* includes information on a separate sample of visitors hiking the Harding Icefield Trail. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed on the Harding Icefield Trail. Visitors returned 123 questionnaires for an 82% response rate for this portion of the study.

General Exit Glacier Visitor Population Results

- This report section profiles Exit Glacier Area visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Sixty-five percent of the visitor groups were family groups, 15% were with friends and 10% were with family & friends. Forty-one percent of visitors were groups of two; 23% were in groups of four. Approximately one-half of visitors (52%) were aged 26-55 and 14% were aged 15 years or younger.
- Eighty-two percent of visitors were making their first visit to Kenai Fjords National Park. Ninety-two percent of the visitor groups spent less than a day at the park and 5% spent one or two days. Of those groups that spent less than a day at the park, 59% spent two or three hours.
- United States visitors were from Alaska (19%), California (12%), Minnesota (6%), Washington (6%), 40 other states and Washington, D.C. International visitors comprised 8% of the total visitation. The countries represented included Germany (24%), Japan (19%), England (8%), Switzerland (8%), and 11 other countries.
- On this visit, the most common activities were taking photographs (97%), touching the glacier (66%) and visiting the Exit Glacier ranger station (47%).
- The sources of information most used by visitor groups prior to their trip were travel guides and tourbooks (44%), friends and relatives (35%) and *Milepost* magazine (27%).
- 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 310 respondents were the parking lot (86%), roads (73%) and restrooms (73%). According to visitors, the most important facilities were the Harding Icefield Trail (93% of 89 respondents), restrooms (90% of 217 respondents) and other trails (88% of 110 respondents). The highest quality services were other trails (92% of 106 respondents) and the Harding Icefield Trail (90% of 90 respondents).
- Forty-three percent of visitor groups spent over \$351 on lodging, travel, food or "other" items such as clothing, film and gifts in the Kenai Fjords National Park area. Of the total expenditures by groups, 36% were for tours and admission fees and 25% were for lodging.
- Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups reported the level of crowding of people at the Exit Glacier Area was "not at all crowded" and 38% reported it "somewhat crowded." Fifty-two percent of visitor groups reported that the level of crowding of vehicles at the Exit Glacier area was "not at all crowded" and 41% reported it "somewhat crowded." Seventy-four percent of visitor groups reported that a "shuttle system from off-site parking area" was an "acceptable" option for limiting visitor congestion at the Exit Glacier area.
- Eighty-nine percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services in the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park as "very good" or "good." Less than one percent of groups rated services as "very poor." Visitors made many comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7129 or 885-7863.

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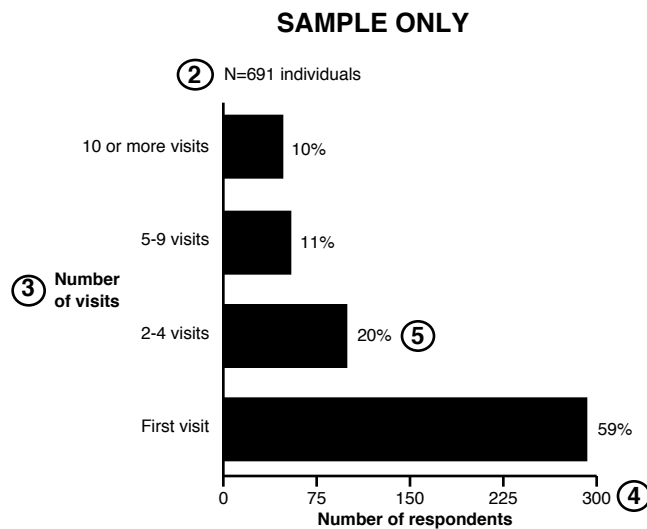
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of visitors to the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park. This visitor study was conducted August 5-11, 1999 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A **Methods** section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. A **Results** section follows, including a summary of visitor comments. Next, an **Additional Analysis** page helps managers request additional analyses. The final section has a copy of the **Questionnaire**. The separate appendix includes comment summaries and visitors' unedited comments.

Most of this report's graphs resemble the example below. The large numbers refer to explanations following the graph.



① **Figure 4: Number of visits**

- 1: The figure title describes the graph's information.
- 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding and a description of the chart's information. Interpret data with an 'N' of less than 30 with **CAUTION!** as the results may be unreliable.
- 3: Vertical information describes categories.
- 4: Horizontal information shows the number or proportions in each category.
- 5: In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.

METHODS

Questionnaire design and administration

The questionnaire for this visitor study was designed using a standard format that has been developed in previous Visitor Services Project studies. A copy of the questionnaire, which was distributed to both visitor populations included in this study, is included at the end of this report.

Interviews were conducted with, and questionnaires were distributed to, a sample of visitors who arrived at Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park during the period from August 5-11, 1999. Visitors were sampled at two locations shown in Table 1, based on the recommendations of park staff.

Table 1: Questionnaire distribution locations

Location:	Questionnaires distributed	
	Number	%
Exit Glacier parking lot	400	73
Harding Icefield Trail (Oversample)	150	27
GRAND TOTAL	550	100

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study, and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, an interview, lasting approximately two minutes, was used to determine group size, group type, and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This individual was given a questionnaire and was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminder-thank you postcard. Visitor groups were asked to complete the questionnaire during or after their visit and then return it by mail.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey. Eight weeks after the survey, second replacement questionnaires were mailed to visitors who still had not returned their questionnaires.

Returned questionnaires were coded and the information was entered into a computer using a standard statistical software package. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated for the coded data, and responses to open-ended questions were categorized and summarized.

Data analysis

This study collected information on both visitor groups and individual group members. Thus, the sample size ("N"), varies from figure to figure. For example, while Figure 1 shows information for 327 visitor groups, Figure 4 presents data for 1,077 individuals. A note above each graph specifies the information illustrated.

Sample size, missing data and reporting errors

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions result in missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 331 questionnaires were returned by Kenai Fjords National Park visitors who received a questionnaire at the Exit Glacier parking lot, Figure 1 shows data for only 327 respondents.

Questions answered incorrectly due to carelessness, misunderstanding directions, and so forth turn up in the data as reporting errors. These create small data inconsistencies.

Limitations

Like all surveys, this study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results.

1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage applies to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire soon after they visit the park.

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of August 5-11, 1999. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year.

3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever the sample size is less than 30, the word "**CAUTION!**" is included in the graph, figure or table. Tour bus groups are likely under-represented in this study due to the sampling methodology used.

Special conditions

During the study week, weather conditions were fairly typical of August with the exception of two abnormally cold days. Although "typical," the weather could have affected what visitors did or did not do, or how long they stayed. In addition, an airline strike may have caused lower than normal visitation to Kenai Fjords National Park.

RESULTS

As shown in Table 1 on page 2, visitors to Kenai Fjords National Park were sampled at two locations—the Exit Glacier Area parking lot and the Harding Icefield Trail. A random sample of visitors was chosen at the Exit Glacier Area parking lot to represent the general visitor population to the Kenai Fjords National Park Exit Glacier Area during the one-week study period. The results from this sample are included in the section entitled *General Exit Glacier Visitor Population Results* (pages 6-64).

Visitors contacted

Park managers were also interested in receiving feedback from hikers related to crowding issues on the Harding Icefield Trail (see questionnaire questions 15-19). As a result, an oversample of hikers on the Harding Icefield Trail was gathered to represent the opinions of this subpopulation of park visitors. The results from this oversample are included in a separate section entitled *Harding Icefield Trail Oversample Results* (pages 65-72).

GENERAL EXIT GLACIER VISITOR POPULATION RESULTS

Visitors contacted

At the Exit Glacier parking lot, 421 visitor groups were contacted, and 400 of these groups (95%) accepted questionnaires. Questionnaires were completed and returned by 331 visitor groups, resulting in an 83% response rate for the general visitor population portion of this study.

Table 2 compares age and group size information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted with that from those who actually returned questionnaires. Based on the variables of respondent age and visitor group size, non-response bias was judged to be insignificant.

Table 2: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondents	393	44.9	326	45.8
Group size	413	4.3	327	4.5

Demographics

Figure 1 shows visitor group sizes, which ranged from one person to 200 people. Forty-one percent of visitor groups consisted of two people, while another 23% were in groups of four. Sixty-five percent of visitor groups were made up of family members, 15% were made up of friends, and 10% were made up of family and friends (see Figure 2). Groups listing themselves as “other” for group type included church groups and an outward bound group. Four percent of the visitor groups at Kenai Fjords National Park were with a guided tour group (see Figure 3).

As shown in Figure 4, the most common ages of visitors were 26-55 (52%). Another 14% of visitors were in the 15 or younger age group. Eighty-two percent of visitors were making their first visit to the park, while 18% of visitors had visited the park previously (see Figure 5).

International visitors to Kenai Fjords National Park comprised 8% of the total visitation (see Table 3). The countries most often represented were Germany (24%), Japan (19%), England (8%) and Switzerland (8%). The largest proportions of United States visitors were from Alaska (19%), California (12%), Minnesota (6%), Washington (6%) and New York (5%). Smaller proportions of U.S. visitors came from another 39 states and Washington, D.C. (see Map 1 and Table 4).

Demographics-continued

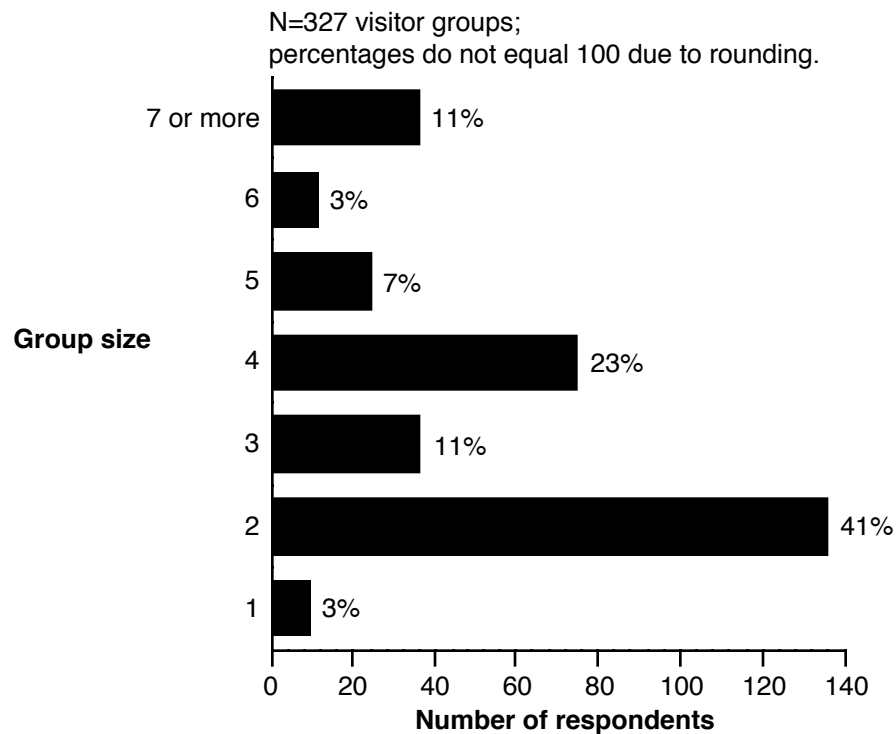


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

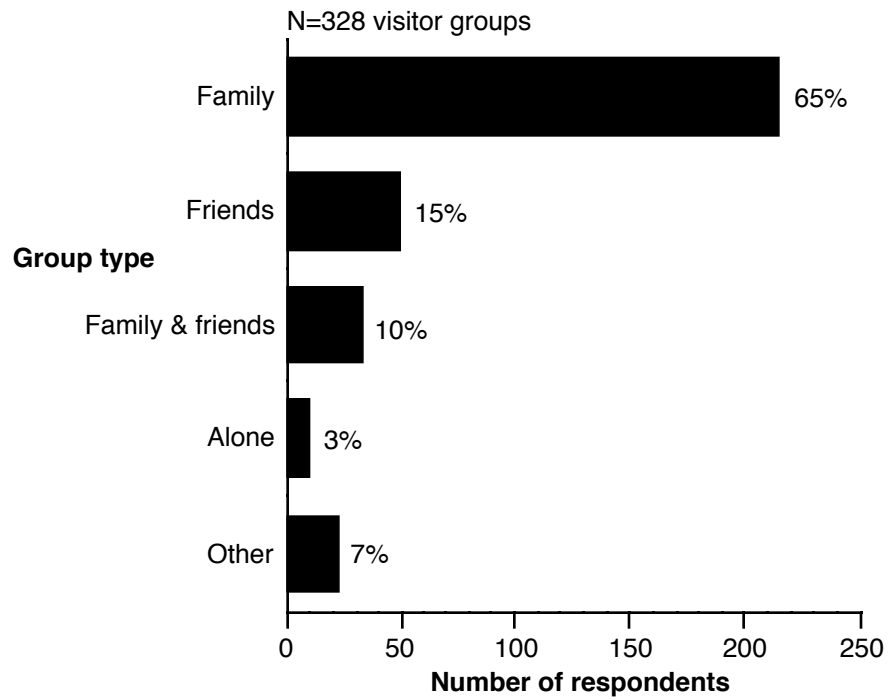


Figure 2: Visitor group types

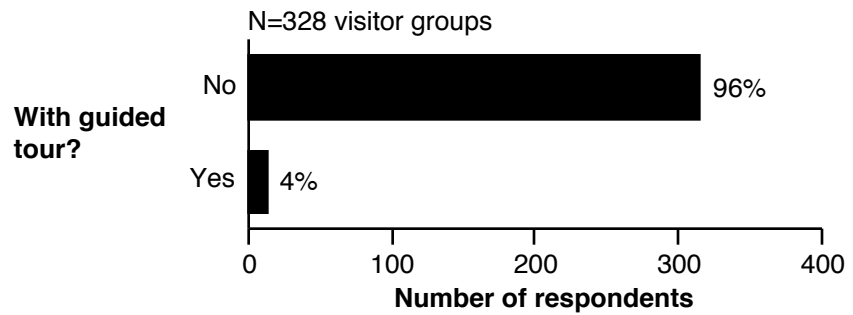


Figure 3: With a guided tour group?

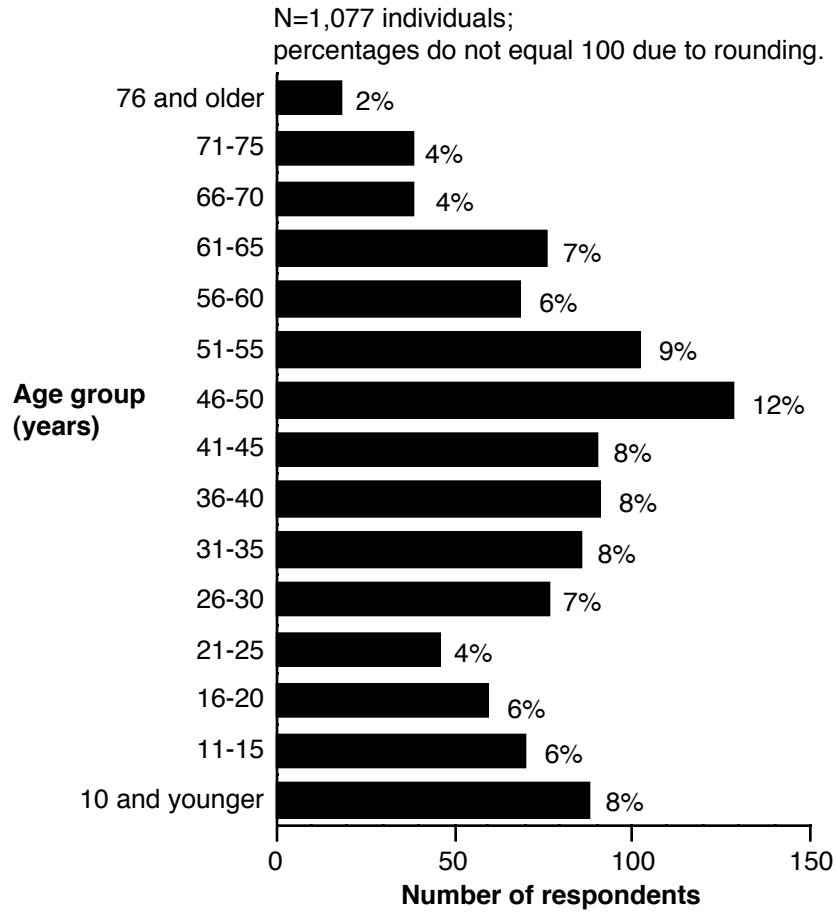


Figure 4: Visitor ages

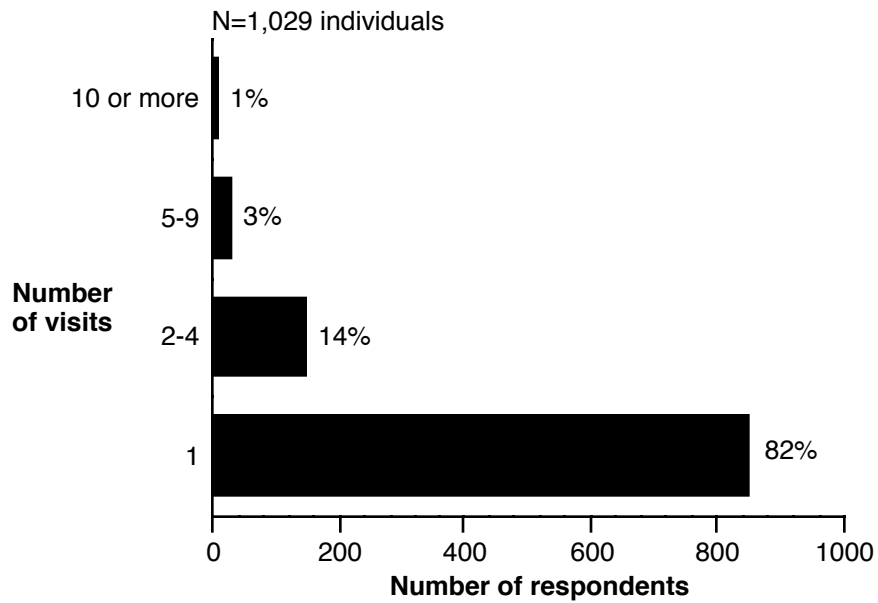
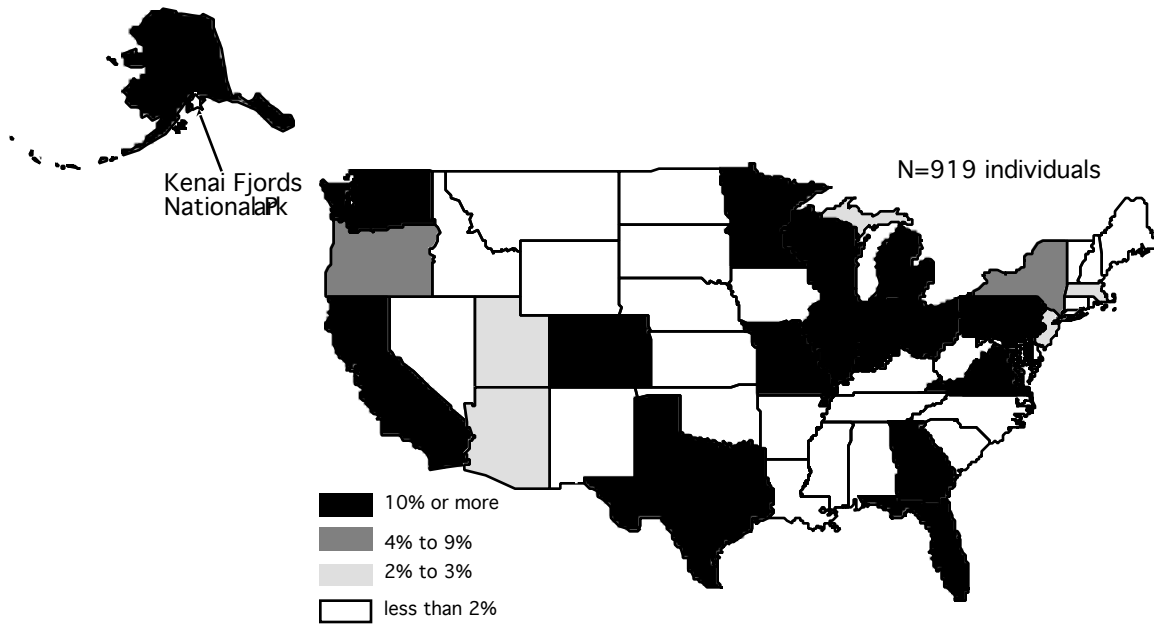


Figure 5: Number of lifetime visits to Exit Glacier

Table 3: International visitors by country of residence

N=79 individuals

State	Number of individuals	Percent of Int'l visitors	Percent of total visitors
Germany	19	24	2
Japan	15	19	2
England	6	8	1
Switzerland	6	8	1
Canada	5	6	1
Korea	5	6	1
Thailand	5	6	1
Holland	4	5	1
Israel	3	4	<1
Spain	3	4	<1
Australia	2	3	<1
Belgium	2	3	<1
Italy	2	3	<1
France	1	1	<1
Sweden	1	1	<1



Map 1: Proportion of United States visitors by state of residence

Table 4: United States visitors by state of residence

N=919 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	Percent of U.S. visitors	Percent of total visitors
Alaska	175	19	18
California	113	12	11
Minnesota	52	6	5
Washington	51	6	5
New York	45	5	5
Oregon	38	4	4
Texas	31	3	3
Arizona	26	3	3
Pennsylvania	26	3	3
Wisconsin	26	3	3
Colorado	25	3	3
New Jersey	21	2	2
Missouri	20	2	2
Georgia	19	2	2
Michigan	18	2	2
Utah	18	2	2
Florida	17	2	2
Illinois	17	2	2
Massachusetts	17	2	2
Virginia	17	2	2
Maryland	15	2	2
23 other states and Washington, D.C.	132	14	13

Visit frequency

Visitor groups were asked “During this trip, how many times did you and your group visit the Exit Glacier Area?” Most visitor groups (90%) said that they visited the Exit Glacier Area once during their trip (see Figure 6). Nine percent visited two to four times during their trip.

