
Visitor Services Project
John Muir National Historic Site
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at John Muir NHS (NHS) during May 28 – August 5, 2007. A total of 367 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 248 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 67.6% response rate.
 - This report profiles a systematic random sample of John Muir NHS. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
 - Most visitor groups (61%) were in groups of one or two and 39% were in groups of three or more. Fifty-four percent of visitor groups were family groups and 23% were traveling alone. Five percent of visitor groups were traveling with an organized tour group.
 - Forty-seven percent of visitors were ages 46-65 years, 15% were 66 years or older, and 13% were 15 years or younger. Fifty-three percent of visitors were female and 47% were male. Thirty-nine percent of visitors held a Bachelor's degree and 38% held a Graduate degree.
 - United States visitors were from California (81%), Washington (3%), Colorado (2%), and 27 other states and Washington, D.C. International visitors, comprised 3% of the total visitation, but this data should be viewed with CAUTION! due to the small number of respondents.
 - Most visitors (62%) were visiting the park for the first time in their life, while 23% had visited four or more times. Ninety-one percent of visitor groups used one vehicle to travel to the park.
 - Twelve percent of visitor groups had members with a physical condition that made it difficult to access services or participate in park activities. Among these groups, 47% had difficulty accessing John Muir's home and 30% had difficulty accessing trails.
 - Visiting John Muir NHS was the primary reason that brought 37% of visitor groups to the park area (within 35 miles of park), while 31% were visiting friends/relatives in the area. Forty-seven percent of visitor groups were local residents. Visiting John Muir House was the primary reason that brought 64% of visitor groups to the park, while 55% visited to learn more about John Muir. Forty percent of visitor groups decided to visit the park on the same day they visited, while 27% decided to visit the park about a week prior to their visit.
 - Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about the park through friends/ relatives/ word of mouth (43%) and previous visits (42%). Thirty-five percent of visitor groups used the park website prior to this visit. The most preferred source to use on a future visit was the park website (60%).
 - Of visitor groups who spent less than 24 hours in the park (N=230), 78% spent up to two hours, while 22% spent three or more hours. The average length of stay was two hours. Forty-six percent of visitor groups had not planned a specific amount of time to spend at the park, while 41% spent the amount of time they had planned. Most visitor groups (94%) entered the park one time on this visit.
 - Most visitor groups (86%) felt the ability to roam freely "added to" their experience, while 65% felt the availability of park staff/volunteers "added to" their experience. Forty percent of visitor groups felt highway noise "detracted from" their experience.
 - The most common visitor activities included learning about John Muir (70%), viewing John Muir House (67%), and visiting historic orchards (53%). The most common primary reasons for visiting the park were viewing John Muir House (36%), learning about John Muir (27%), and walking trails at Mt. Wanda (23%).
 - Prior to this visit, 97% of visitor groups were aware of who John Muir was, 37% were aware of the Mt. Wanda unit. Thirty-four percent of visitor groups learned about Mt Wanda on this visit. The most common
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topics learned on this visit by visitor groups were John Muir and his significance (73%, N=164), and historic orchards and their significance (63%, N=136).

- The most common methods to learn about the park on a future visit by visitor groups were outdoor exhibits (79%), self-guided tours (77%), and printed materials (65%). The most common topics preferred for a future visit were native plants and animals at Mt Wanda (89%, N=185) and John Muir and his significance (89%, N=179). Most visitor groups (79%) were interested in visiting the gravesite of John Muir on a future visit.
- Regarding the importance of protecting park attributes/resources, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The attributes/resources that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings included historic structures (92%, N=244), natural landscape (Mt. Wanda) (84%, N=235), educational opportunities (79%, N=243), and historic orchards (79%, N=244).
- Regarding use, importance, and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The most used services/facilities included John Muir Visitor Center (71%), park brochure/map (69%), walking through John Muir House (68%), and assistance from park staff (67%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings included walking through John Muir House (95%, N=153), Mt. Wanda trails (89%, N=79), ranger-led tour of John Muir House (89%, N=37), and visitor center restrooms (89%, N=125). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings were assistance from park staff (97%, N=153), walking through John Muir House (95%, N=153), visitor center film (93%, N=106), and visitor center restrooms (93% N=127).
- Most visitor groups (90%) rated the overall quality of services, facilities, and recreational opportunities at John Muir NHS as “very good” or “good.” No visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor,” while 1% rated the overall quality as “