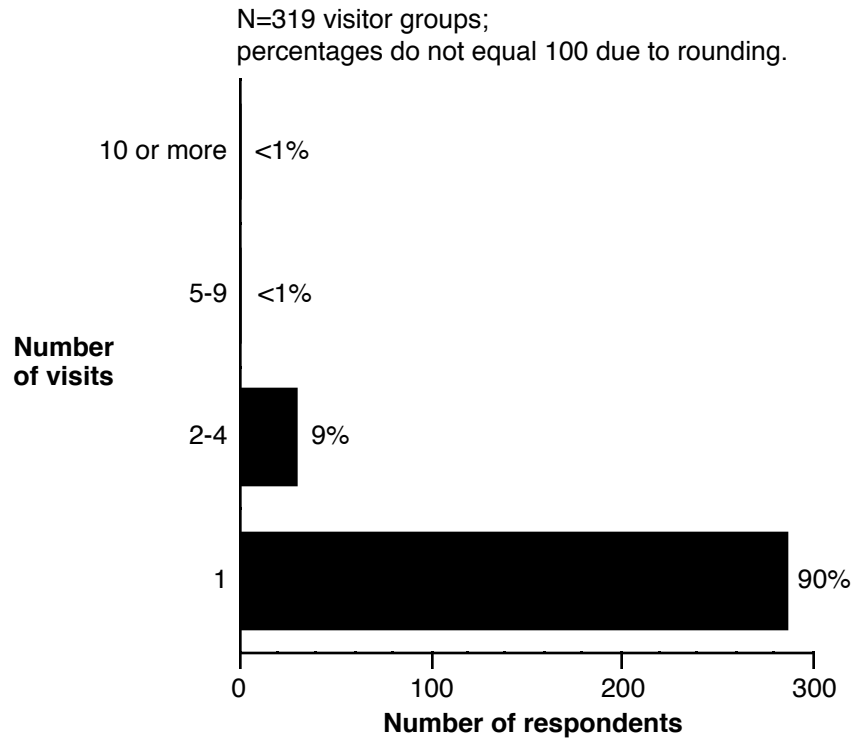


Figure 6: Number of visits to Exit Glacier on this trip

Visitor groups were asked how much time they spent at the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park. Ninety-two percent of visitor groups spent less than one day at the Exit Glacier Area, 5% spent one or two days and another 3% spent three or four days (see Figure 7). Of the groups that spent less than a day at the Exit Glacier Area, 83% reported that they spent from one to four hours, while 7% spent seven hours or more (see Figure 8).

Length of stay

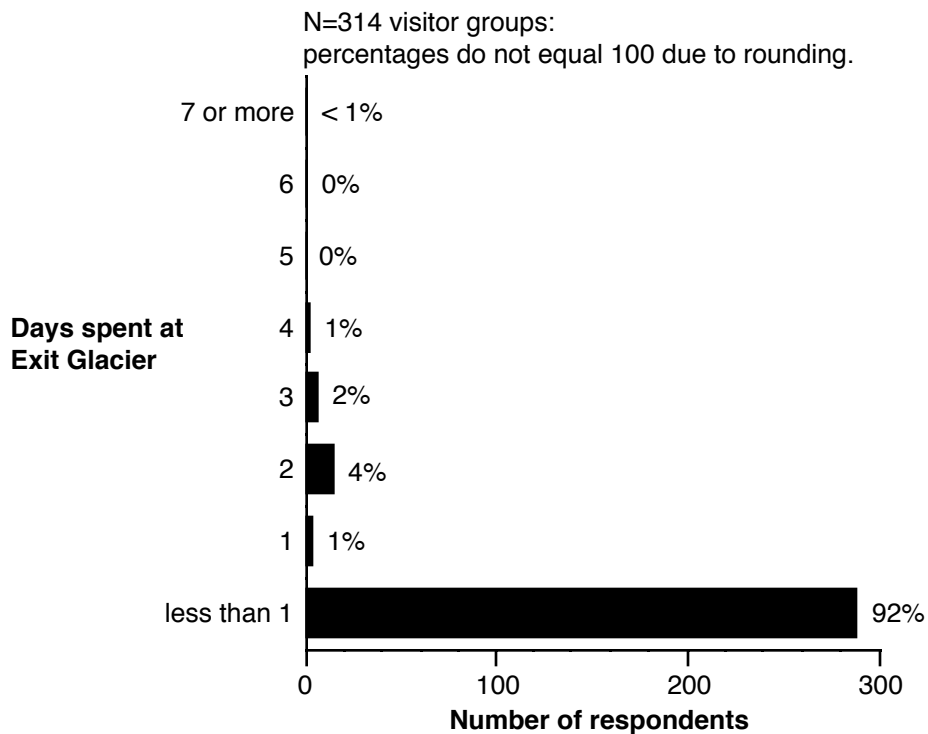


Figure 7: Days spent visiting Exit Glacier

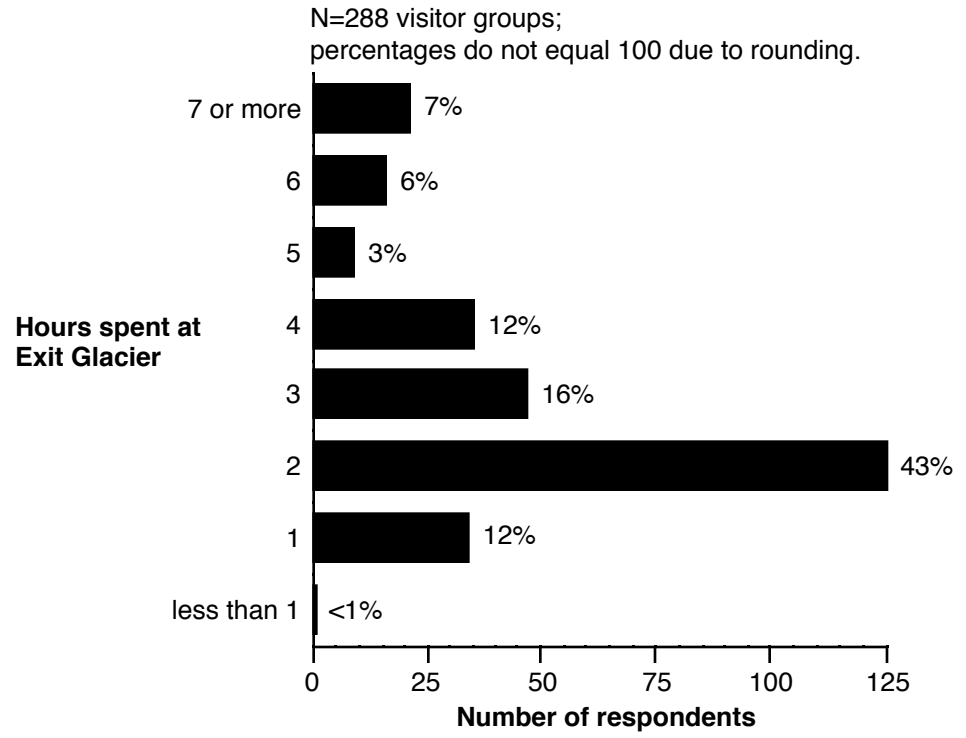


Figure 8: Hours spent visiting Exit Glacier

Figure 9 shows the proportions of visitor groups that planned to participate in activities at the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park. The most common planned activities were taking photographs (95%), touching the glacier (69%), and viewing wildlife (63%). The least common planned activity was camping in the backcountry (2%). "Other" activities which visitors planned to do included fishing, viewing the glacier, hiking to the icefield and taking the nature trail.

Activities

Figure 10 shows the proportions of visitor groups that actually participated in activities at the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park. The most common activities were taking photographs (97%), touching the glacier (66%), and visiting the Exit Glacier ranger station (47%). The least common activity was camping in the backcountry (1%). Visitor groups participated in a number of "other" activities including fishing, reading information signs and taking the nature trail.

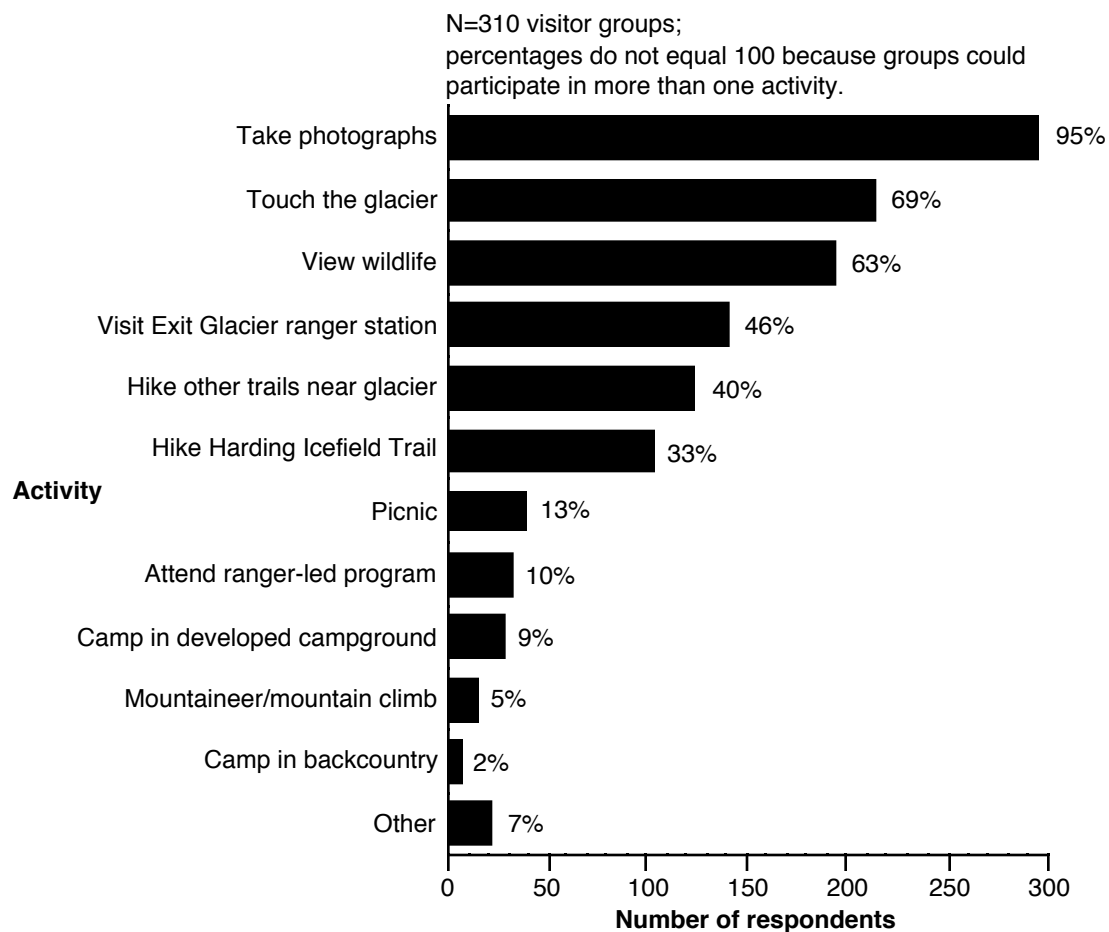


Figure 9: Planned visitor activities

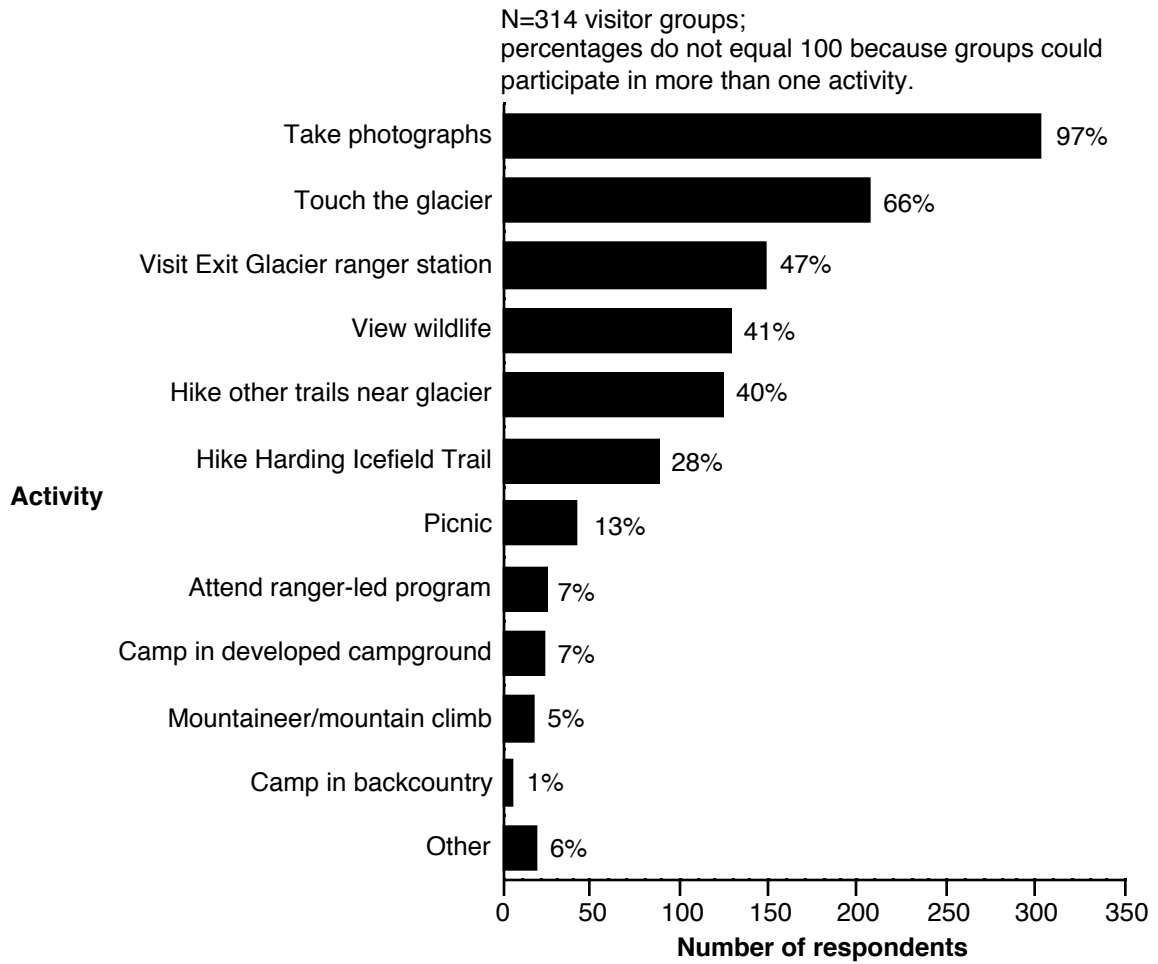


Figure 10: Actual visitor activities

Visitor groups were asked to indicate the sources from which they had received information about Kenai Fjords National Park prior to their visit. The most common sources of information were from a travel guide or tourbook (44%), friends or relatives (35%), and *Milepost* magazine (27%), as shown in Figure 11. Ten percent of visitor groups received no information prior to their visit. “Other” sources of information used by visitor groups included road signs and local residents.

Sources of information

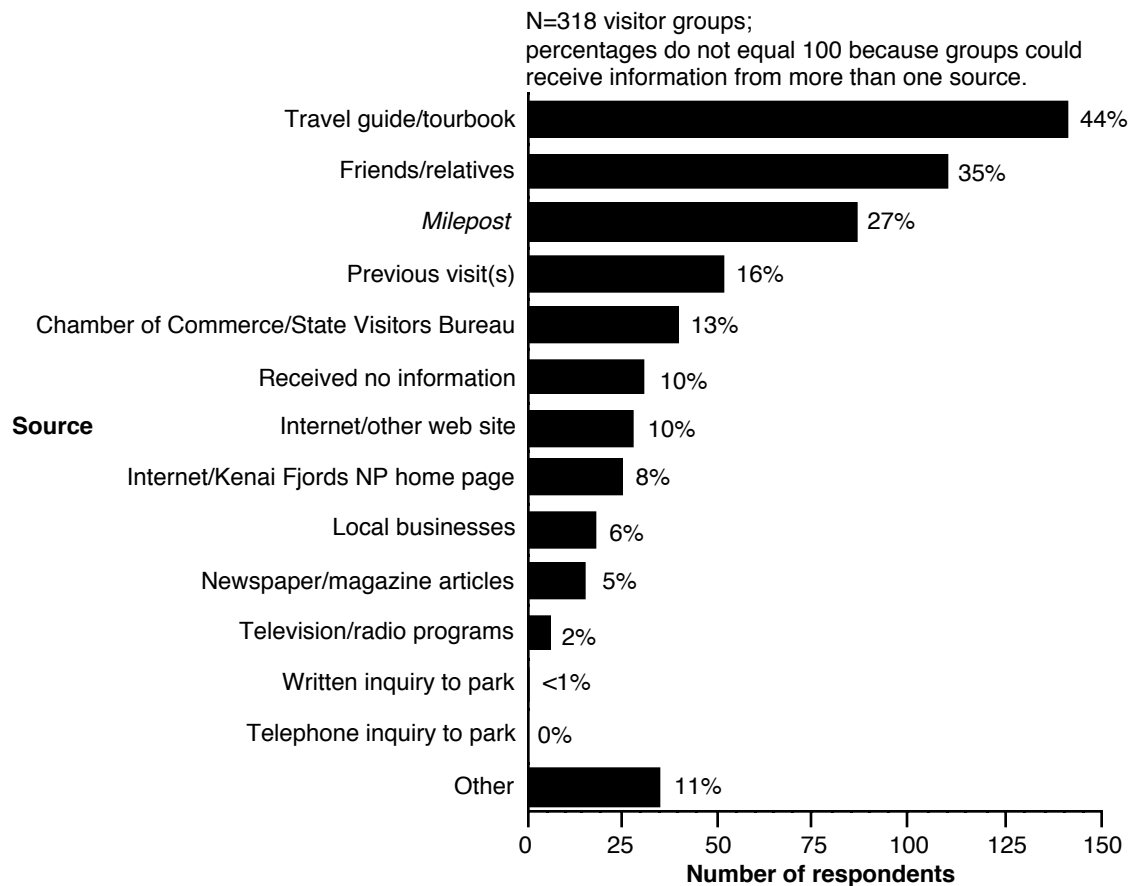


Figure 11: Sources of information used by visitors

Visitor services and facilities: use, importance and quality

Visitor groups were asked to note the park services and facilities they used during their visit to the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park. As shown in Figure 12, the services that were most commonly used by visitor groups were the parking lot (86%), roads (73%), restrooms (73%), trailside exhibits (67%), park directional signs (66%), and park brochure or map (65%). The least used service was the Junior Ranger Program (2%).

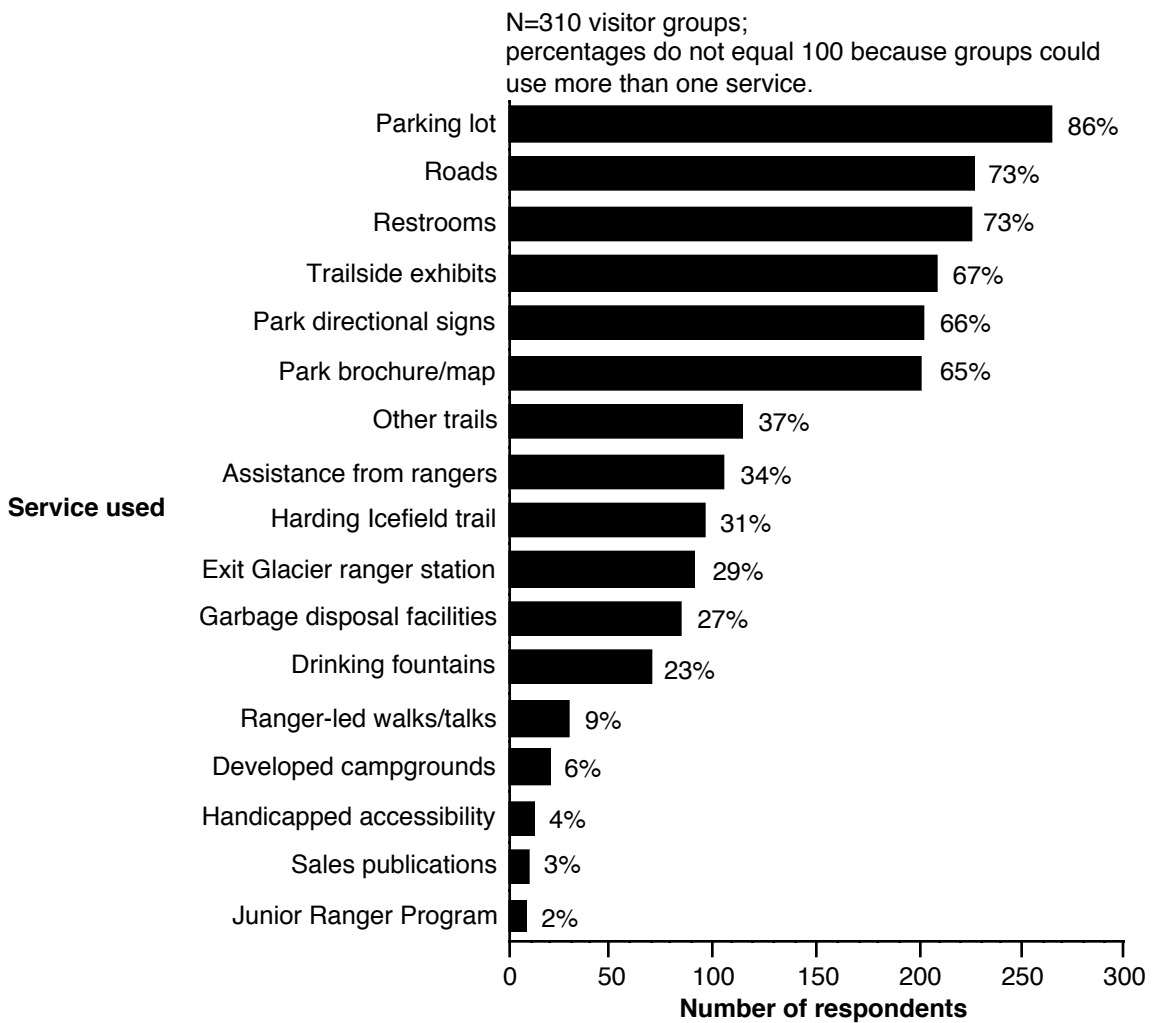


Figure 12: Park services used

Visitor groups rated the importance and quality of each of the park services and facilities they used. The following five point scales were used in the questionnaire:

IMPORTANCE	QUALITY
5=extremely important	5=very good
4=very important	4=good
3=moderately important	3=average
2=somewhat important	2=poor
1=not important	1=very poor

Figure 13 shows the average importance and quality ratings for visitor services. An average score was determined for each service and facility based on ratings provided by visitors who used that service or facility. This was done for both importance and quality, and the results are plotted on the grid shown in Figure 14. All services were rated as above "average" both in importance and quality. Please note that sales publications, Junior Ranger programs, ranger-led walks and talks, handicapped accessibility and developed campgrounds were not rated by enough people to provide reliable data.

Figures 15-31 show the importance ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services and facilities. Those services and facilities receiving the highest proportion of "extremely important" or "very important" ratings included the Harding Icefield Trail (93%), restrooms (90%) and other trails (88%). The highest proportion of "not important" ratings were for park brochure/map (3%) and parking lot (2%).

Figures 32-48 show the quality ratings that were provided by visitor groups for each of the individual services and facilities. Those services and facilities receiving the highest proportion of "very good" or "good" ratings included other trails (92%), the Harding Icefield Trail (90%) and assistance from rangers (85%). The highest proportion of "very poor" ratings was for restrooms (8%).

Figure 49 combines the "very good" and "good" quality ratings and compares those ratings for all of the services and facilities.

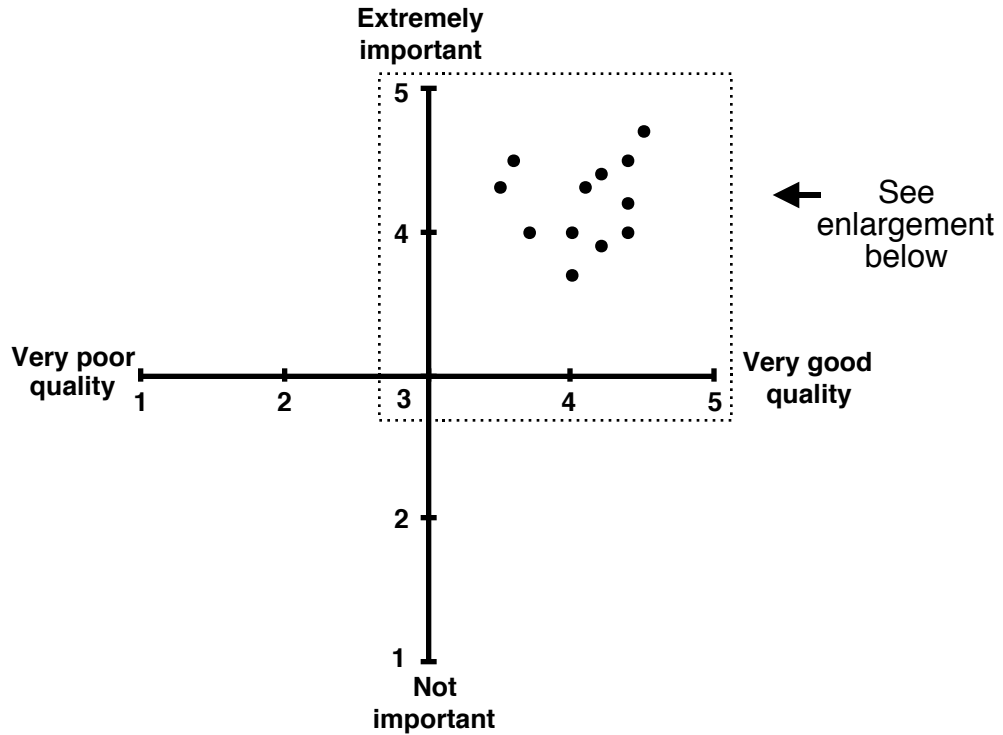


Figure 13: Average ratings of service and facility importance and quality

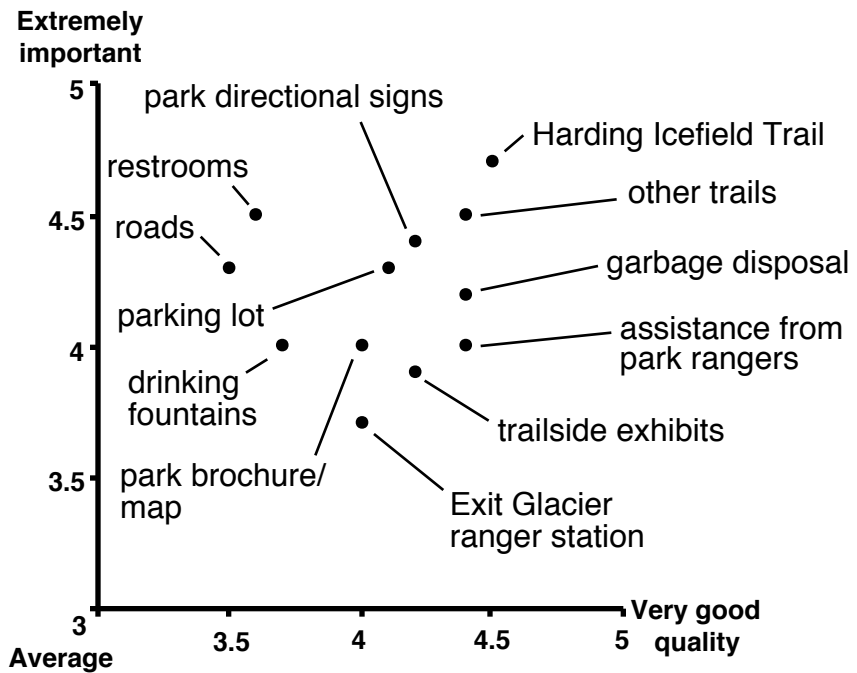


Figure 14: Detail of Figure 13

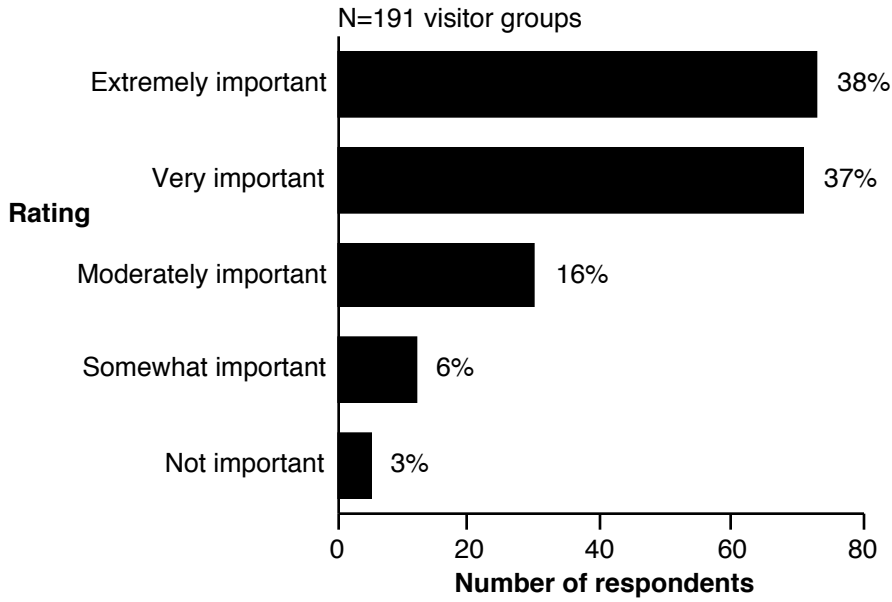


Figure 15: Importance of park brochure/map

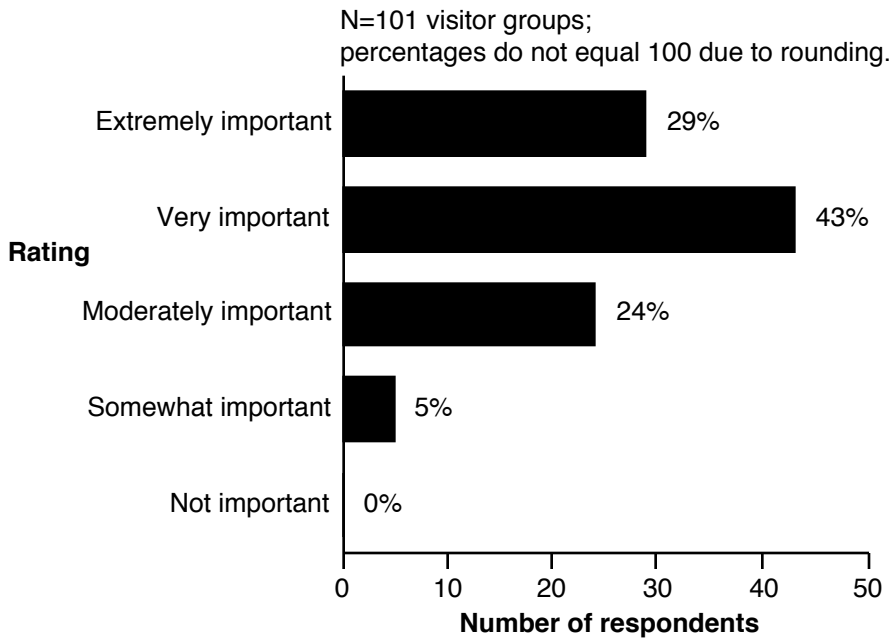


Figure 16: Importance of assistance from rangers

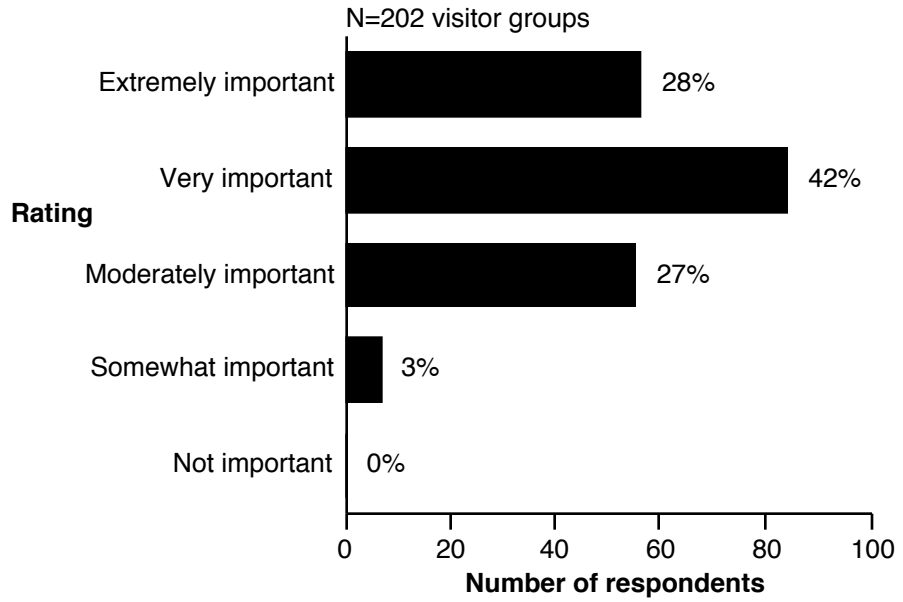


Figure 17: Importance of trailside exhibits

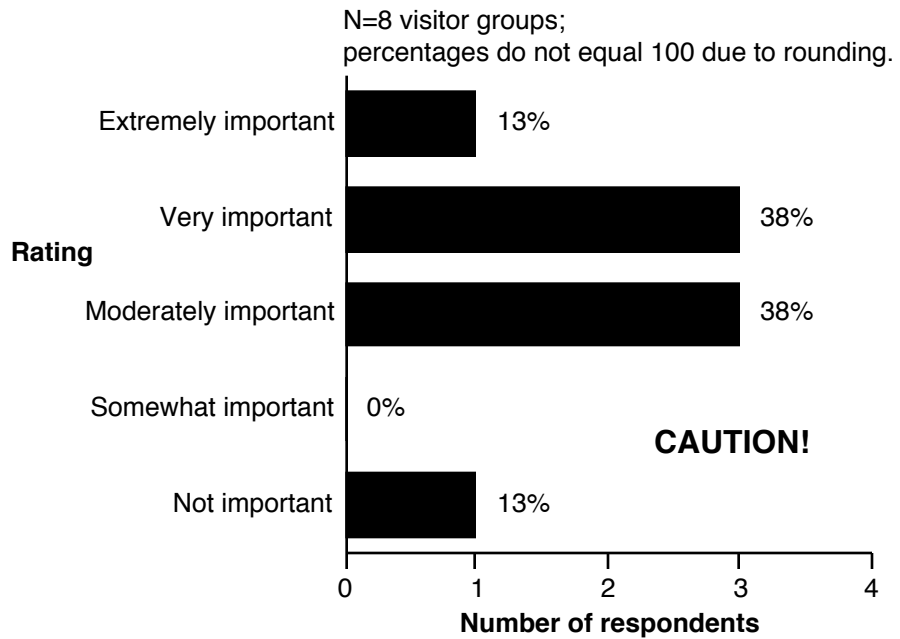


Figure 18: Importance of sales publications

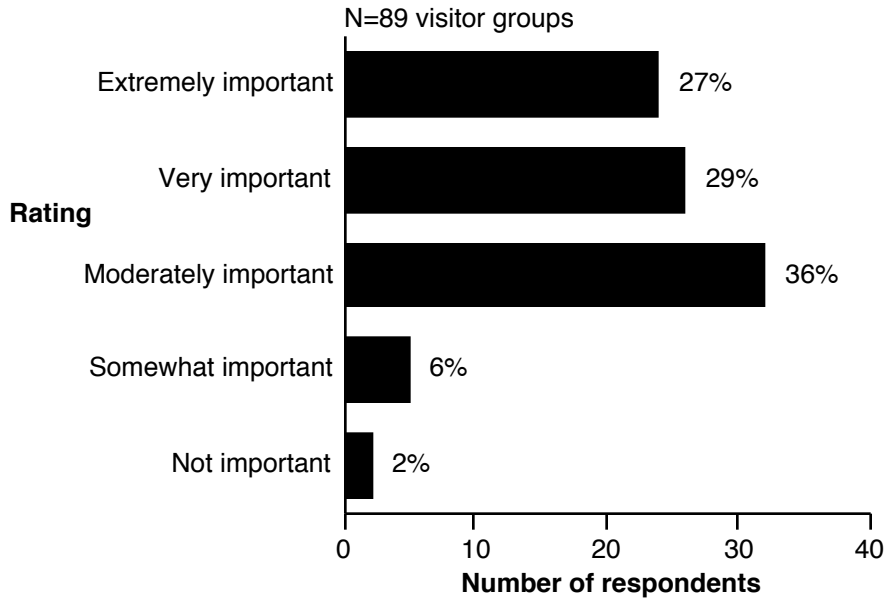


Figure 19: Importance Exit Glacier ranger station

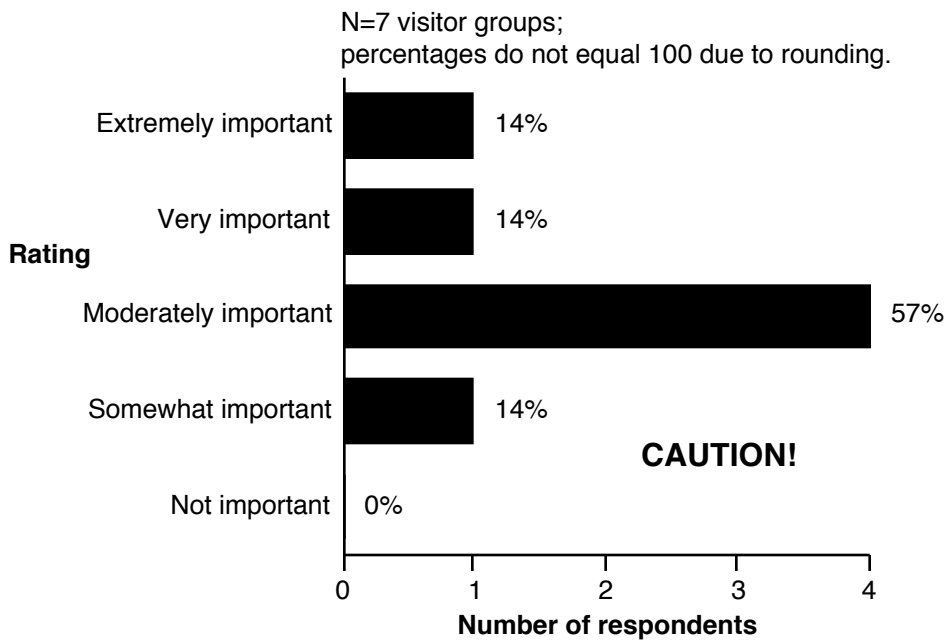


Figure 20: Importance of Junior Ranger programs

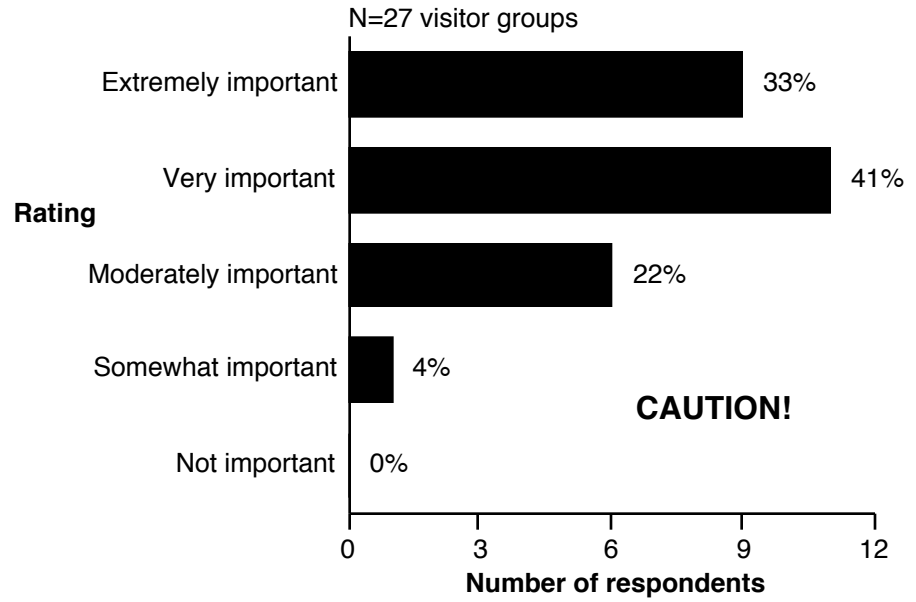


Figure 21: Importance of ranger-led walks/talks

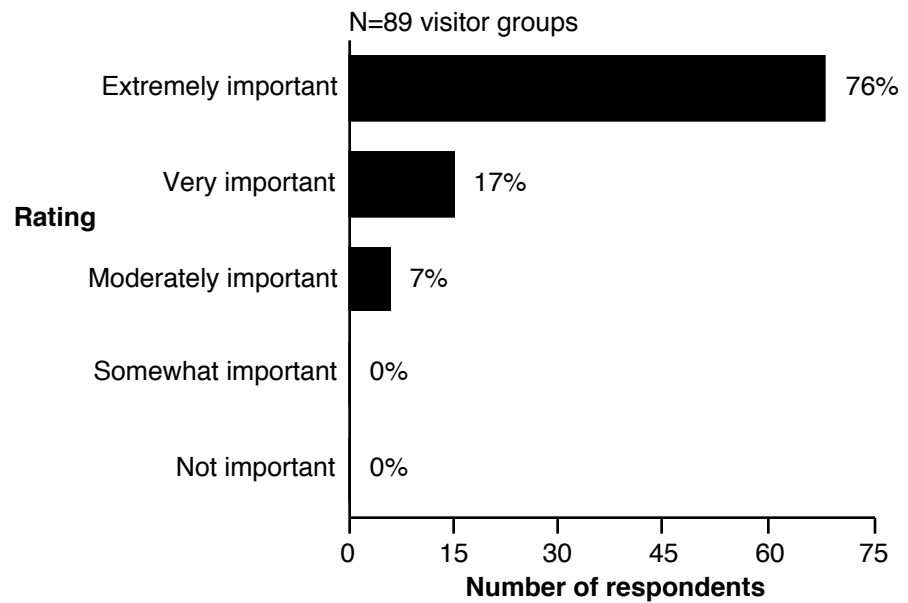


Figure 22: Importance of Harding Icefield Trail

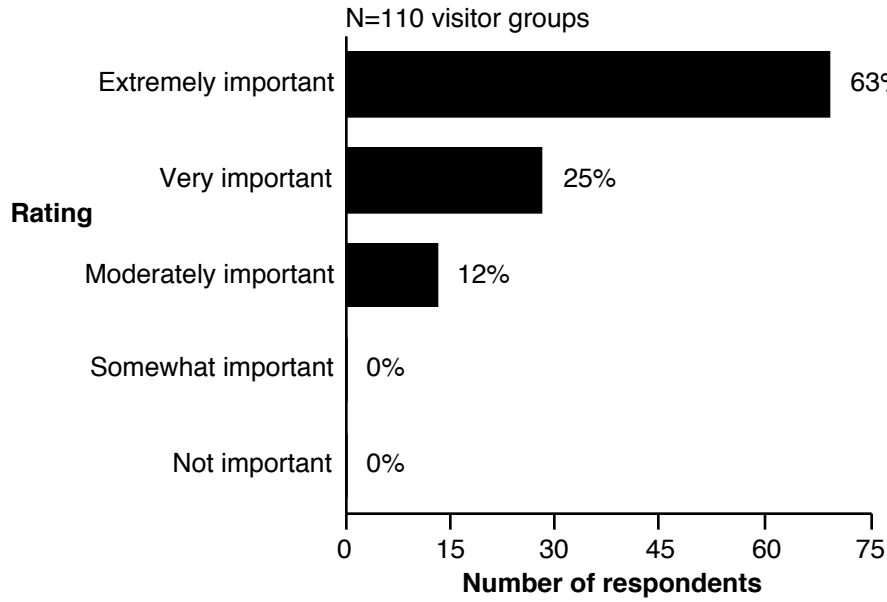


Figure 23: Importance of other trails

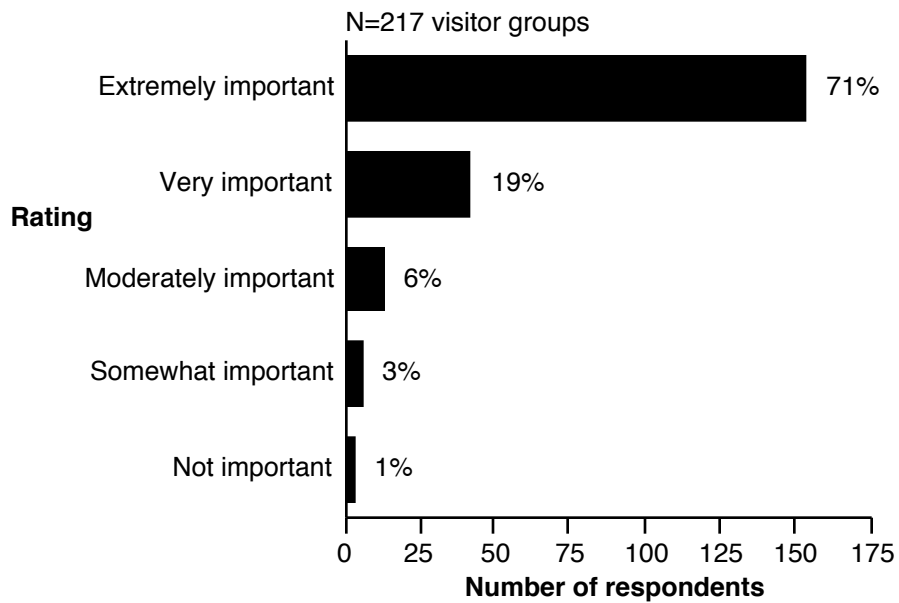


Figure 24: Importance of restrooms

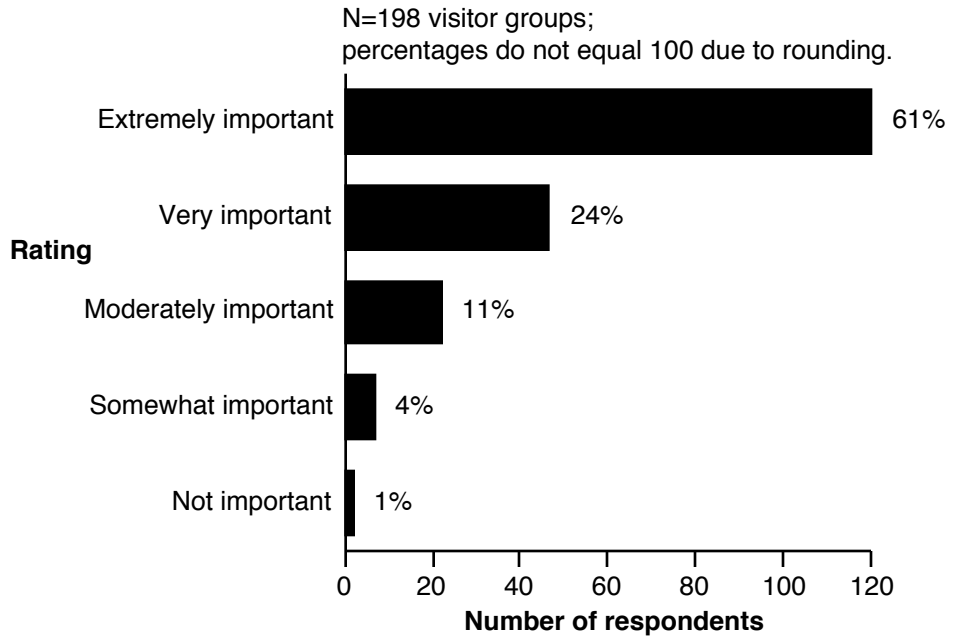


Figure 25: Importance of park directional signs

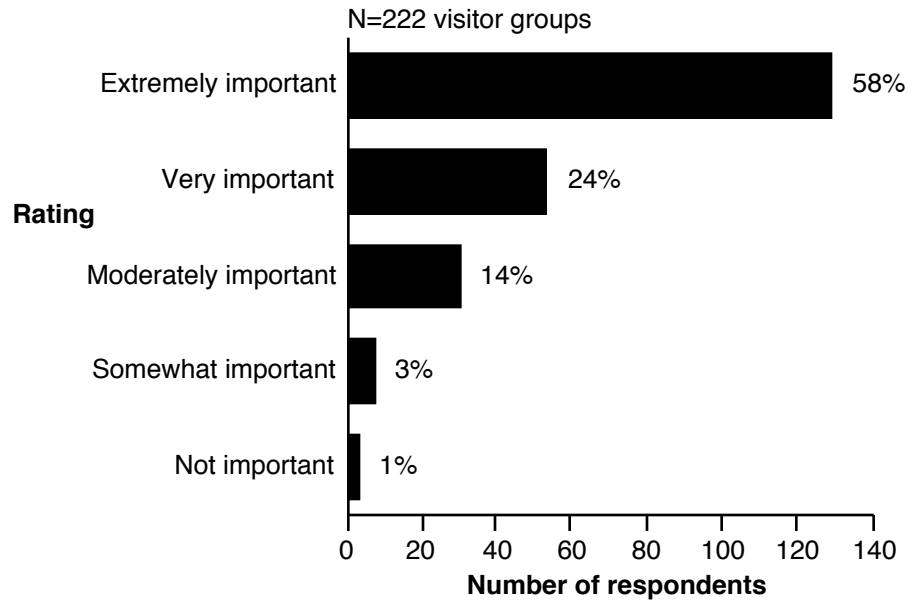


Figure 26: Importance of roads

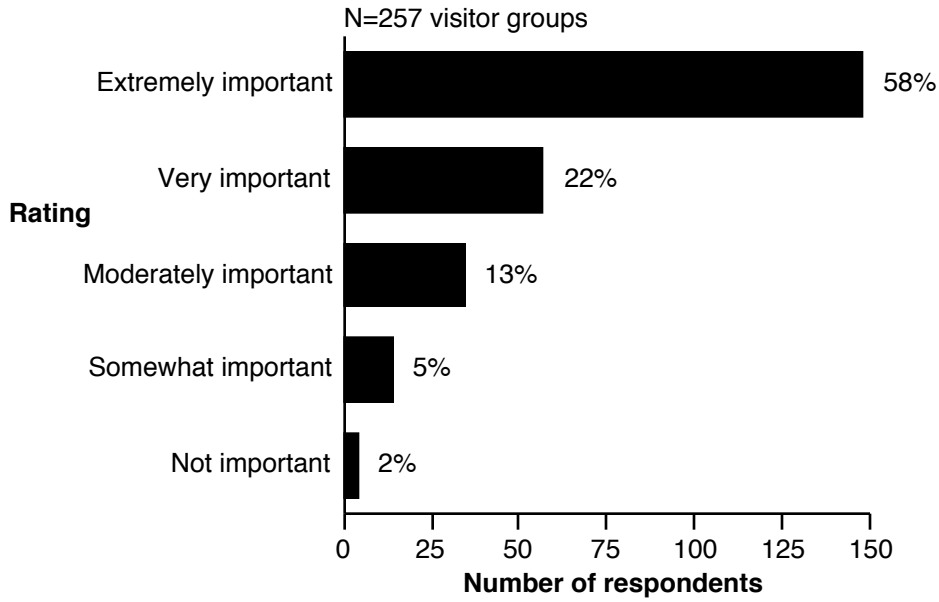


Figure 27: Importance of parking lot

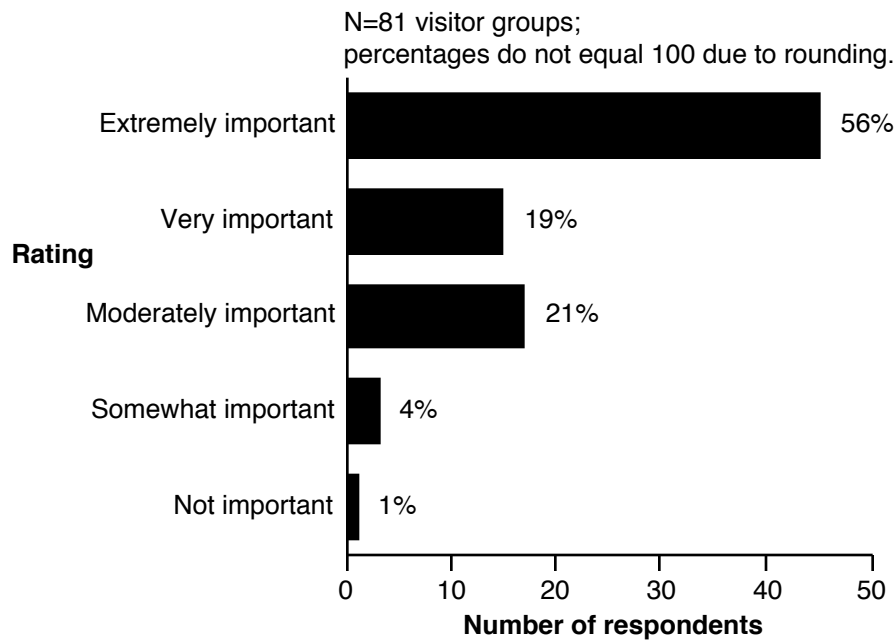


Figure 28: Importance of garbage disposal facilities

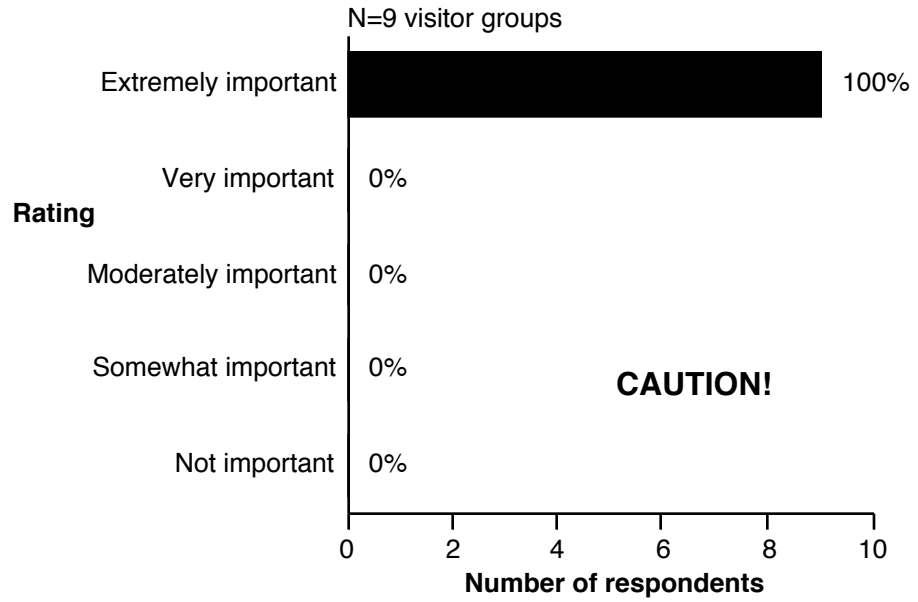


Figure 29: Importance of handicapped accessibility

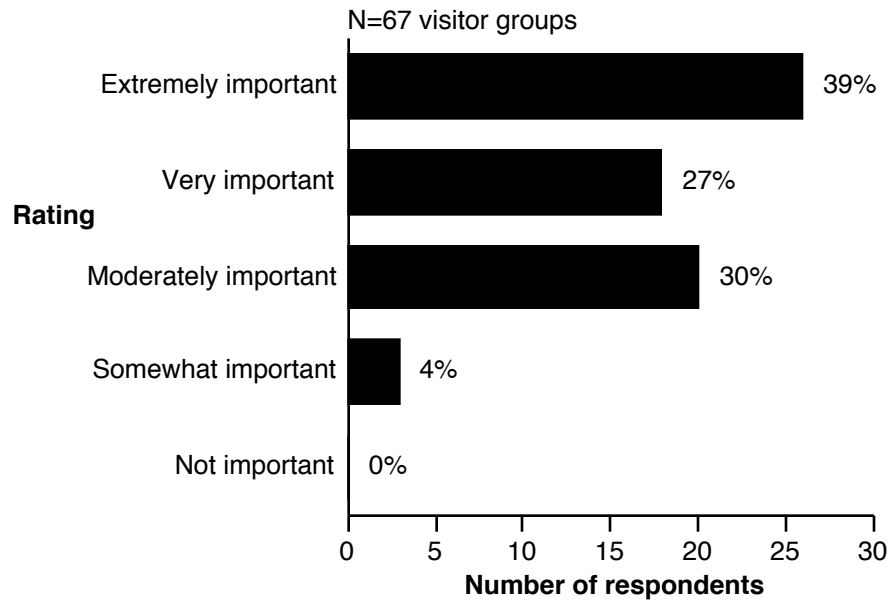


Figure 30: Importance of drinking fountains

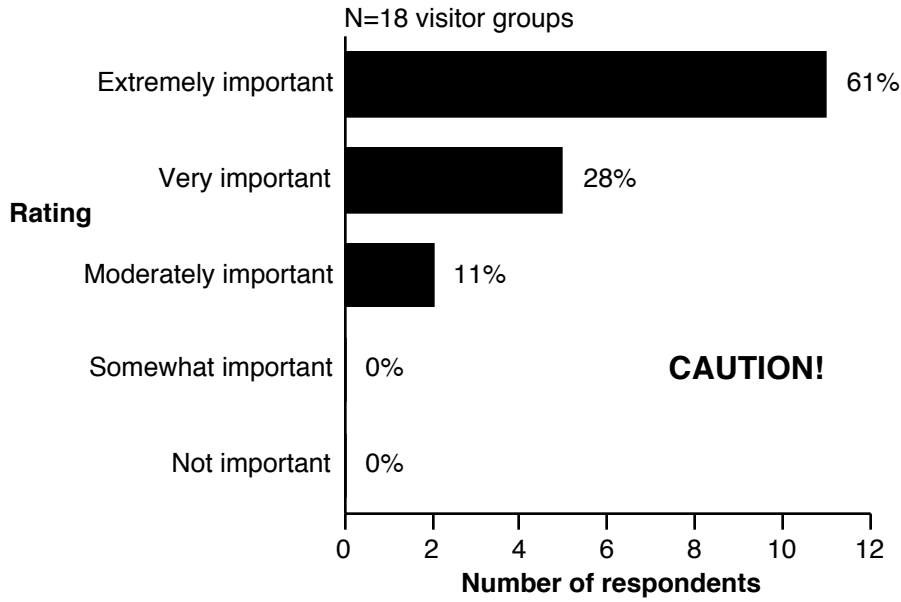


Figure 31: Importance of developed campground

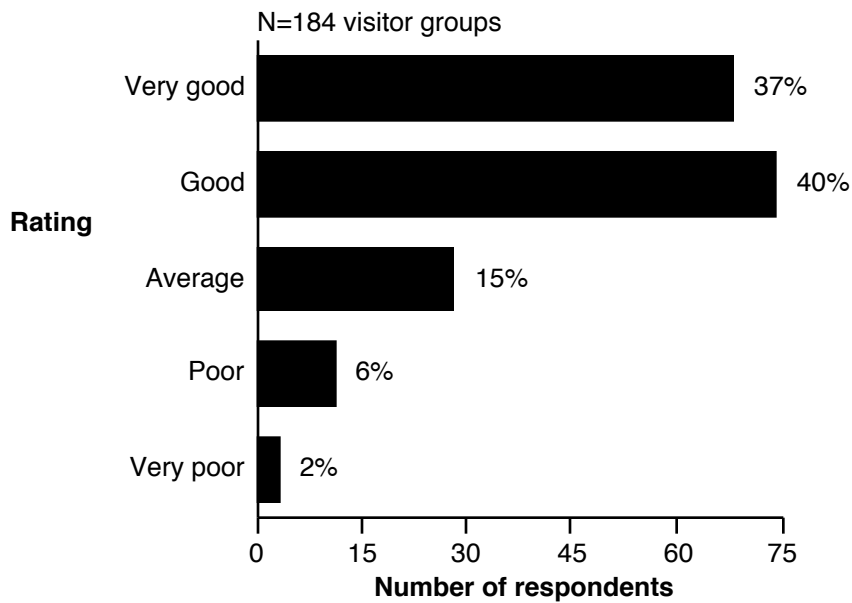


Figure 32: Quality of park brochure/map

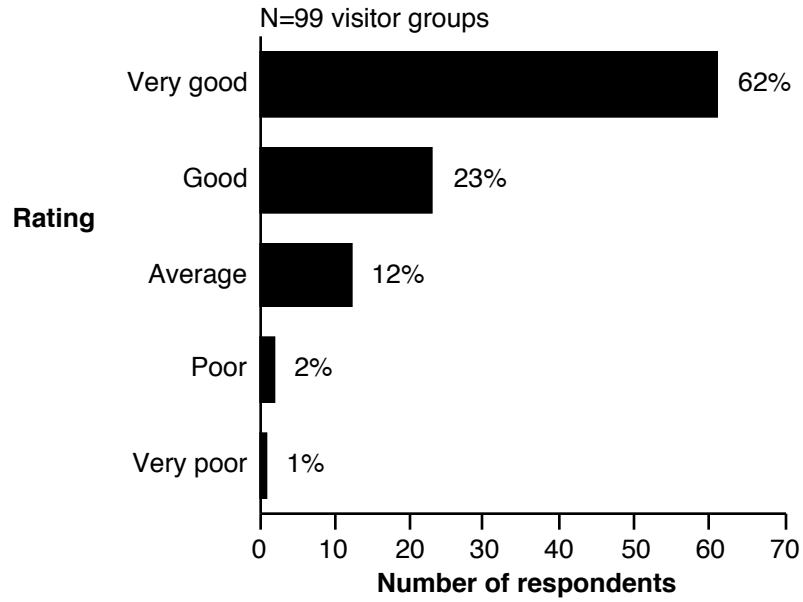


Figure 33: Quality of assistance from rangers

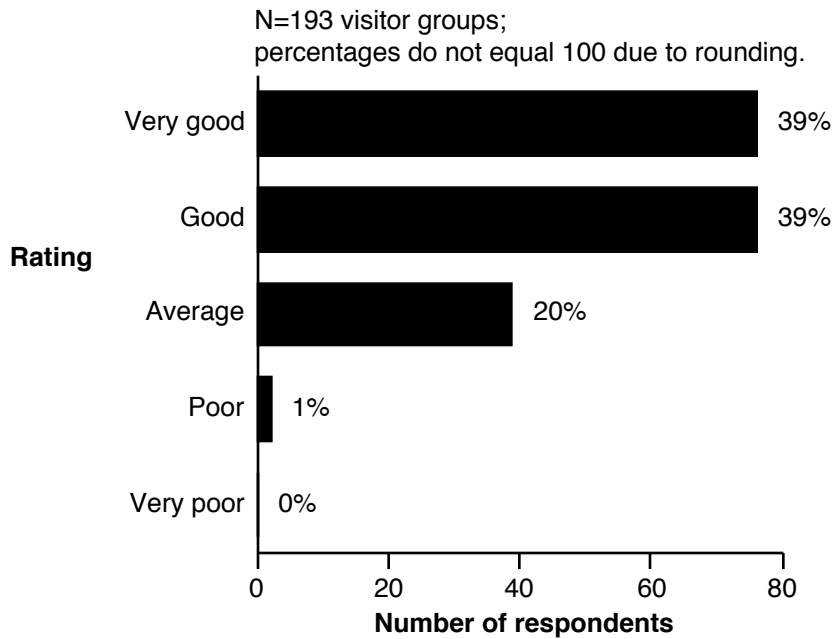


Figure 34: Quality of trailside exhibits

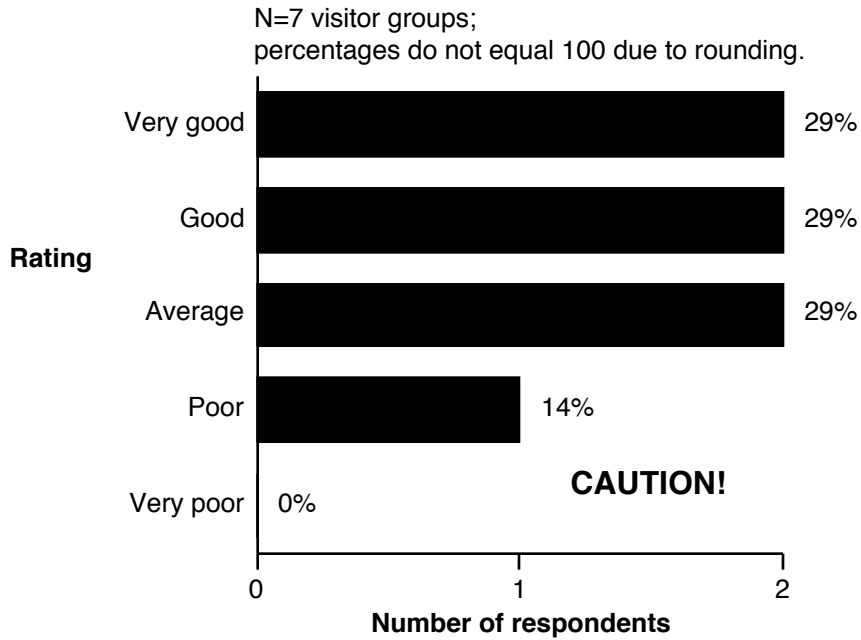


Figure 35: Quality of sales publications

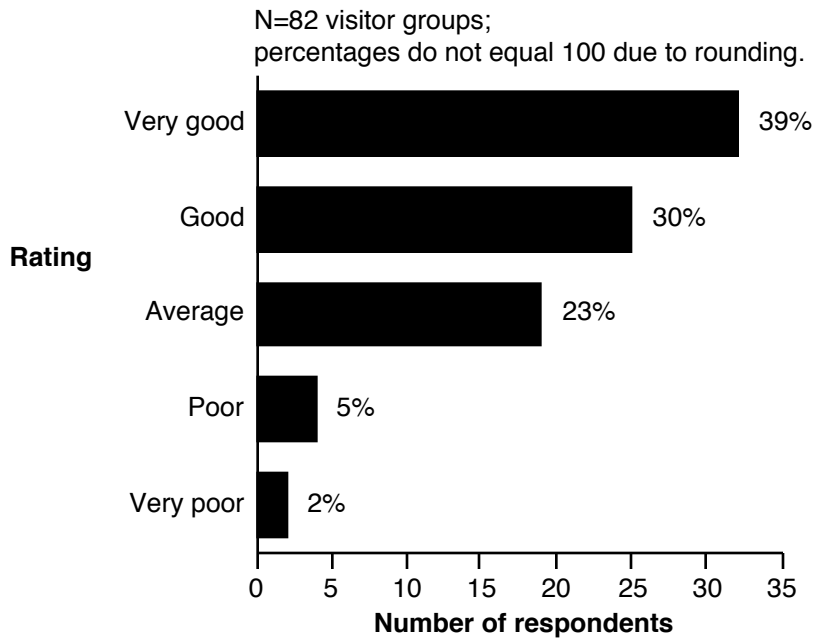


Figure 36: Quality of Exit Glacier ranger station

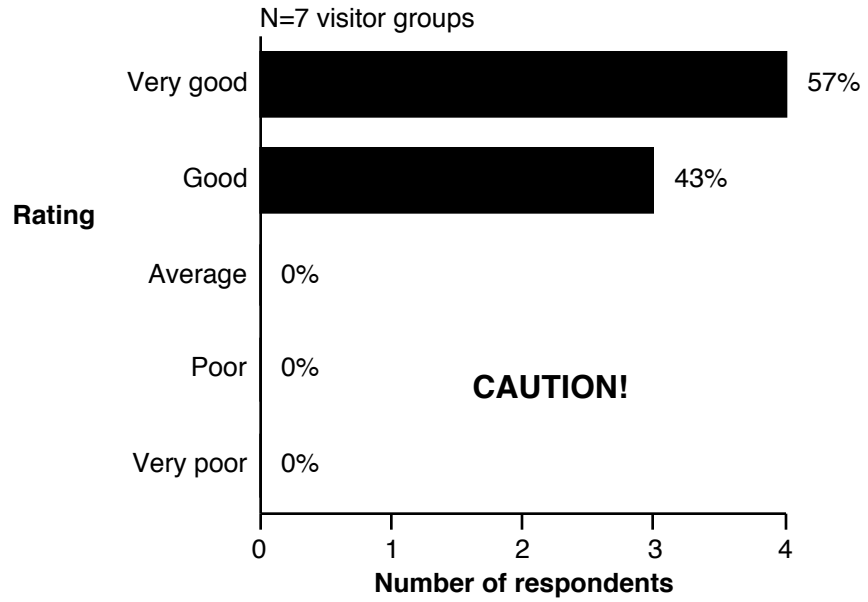


Figure 37: Quality of Junior Ranger programs

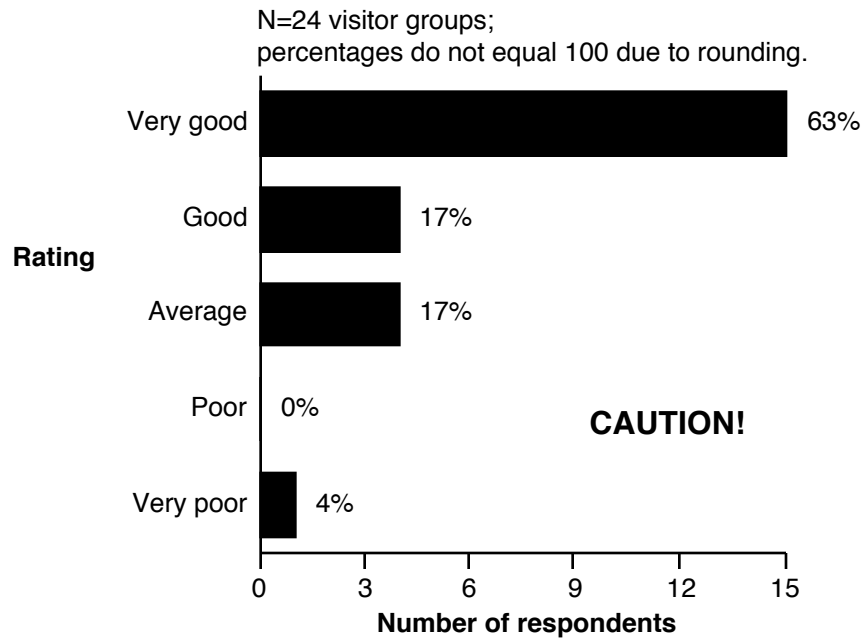


Figure 38: Quality of ranger-led walks/talks

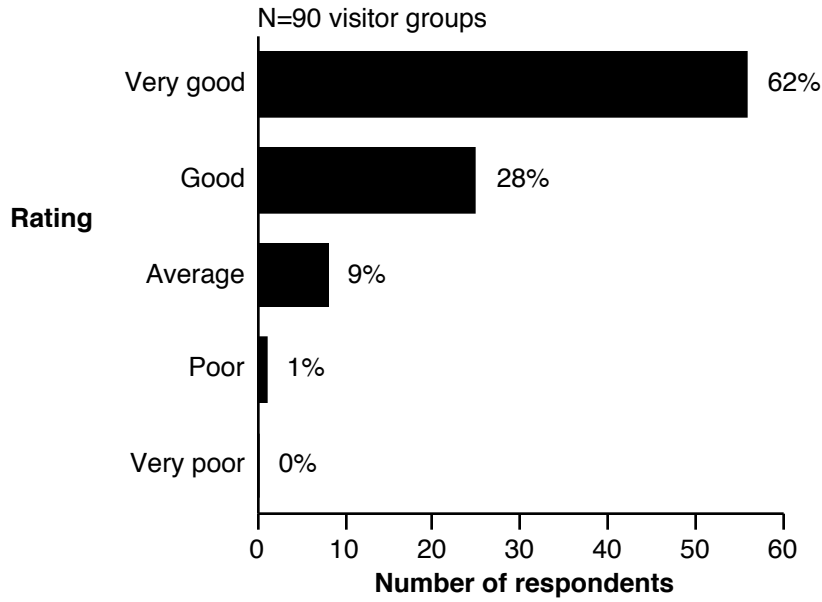


Figure 39: Quality of Harding Icefield Trail

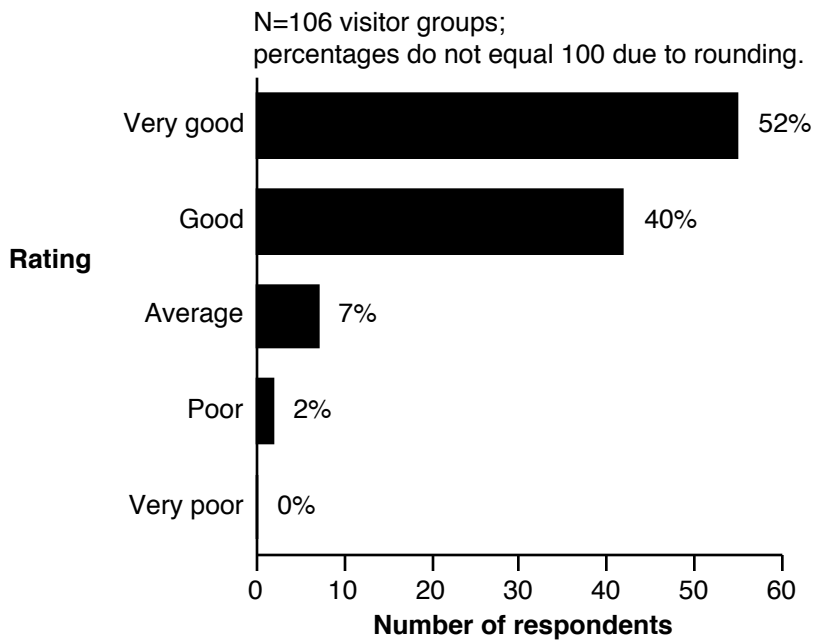


Figure 40: Quality of other trails

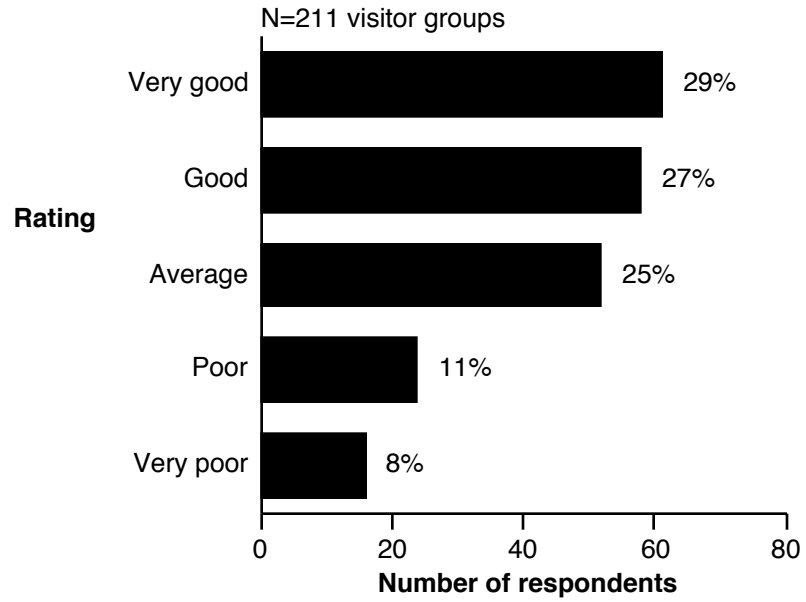


Figure 41: Quality of restrooms

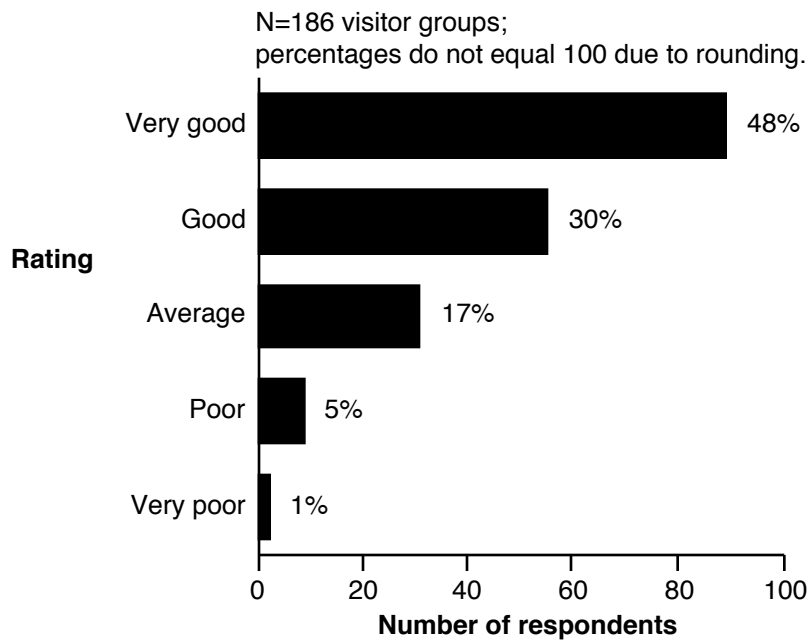


Figure 42: Quality of park directional signs

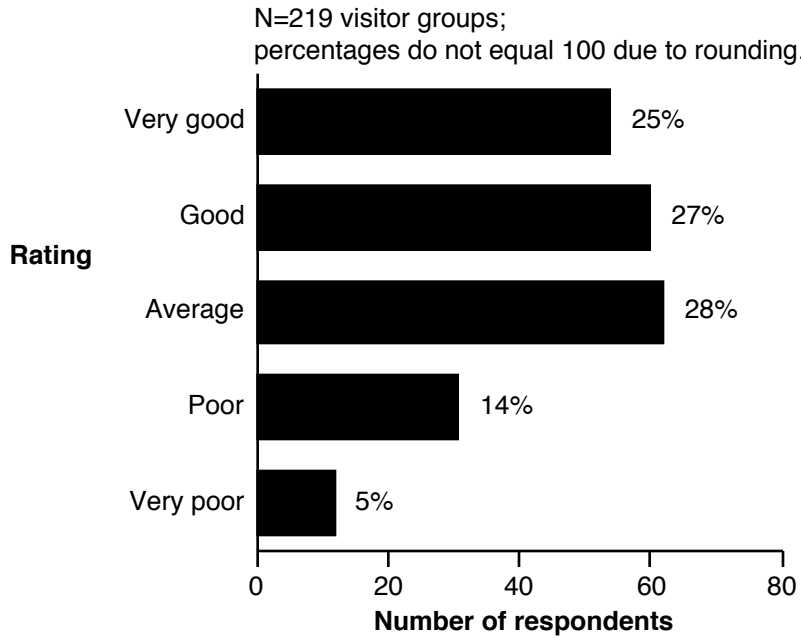


Figure 43: Quality of roads

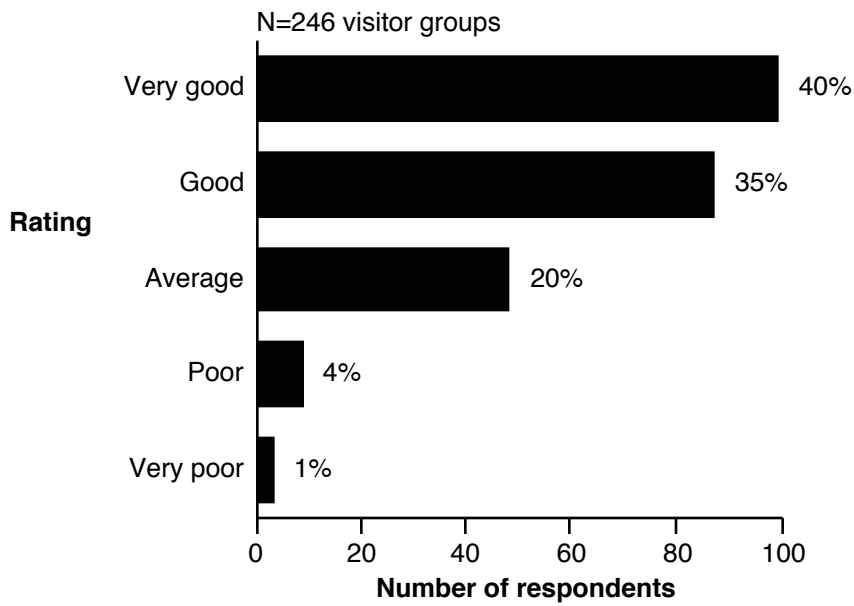


Figure 44: Quality of parking lot

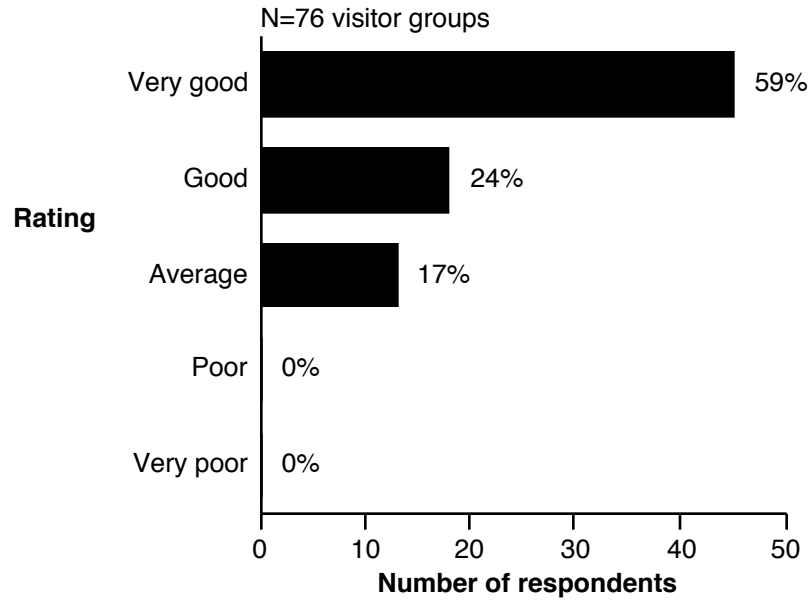


Figure 45: Quality of garbage disposal facilities

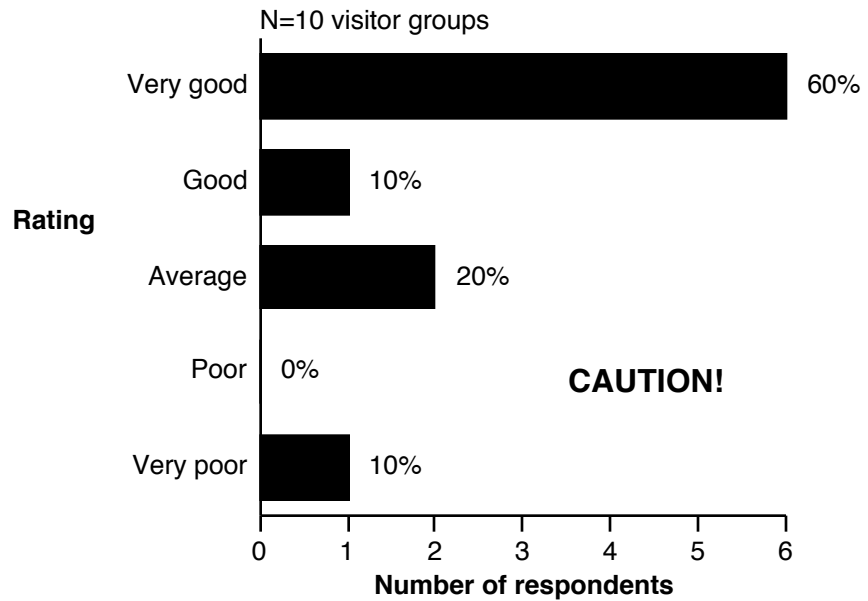


Figure 46: Quality of handicapped accessibility

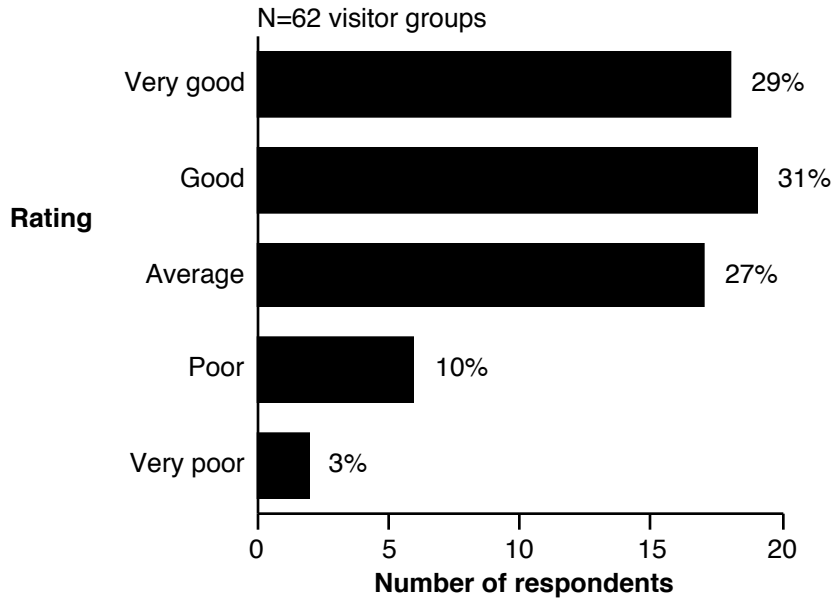


Figure 47: Quality of drinking fountains

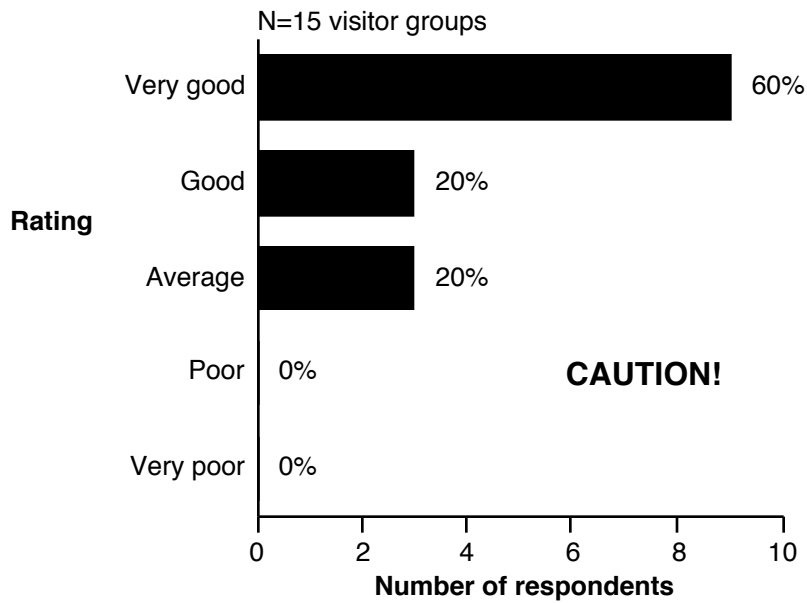


Figure 48: Quality of developed campground

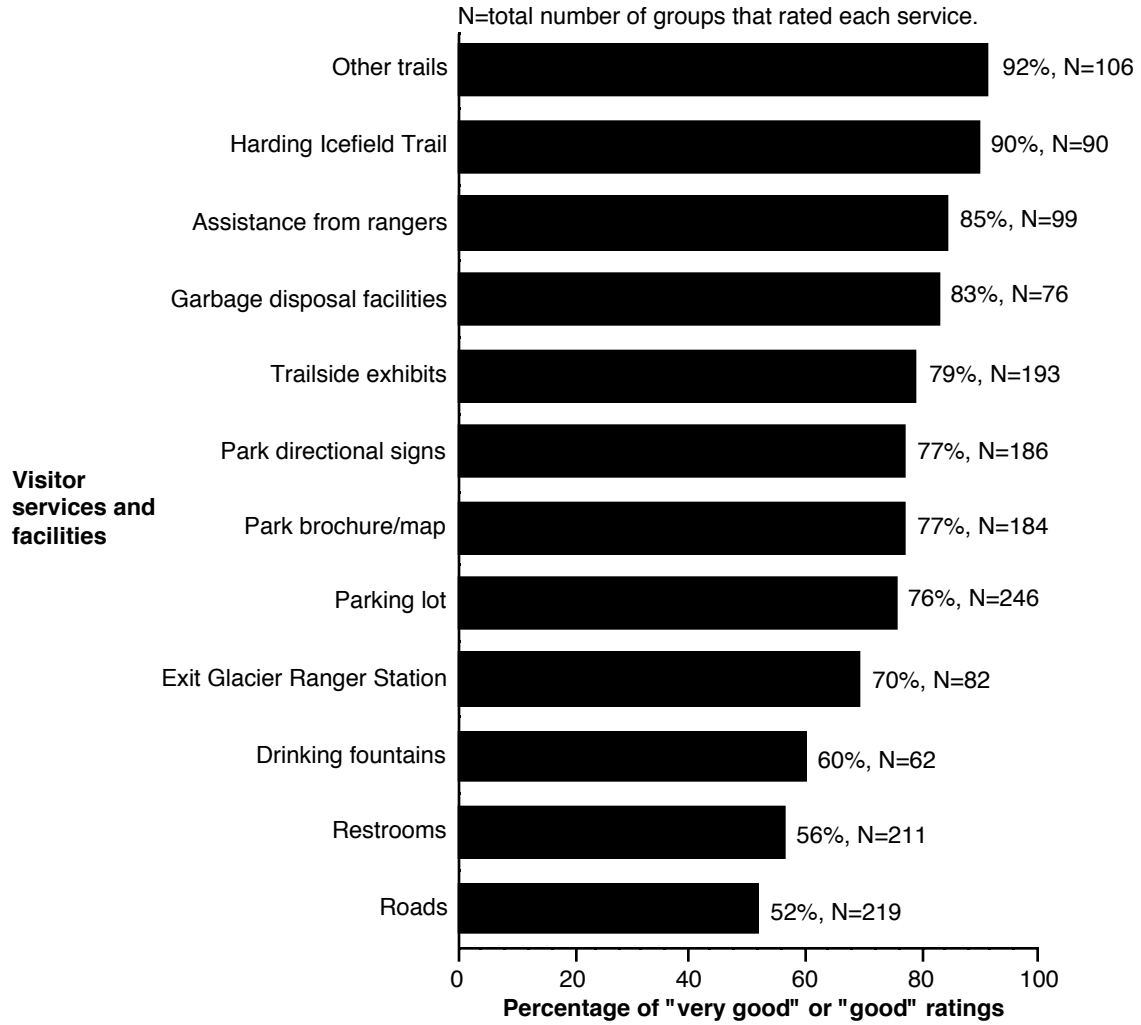


Figure 49: Combined proportions of “very good” or “good” quality ratings for services and facilities

Visitor groups were asked to rate the importance (from 1 to 5) of selected features or qualities of Kenai Fjords National Park.

The features and qualities were as follows: scenic views, recreational opportunities, educational opportunities, solitude, quiet, wildlife, and access to the glacier.

Importance of park features and qualities; reasons for impaired enjoyment

Figures 50-56 show visitors' ratings of the above features and qualities. The results can be compared by looking at the combined "extremely important" and "very important" ratings for each feature or quality. The highest importance ratings were for scenic views (97%) access to the glacier (89%), wildlife (71%) and recreational opportunities (67%). The feature which received the highest "not important" rating was solitude (9%).

Visitor groups were also asked "Did anything detract from your enjoyment of any of the above features or qualities?" Twenty-eight percent of the visitors said that there were things which detracted from their enjoyment of park features or qualities (see Figure 57). Visitors were asked to identify the problems. Their responses are included in Table 5.

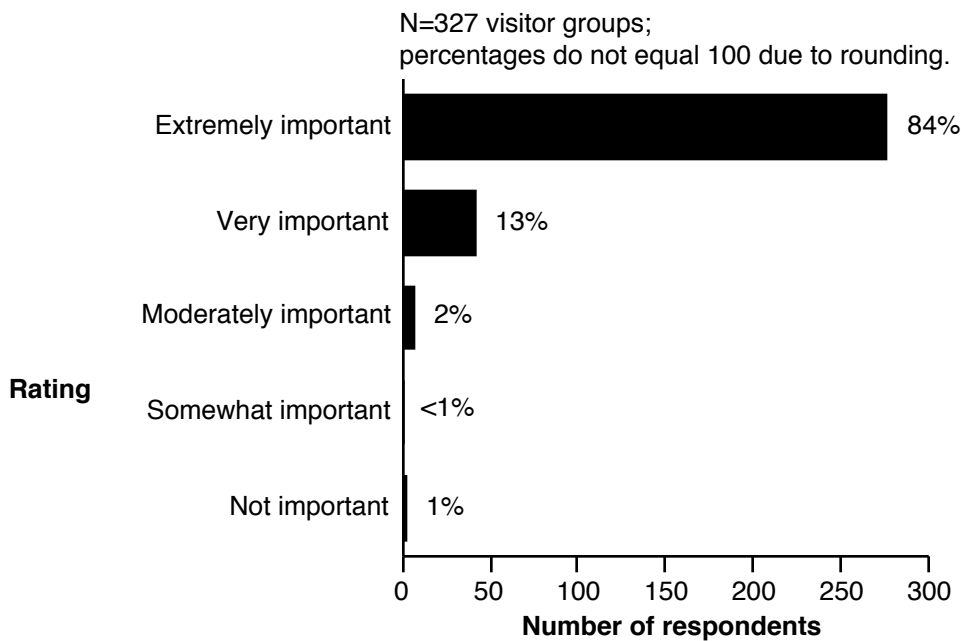


Figure 50: Importance of scenic views

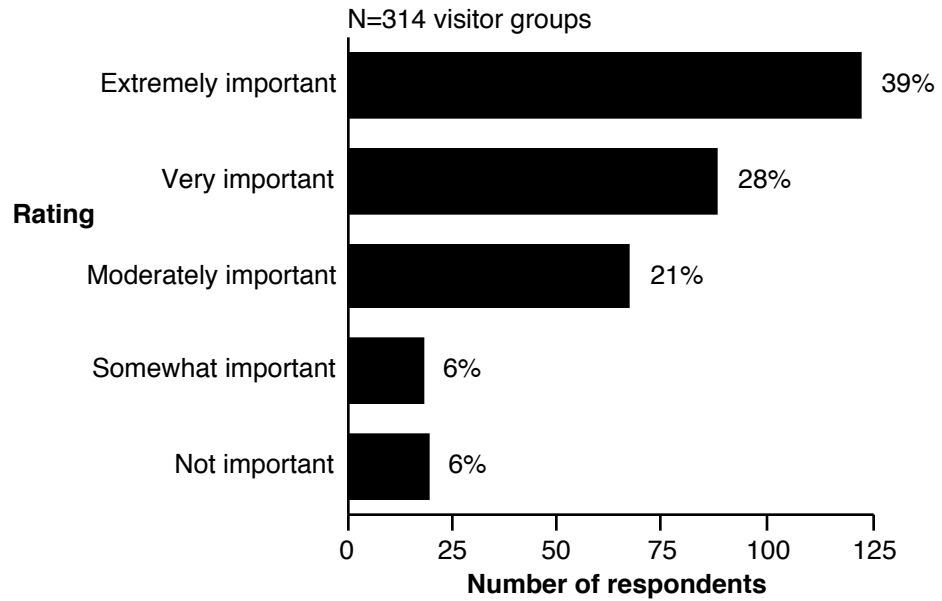


Figure 51: Importance of recreational opportunities

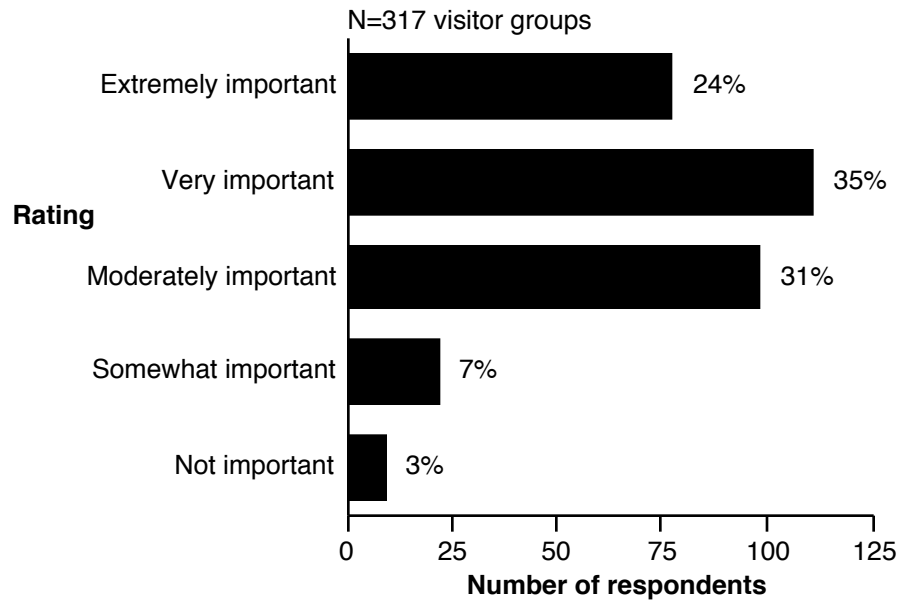


Figure 52: Importance of educational opportunities

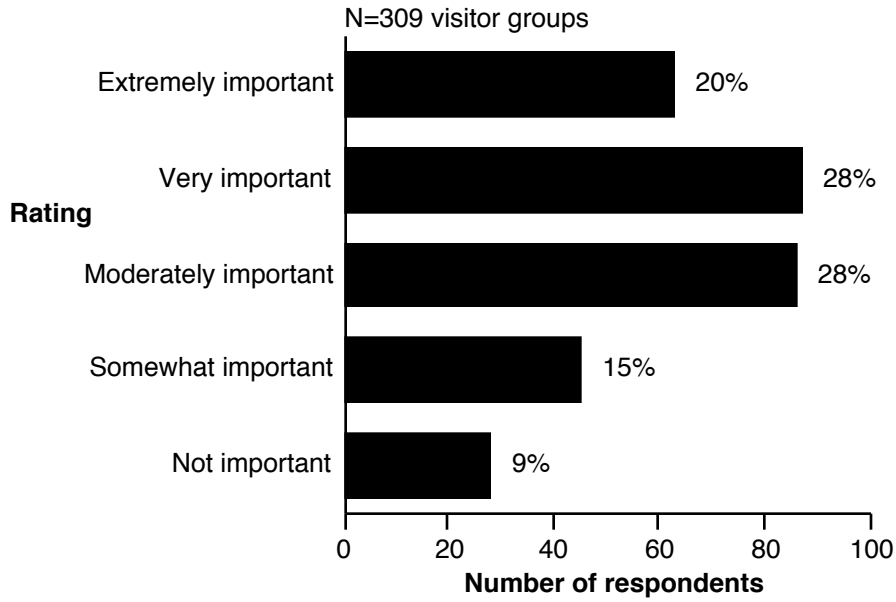


Figure 53: Importance of solitude

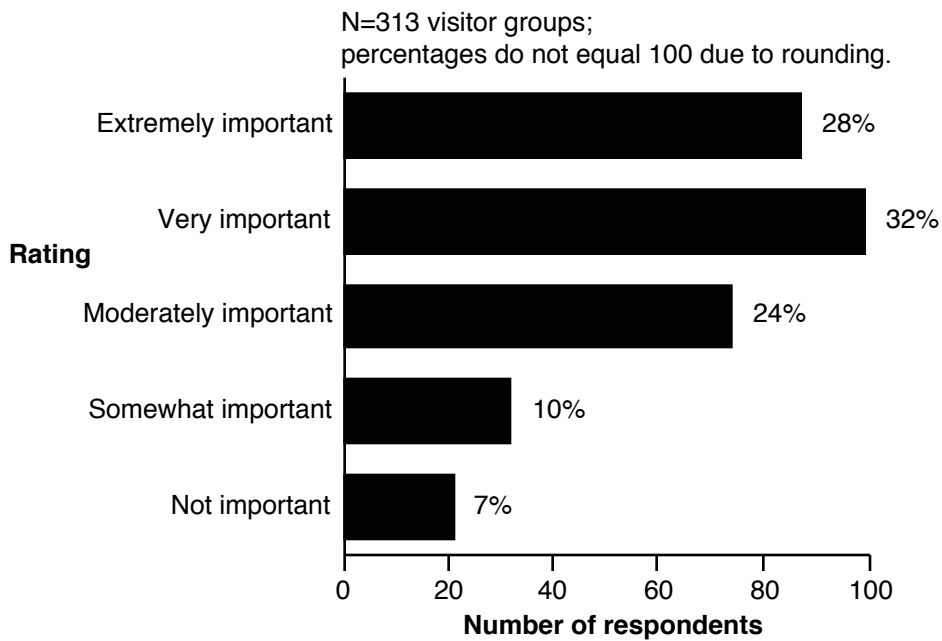


Figure 54: Importance of quiet

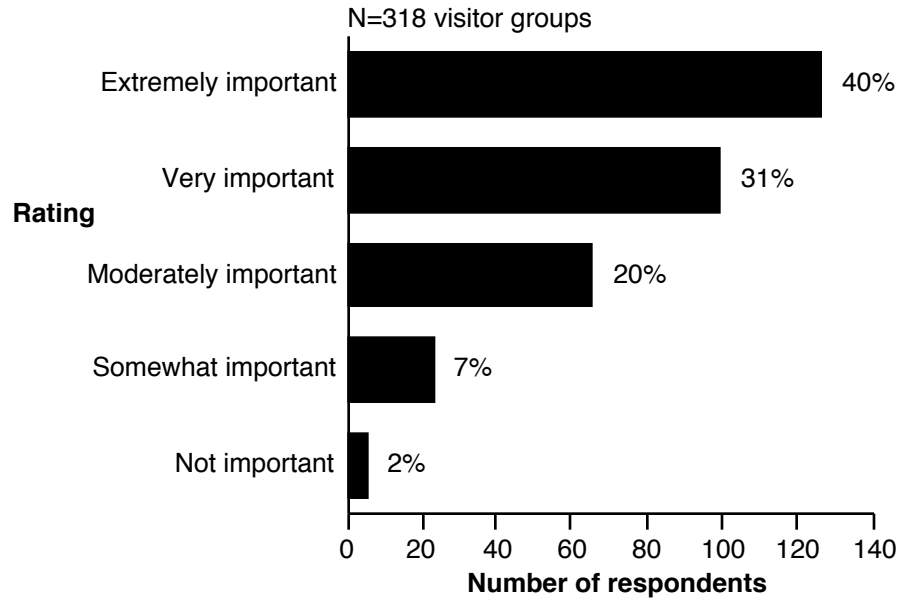


Figure 55: Importance of wildlife

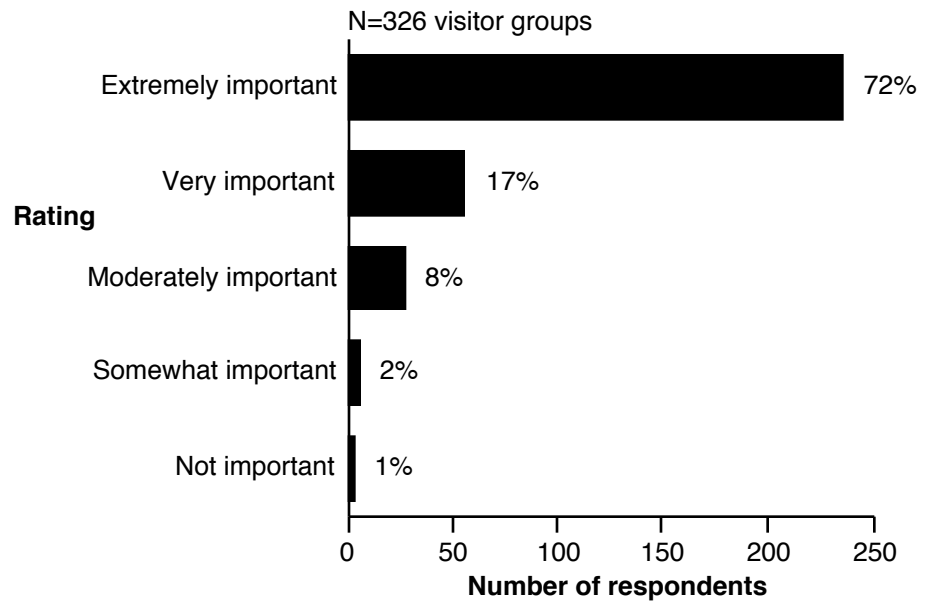


Figure 56: Importance of access to the glacier

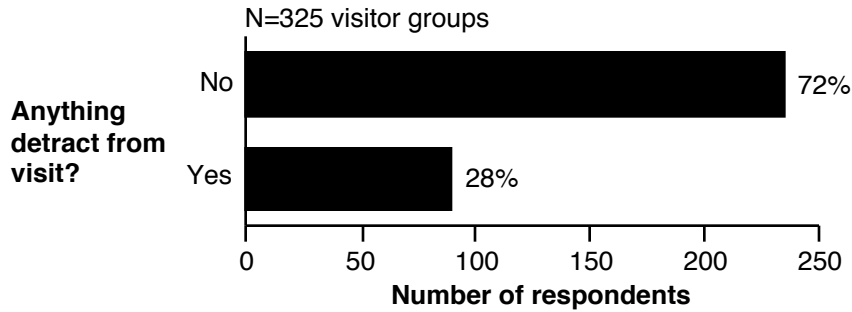


Figure 57: Did anything detract from your enjoyment of park features or qualities

Table 5: Detractions from enjoyment of park features or qualities

N=98 comments;
some visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Weather	21
Yellow jackets/ bees	7
Lack of wildlife	7
Not enough opportunity to touch glacier	5
Too crowded	4
Couldn't bring pet	4
Rangers telling people to not get too close to glacier	4
Road maintenance	3
Yellow ropes near glacier	3
Smelly restrooms	3
Lack of time	2
People smoking on trails	2
Ranger station was closed	2
Not enough campground sites	2
People bringing pets	2
Other comments	27

**Visitors/
activities which
interfered with
visit**

Visitor groups were asked “During this visit, did other visitors and their activities interfere with your visit or cause you to feel unsafe during your visit to Kenai Fjords National Park?” Four percent of the visitors said other visitors and their activities did interfere with their visit (see Figure 58). These visitors were asked to identify the problems. Their responses are listed in Table 6.

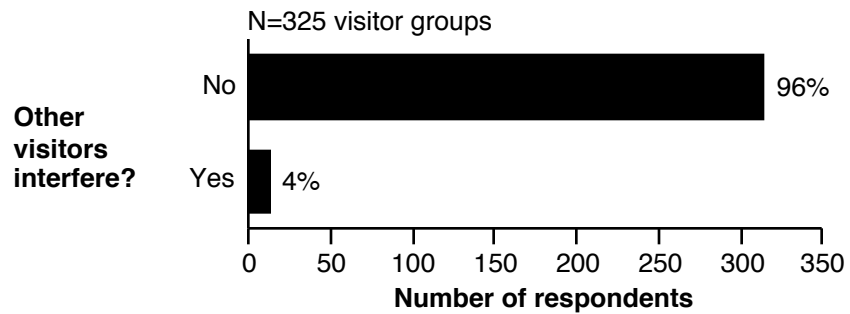


Figure 58: Did visitors or their activities interfere with visit

Table 6: Ways visitors/ activities interfere with visit

N=11 comments;
some visitors made more than one comment.

CAUTION!

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Other visitors went beyond safety rope	2
Too crowded	2
Other comments	7

Visitor groups were asked to list the amount of money they had spent in the Kenai Fjords National Park area (within 50 miles of the park). They were asked to indicate their expenditures for lodging, travel, food, tours and admission fees and “other” items (such as clothing, film and gifts).

Expenditures

Total expenditures: Forty-three percent of the groups spent \$351 or more, and another 24% spent up to \$100 in the Kenai Fjords National Park area (see Figure 59). Seven percent of visitor groups spent no money. Of the total expenditures by groups, 36% was for tours and admission fees, 25% was for lodging, 19% was for food, 10% was for travel and 10% was for “other” items (see Figure 60).

The average visitor group expenditure during this visit was \$470. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$325. The average per capita expenditure was \$181.

Lodging: Thirty-one percent of visitor groups spent \$151 or more, and another 10% spent up to \$25 on lodging in the Kenai Fjords National Park area (see Figure 61). Thirty-two percent of visitor groups spent no money.

Travel: Forty-three percent of visitor groups spent up to \$25, and another 22% spent from \$26 - \$50 on travel in the Kenai Fjords National Park area (see Figure 62). Sixteen percent of visitor groups spent no money.

Food: Twenty-four percent of visitor groups spent from \$26 - \$50, and another 19% spent up to \$25 on food in the Kenai Fjords National Park area (see Figure 63). Twelve percent of visitor groups spent no money.

Tours and admission fees: Forty percent of visitor groups spent \$151 or more, and another 16% spent up to \$25 on tours and admission fees in the Kenai National Park area (see Figure 64). Fifteen percent of visitor groups spent no money.

“Other” items: Thirty percent of visitor groups spent no money on “other” items (such as clothing, film and gifts) in the Kenai National Park area (see Figure 65). Twenty-four percent of the groups spent up to \$25, and another 18% spent from \$26 - \$50.

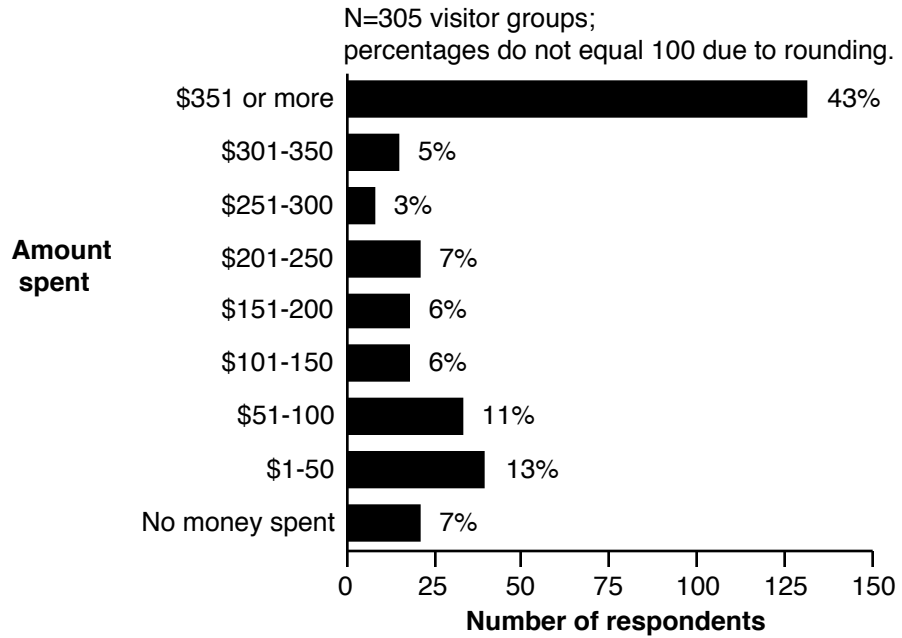


Figure 59: Total expenditures in park area

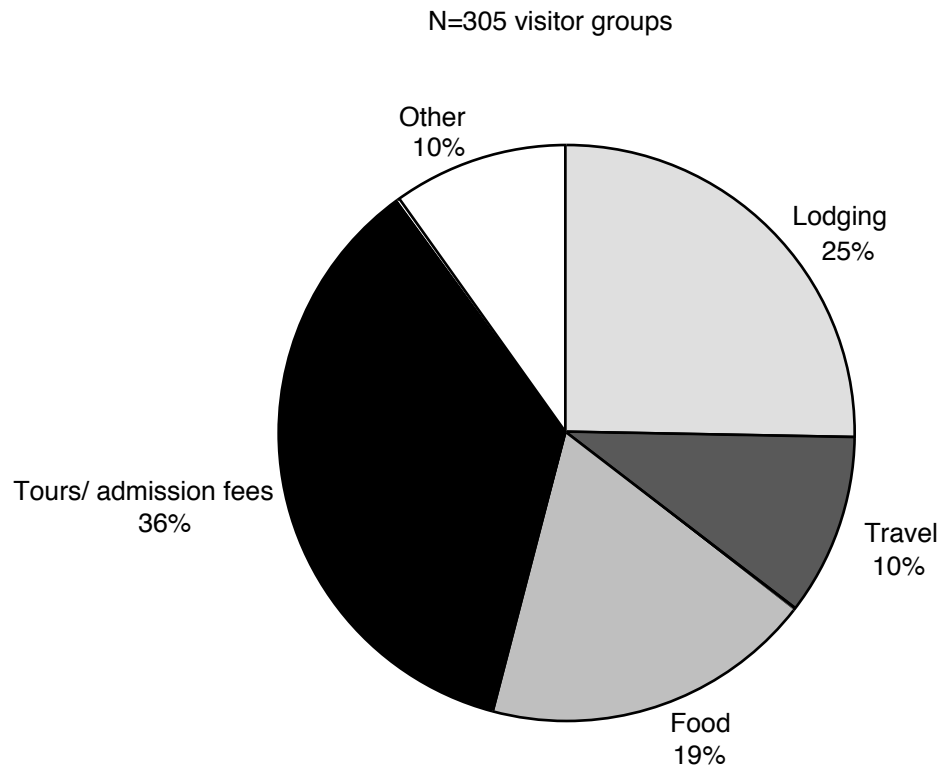


Figure 60: Proportions of expenditures in park area

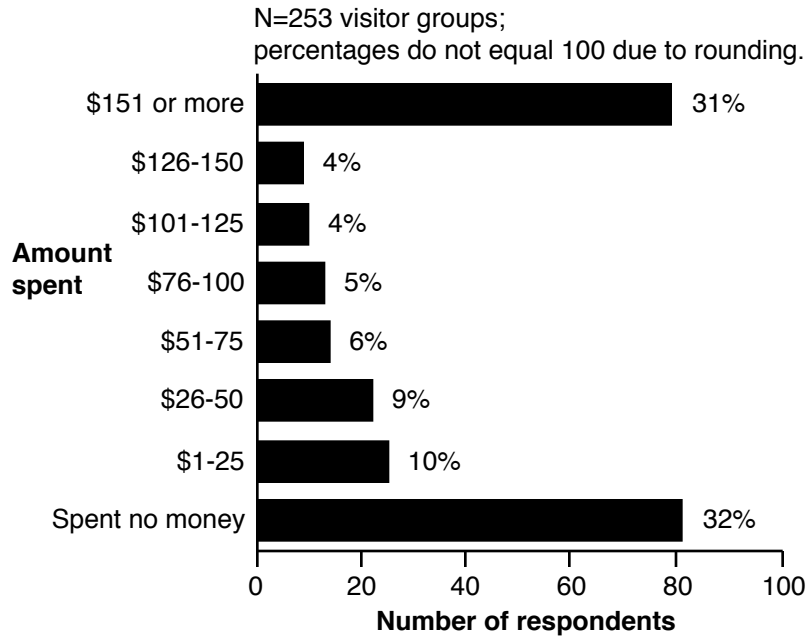


Figure 61: Expenditures for lodging in park area

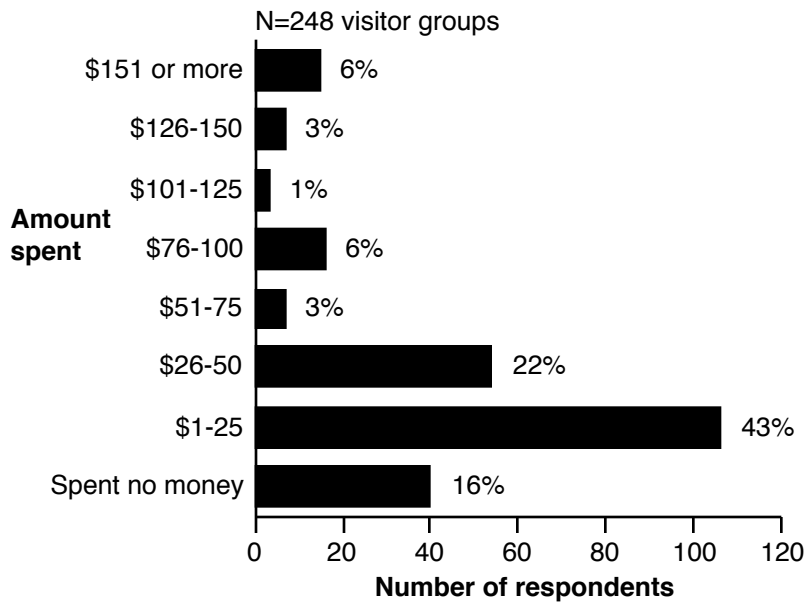


Figure 62: Expenditures for travel in park area

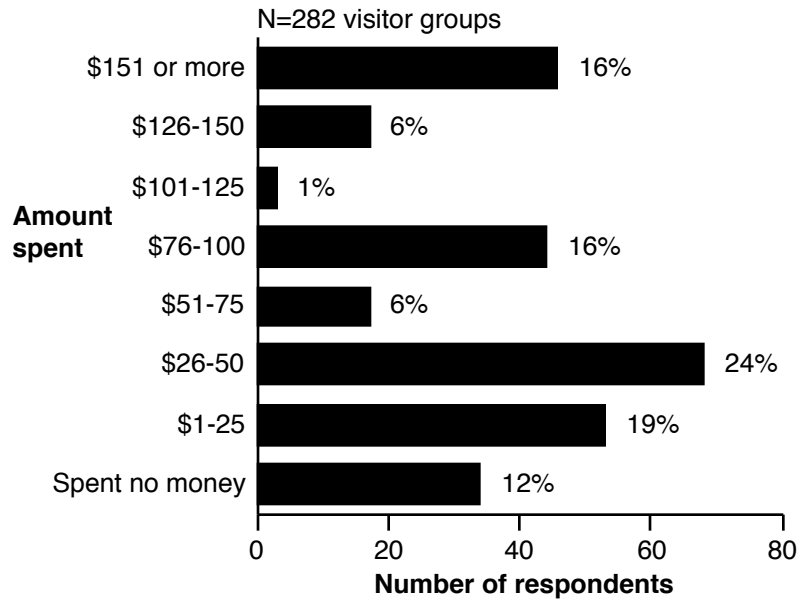


Figure 63: Expenditures for food in park area

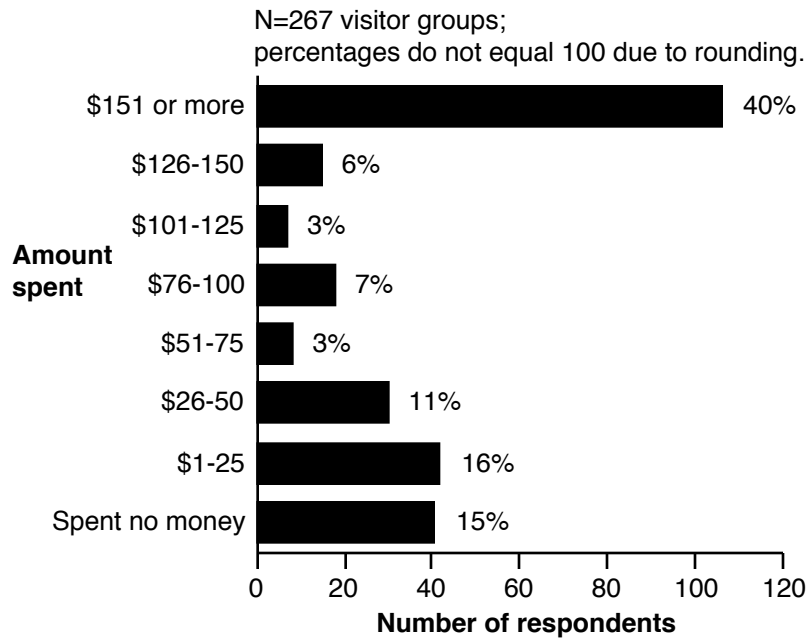


Figure 64: Expenditures for tours and admission fees in park area

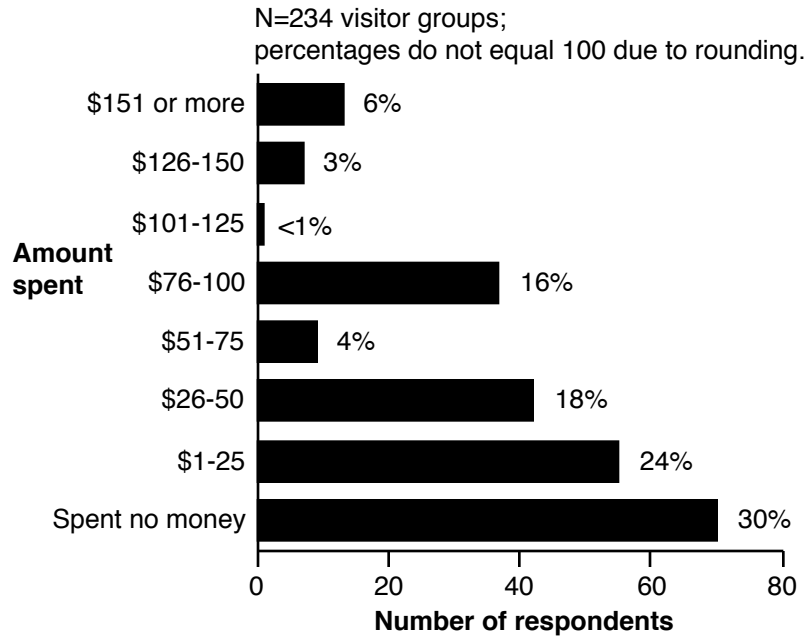


Figure 65: Expenditures for “other” items in park area

**Opinions about
crowding at Exit
Glacier**

Visitor groups were asked to indicate whether they felt crowded during their visit to the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park. Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups reported the level of crowding by people at the Exit Glacier Area was “not at all crowded” and 38% “somewhat crowded” (see Figure 66). Fifty-two percent of visitor groups reported the level of crowding by vehicles at the Exit Glacier Area was “not at all crowded” and 41% “somewhat crowded” (see Figure 67).

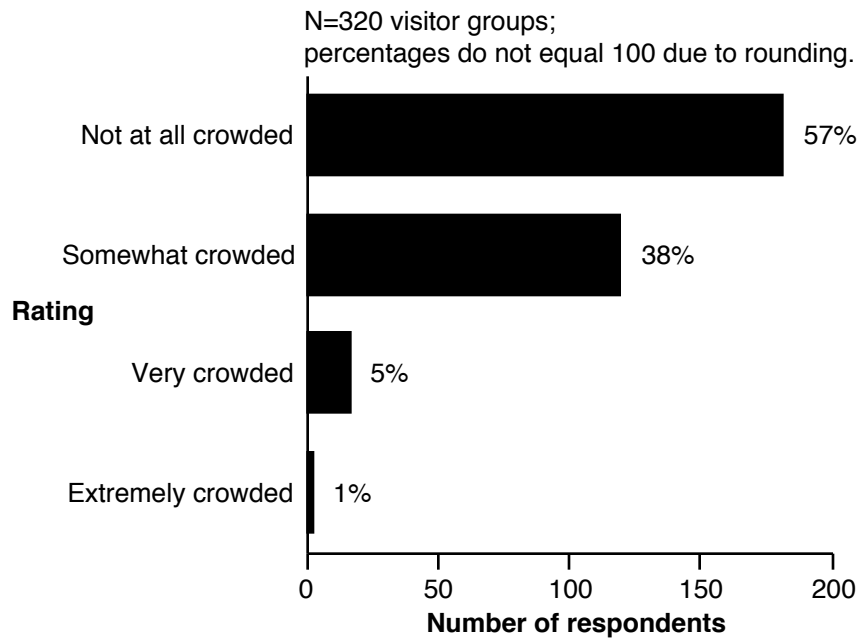


Figure 66: Level of crowding at Exit Glacier by people

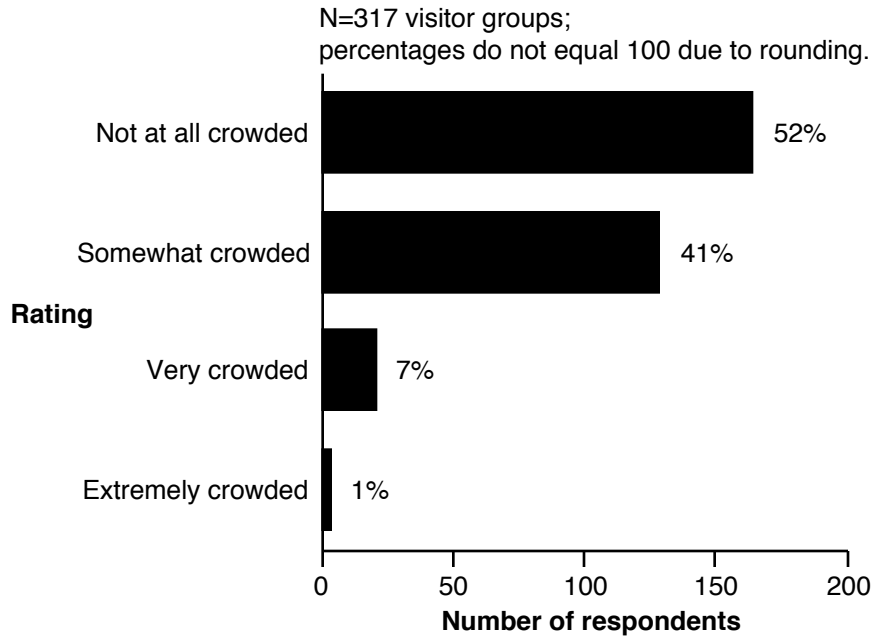


Figure 67: Level of crowding at Exit Glacier by vehicle

Reducing visitor congestion at Exit Glacier

Several different methods to reduce visitor congestion at the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai National Park are under consideration by park managers. The alternatives for reducing visitor congestion were as follows: first come, first served until a daily limit is reached, a shuttle system from an off-site parking area or a reservation system.

Visitor groups were asked to note their preferences from among these alternatives, or to suggest another alternative if they had one. Almost three-fourths of the visitors (74%) said that a shuttle system was an “acceptable” method to reduce visitor congestion (see Figure 68). Fifty-seven percent of the visitors (see Figure 69) said that first come, first served was “acceptable” and 52% (see Figure 70) that a reservation system was “acceptable.” “Other” alternatives that visitors suggested are included in Table 7.

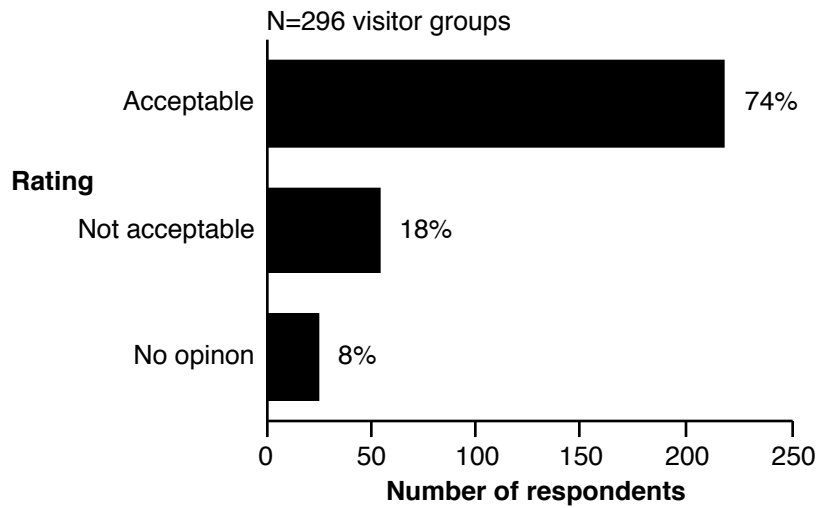


Figure 68: Preference for limiting visitor congestion at Exit Glacier, shuttle system

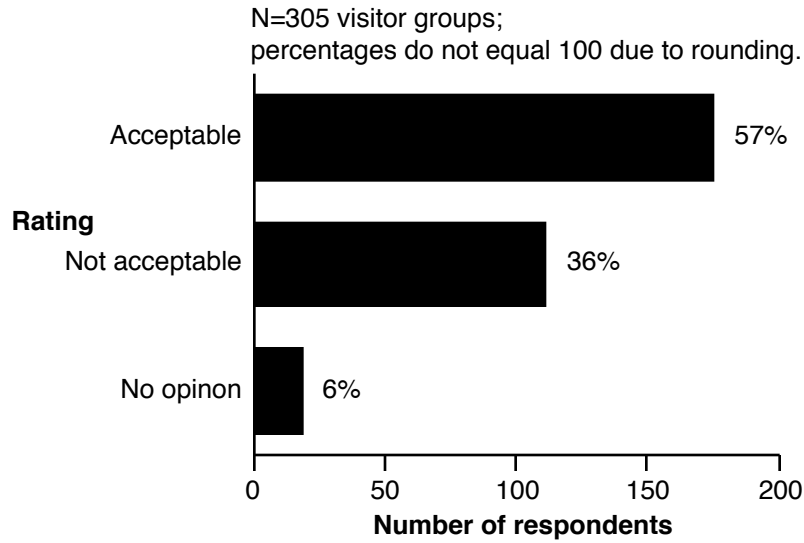


Figure 69: Preference for reducing visitor congestion at Exit Glacier, 1st come, 1st served

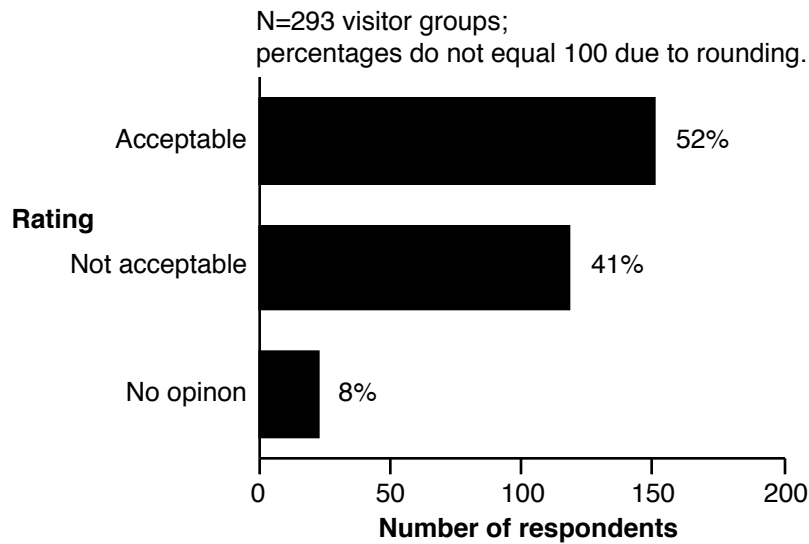


Figure 70: Preference for reducing visitor congestion at Exit Glacier, reservation system

Table 7: “Other” suggested alternatives for reducing visitor congestion at Exit Glacier

N=25 comments;
some visitors made more than one comment.

CAUTION!

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Combined reservation system and 1 st come, 1 st served	7
No restrictions	4
Expand parking area	2
Other comments	12

Thirty-five percent of visitor groups reported that one or more members of their group hiked the Harding Icefield Trail (see Figure 71). These visitor groups were asked how they felt about the number of visitors encountered on the trail. As shown by Figure 72, 94% of the groups felt that the number of visitors encountered was “about right” and 2% “too many.”

**Opinions
about
crowding on
the Harding
Icefield Trail**

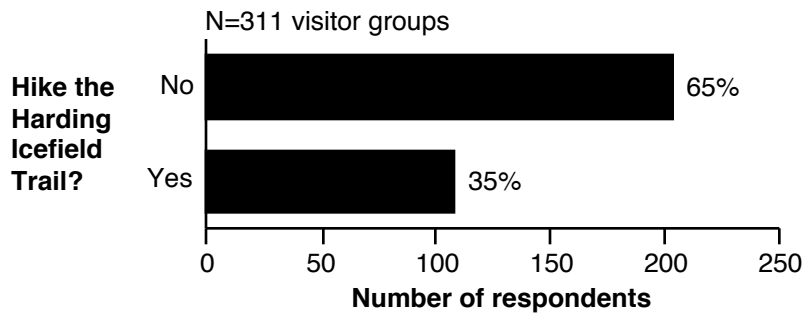


Figure 71: Hike the Harding Icefield Trail

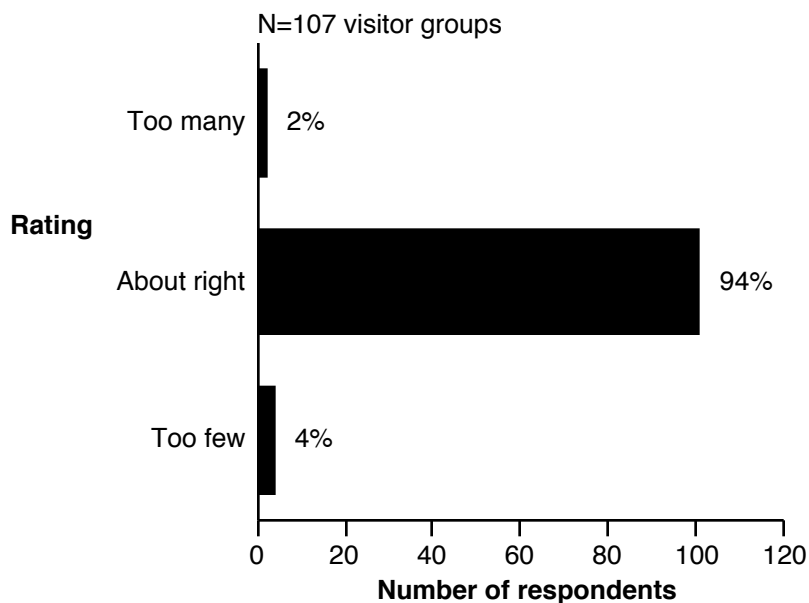


Figure 72: Level of crowding on Harding Icefield Trail

Reducing visitor congestion on the Harding Icefield Trail

Several different methods to reduce visitor congestion on the Harding Icefield Trail are under consideration by park managers. The alternatives for reducing visitor congestion were first come, first served until a daily limit is reached or a reservation system. Visitor groups were asked to note their preferences from among these alternatives, or to suggest another alternative if they had one. Sixty percent of the visitors (Figure 73) said that first come, first served was an “acceptable” method to reduce visitor congestion. Fifty percent (Figure 74) said that a reservation system was “acceptable.” “Other” suggested alternatives are included in Table 8.

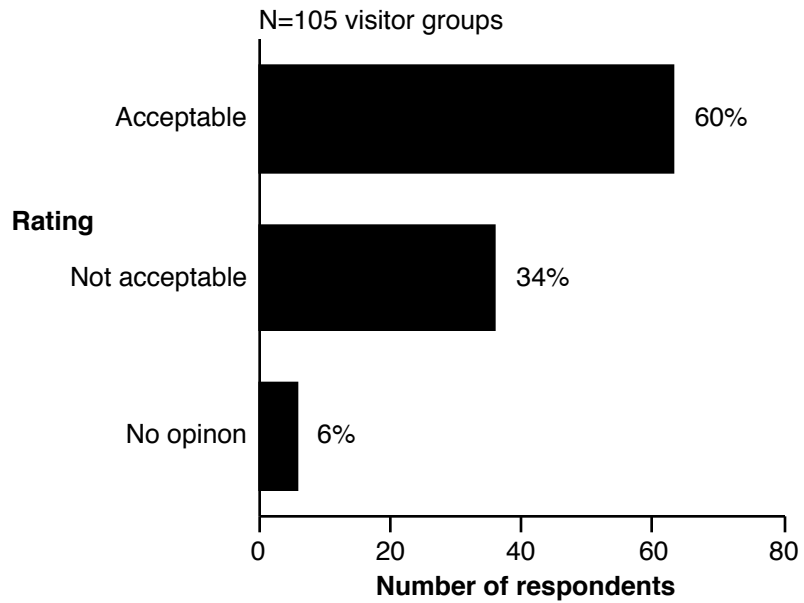


Figure 73: Preference for reducing visitor congestion on Harding Icefield Trail, 1st come, 1st served

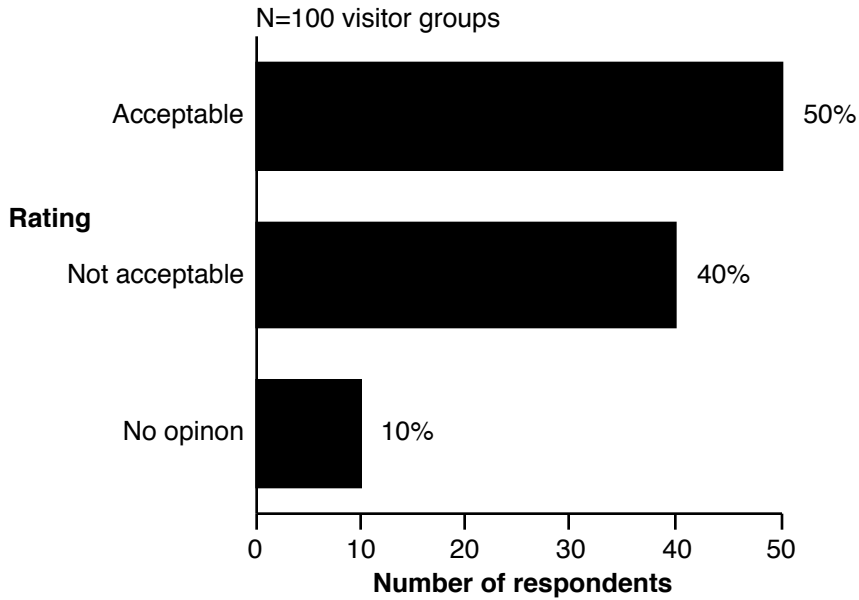


Figure 74: Preference for reducing visitor congestion on Harding Icefield Trail, reservation system

Table 8: “Other” suggested alternatives for reducing visitor congestion on the Harding Icefield Trail

N=10 comments;
some visitors made more than one comment.

CAUTION!

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Combined reservation system and 1 st come, 1 st served	3
Other comments	7

**Overall quality
of visitor
services**

Visitor groups were asked to rate the overall quality of the visitor services provided in the Exit Glacier Area at Kenai Fjords National Park during this trip. The majority of visitor groups (89%) rated services as "very good" or "good" (see Figure 75). Only one visitor group (less than 1% of respondents) rated services as "very poor."

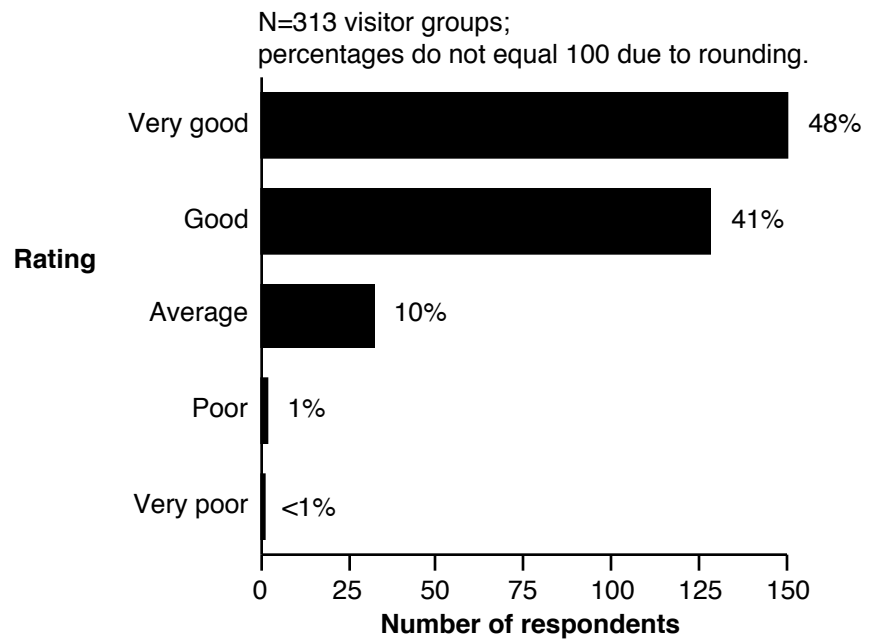


Figure 75: Overall quality of visitor services

Visitor groups were asked “What did you and your group like most about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail at Kenai Fjords National Park?” Twenty-eight percent of visitor groups (94 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 9 and in the appendix.

What visitors liked most about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail

Table 9: What visitors liked most about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail

N=149 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Comment	1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Educational	2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Trail well maintained	6
Trail well marked	5
Easy walking	2
Other comments	3
POLICIES	
Accessibility to glacier	16
Easy access	5
Other comments	2
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Plant life	6
Wildlife	5
Size of glacier	3
Different vegetation zones	2
Not too crowded	2
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Scenery	53
Beauty	10
Solitude	4
Good experience	4
Fun hike	3
Quiet	3
Nothing	2
Fresh air	2
Challenge	2
Other comments	6

What visitors liked least about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail

Visitor groups were asked “What did you and your group like least about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail at Kenai Fjords National Park?” Twenty-two percent of visitor groups (73 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 10 and in the appendix.

Table 10: What visitors liked least about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail

N=89 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Lack of information about glacier & summit	2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Lack of mile markers	5
Trail too steep	5
Slippery trail	4
Better trail markers	3
Provide elevation signs	2
Other comments	11
POLICIES	
Comment	1
CROWDING	
Too many people	2
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Too many hornets / bees	7
Couldn't go directly to glacier	3
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Nothing	30
Weather	10
Other comments	4

Visitor groups were asked "If you were a park manager planning for the future of the Exit Glacier Area of Kenai Fjords National Park, what would you propose? Please be specific." Sixty-two percent of visitor groups (204 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 11 and in the appendix.

Planning for the future

Table 11: Planning for the future

N=278 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
More rangers available	7
Add more rangers at glacier	6
Other comment	1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
More displays about glaciers/icefields	7
Add signs to warn visitors of trail difficulty & distance	7
Add ranger-led walks & talks on regular schedule	6
Provide more education programs	5
More emphasis to stay on the trail	4
Advise visitors of proper footwear & clothing	3
Add interpretation at ranger station	3
Better trail marking	3
Improve signing on Seward Highway	2
More marketing	2
Add interpretive board at glacier	2
Add wildflower identification signs	2
Emphasize proper food handling	2
Offer detailed map	2
Have good internet presence	2
Other comments	7
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE	
Improve roads	20
Add more trails	12
Improve parking lot	8
Provide more restrooms	6
Make glacier handicapped accessible	5
Add more benches	5
Improve existing trails	5
Pave trails	3
Construct more trail bridges	3
Offer clean restrooms	3
Provide more campsites	3

Comment	Number of times mentioned
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (continued)	
Add water fountains	2
Develop area to accommodate visitor numbers	2
Provide more picnic tables	2
Extend ranger station hours	2
Provide a place to wash hands	2
Other comments	6
POLICIES	
Limit visitors, if necessary	9
Limit size of tour groups	3
Limit number of vehicles	3
Allow dogs on trails	2
Other comments	10
CONCESSIONS	
Provide a coffee stand	2
Other comments	2
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Control bees/hornets	2
Other comment	1
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Nothing	33
Maintain natural environment	10
Continue to offer glacier access	8
Not too many people	4
Provide moving sidewalk & shuttle on trail	3
Offer a shuttle service	3
Don't over manage the park	3
Don't commercialize the park	2
Reduce human impact	2
Well managed park	2
No more development	2
Other comments	10

Forty-eight percent of visitor groups (158 groups) wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments about Kenai Fjords National Park are summarized below in Table 12 and in the appendix.

**Comment
summary**

Table 12: Additional comments

N=211 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Friendly helpful rangers	19
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Enjoyed interpretive signs	4
More education	2
More interpretive signing	2
Provide trail difficulty/distance signs	2
Other comments	10
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE	
Well maintained	8
Restrooms smelled awful	6
Improve road	5
Provide more trails	3
Other comments	9
POLICIES	
Comments	4
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Comments	2
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Good experience	54
Nothing	14
Beautiful place	14
Not enough time	11
Like touching ice	7
Hope to return	6
Like the open access	4
Not too crowded	4
First time I saw the glacier	2
Disappointed that I couldn't touch the glacier	2
Enjoyed interacting with other visitors	2
Don't change anything	2
Other comments	13

HARDING ICEFIELD TRAIL OVERSAMPLE RESULTS

On the Harding Icefield Trail, 152 visitor groups were contacted, and 150 of these groups (99%) accepted questionnaires. Questionnaires were completed and returned by 123 visitor groups, resulting in an 82% response rate for the Harding Icefield Trail Oversample portion of this study.

Visitors contacted

Ninety-eight percent of visitor groups reported that one or more members of their group hiked the Harding Icefield Trail (see Figure 76). These visitor groups were asked how they felt about the number of visitors encountered on the trail. As shown by Figure 77, 86% of the groups felt that the number of visitors encountered was “about right” and 14% “too many.”

Opinions about crowding on the Harding Icefield Trail

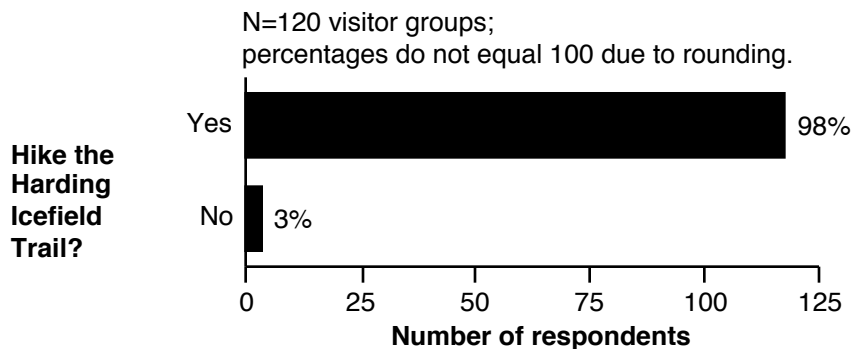


Figure 76: Hike the Harding Icefield Trail

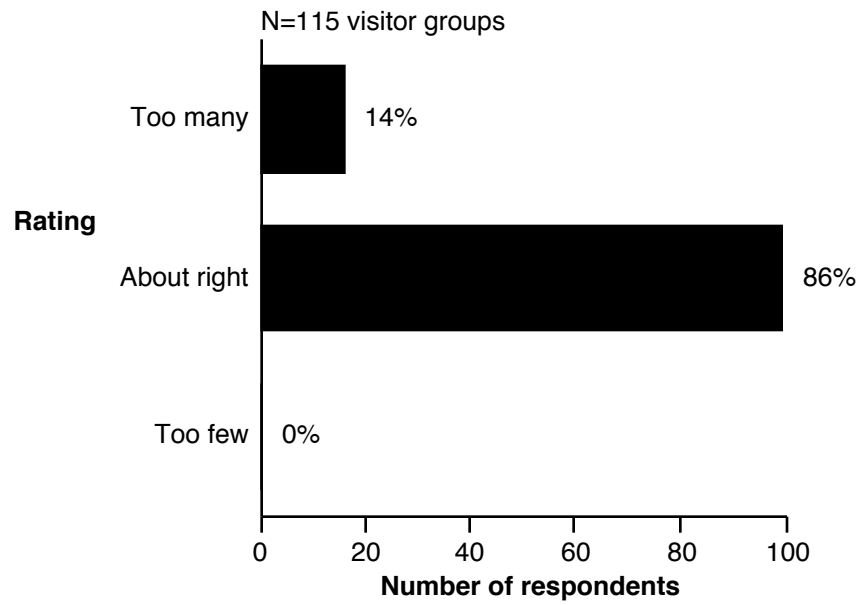


Figure 77: Level of crowding on Harding Icefield Trail

Several different methods to reduce visitor congestion on the Harding Icefield Trail are under consideration by park managers. The alternatives for reducing visitor congestion were first come, first served until a daily limit is reached or a reservation system. Visitor groups were asked to note their preferences from among these alternatives, or to suggest another alternative if they had one. Sixty-five percent of the visitors (Figure 78) said that first come, first served was an “acceptable” method to reduce visitor congestion. Fifty-two percent (Figure 79) said that a reservation system was “acceptable.” “Other” suggested alternatives are included in Table 13.

Reducing visitor congestion on the Harding Icefield Trail

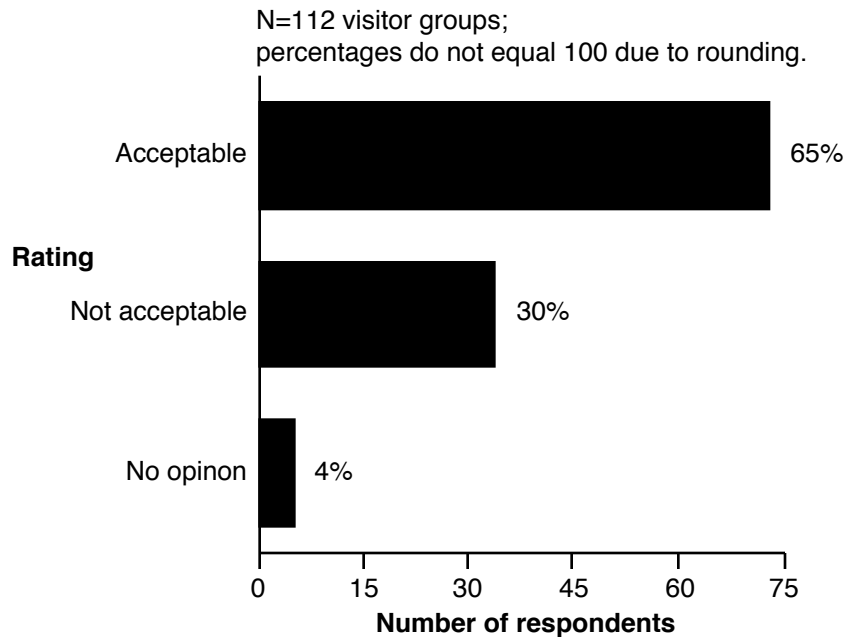


Figure 78: Preference for reducing visitor congestion on Harding Icefield Trail, 1st come, 1st served

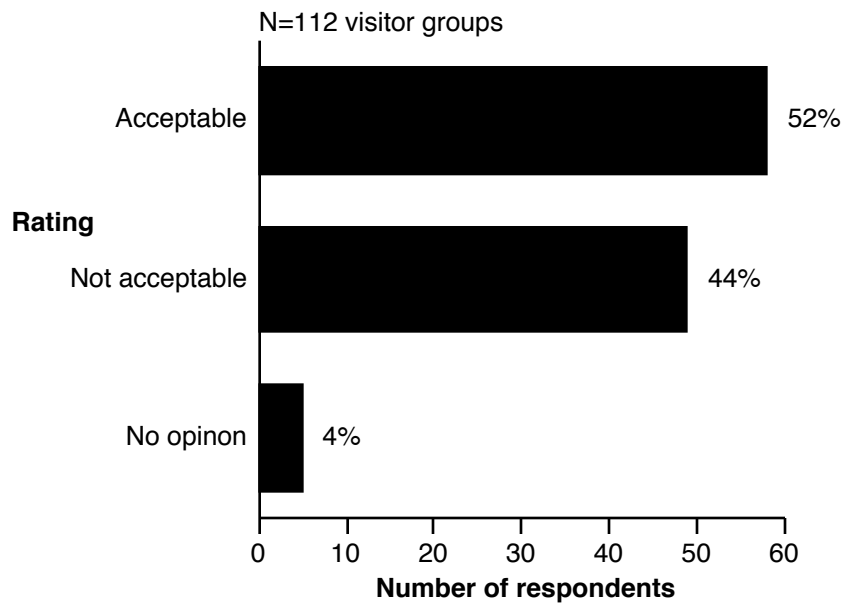


Figure 79: Preference for reducing visitor congestion on Harding Icefield Trail, reservation system

Table 13: “Other” suggested alternatives for reducing visitor congestion on the Harding Icefield Trail

N=14 comments;

some visitors made more than one comment.

CAUTION!

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
No limitations	4
Combined reservation system and 1 st come, 1 st served	3
Lottery system	2
Build another scenic trail(s)	2
Other comments	3

Visitor groups were asked “What did you and your group like most about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail at Kenai Fjords National Park?” Ninety-four percent of visitor groups (116 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 14 and in the appendix.

**What visitors
liked most about
hiking the
Harding Icefield
Trail**

Table 14: What visitors liked most about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail

N=209 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Trail well maintained	12
Trail well marked	4
Other comment	1
POLICIES	
Accessibility to glacier	3
Other comment	1
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Plant life	13
The icefield	12
Wildlife	9
Glaciers	6
Differing vegetation zones	4
Tundra	2
Waterfall	2
Mountains	2
Other comments	4
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Beauty/ scenery	95
Exercise/ challenge	18
Making it to the top	4
Weather	3
Good experience	3
Fun	2
Wooded areas	2
Finishing the trail	2
Remoteness	2
Other comments	3

What visitors liked least about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail Visitor groups were asked “What did you and your group like least about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail at Kenai Fjords National Park?” Seventy-six percent of visitor groups (94 groups) responded to this question. A summary of their responses is listed below in Table 15 and in the appendix.

Table 15: What visitors liked least about hiking the Harding Icefield Trail

N=114 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Need a trail map	2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Hard to climb/ too difficult	12
Muddy trail	7
No mile markers	5
Inappropriate and inadequate trail restoration	5
Too steep	4
Not knowing how far it was to the top	4
No sign indicating trail length and difficulty	3
Trail erosion	3
Not well marked	2
Visitors who don't stay on the trail	2
No bathrooms	2
Not enough drinking water	2
Other comments	11
POLICIES	
Comment	1
CROWDING	
Too many people	4
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Bees / yellowjackets	9
Insects	6
Not enough wildlife	3
Presence of bears	2
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Nothing	13
Weather	10
Other comments	2

**Kenai Fjords National Park—Exit Glacier Area Visitor Study
Additional Analysis
VSP Report 115**

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) staff offers the opportunity to learn more from VSP visitor study data.

Additional Analysis

Additional analysis can be done using the park's VSP visitor study data that was collected and entered into the computer. Two-way and three-way cross tabulations can be made of any of the characteristics listed below. Be as specific as possible--you may select a single program/ service/ facility instead of all that were listed in the questionnaire. Include your name, address and phone number in the request.

- Sources of information
- Hours spent at Exit Glacier Area
- Days spent at Exit Glacier Area
- Number of times visited on this trip
- Planned visitor activities
- Actual visitor activities
- Group size
- Guided tour group
- Age
- Zip code
- Country of residence
- Number of lifetime visits
- Importance of park features/ qualities
- Anything detract from enjoyment?
- Visitor interference with visit
- Service/ facility use
- Service/ facility importance
- Service/ facility quality
- Lodging expenditures
- Travel expenditures
- Food expenditures
- Tour/ admission fees expenditures
- Other expenditures
- People crowding at Exit Glacier Area
- Vehicle crowding at Exit Glacier Area
- Preference for limiting visitation
- Crowding on Harding Icefield Trail
- Preference for limiting congestion
- Overall quality rating

Database

The VSP database is currently being revised to allow easier access to the data. To obtain database information or to make queries of the VSP database, please call or FAX the numbers below.

Phone/send requests to:

**Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Natural Resources
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133**

**Phone: 208-885-7863
FAX: 208-885-4261**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-6 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All other VSP reports listed are available from the parks where the studies were conducted or from the UI CPSU. All studies were conducted in summer unless otherwise noted.

1982

1. Mapping interpretive services: A pilot study at Grand Teton National Park.

1983

2. Mapping interpretive services: Identifying barriers to adoption and diffusion of the method.
3. Mapping interpretive services: A follow-up study at Yellowstone National Park and Mt Rushmore National Memorial.
4. Mapping visitor populations: A pilot study at Yellowstone National Park.

1985

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex
6. Crater Lake National Park

1986

7. Gettysburg National Military Park
8. Independence National Historical Park
9. Valley Forge National Historical Park

1987

10. Colonial National Historical Park (summer & fall)
11. Grand Teton National Park
12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
13. Mesa Verde National Park
14. Shenandoah National Park (summer & fall)
15. Yellowstone National Park
16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study

1988

17. Glen Canyon National Recreational Area
18. Denali National Park and Preserve
19. Bryce Canyon National Park
20. Craters of the Moon National Monument

1989

21. Everglades National Park (winter)
22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
23. The White House Tours, President's Park (summer)
24. Lincoln Home National Historical Site
25. Yellowstone National Park
26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

28. Canyonlands National Park (spring)
29. White Sands National Monument
30. National Monuments, Washington, D.C.
31. Kenai Fjords National Park
32. Gateway National Recreation Area
33. Petersburg National Battlefield
34. Death Valley National Monument
35. Glacier National Park
36. Scott's Bluff National Monument
37. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

1991

38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park (spring)
39. Joshua Tree National Monument (spring)
40. The White House Tours, President's Park (spring)
41. Natchez Trace Parkway (spring)
42. Stehekin-North Cascades NP/ Lake Chelan NRA
43. City of Rocks National Reserve
44. The White House Tours, President's Park (fall)

1992

45. Big Bend National Park (spring)
46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site (spring)
47. Glen Echo Park (spring)
48. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
49. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
50. Zion National Park
51. New River Gorge National River
52. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park (AK)
53. Arlington House-The Robert E. Lee Memorial

1993

54. Belle Haven Park/Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve (spring)
 55. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (spring)
 56. Whitman Mission National Historic Site
 57. Sitka National Historical Park
 58. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (summer)
 59. Redwood National Park
 60. Channel Islands National Park
 61. Pecos National Historical Park
 62. Canyon de Chelly National Monument
 63. Bryce Canyon National Park (fall)
-

Visitor Services Project Publications (continued)

- 1994**
- 64. Death Valley National Monument Backcountry (winter)
 - 65. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (spring)
 - 66. Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center
 - 67. Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts
 - 68. Nez Perce National Historical Park
 - 69. Edison National Historic Site
 - 70. San Juan Island National Historical Park
 - 71. Canaveral National Seashore
 - 72. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (fall)
 - 73. Gettysburg National Military Park (fall)
- 1995**
- 74. Grand Teton National Park (winter)
 - 75. Yellowstone National Park (winter)
 - 76. Bandelier National Monument
 - 77. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve
 - 78. Adams National Historic Site
 - 79. Devils Tower National Monument
 - 80. Manassas National Battlefield Park
 - 81. Booker T. Washington National Monument
 - 82. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
 - 83. Dry Tortugas National Park
- 1996**
- 84. Everglades National Park (spring)
 - 85. Chiricahua National Monument (spring)
 - 86. Fort Bowie National Historic Site (spring)
 - 87. Great Falls Park, Virginia (spring)
 - 88. Great Smoky Mountains National Park (summer)
 - 89. Chamizal National Memorial
 - 90. Death Valley National Park (fall)
 - 91. Prince William Forest Park (fall)
- 1997**
- 92. Great Smoky Mountains National Park (summer & fall)
 - 93. Virgin Islands National Park (winter)
 - 94. Mojave National Preserve (spring)
 - 95. Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historical Park (spring)
 - 96. Lincoln Boyhood Home National Memorial
 - 97. Grand Teton National Park
 - 98. Bryce Canyon National Park
 - 99. Voyageurs National Park
 - 100. Lowell National Historical Park
- 1998**
- 101. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve (spring)
 - 102. Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (spring)
 - 103. Cumberland Island National Seashore (spring)
 - 104. Iwo Jima/Netherlands Carillon Memorials
 - 105. National Monuments & Memorials, Washington, D.C.
 - 106. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, AK
 - 107. Whiskeytown National Recreation Area
 - 108. Acadia National Park
- 1999**
- 109. Big Cypress National Preserve (winter)
 - 110. San Juan National Historic Site, Puerto Rico (winter)
 - 111. St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
 - 112. Rock Creek Park
 - 113. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
 - 114. Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve
 - 115. Kenai Fjords National Park

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7863.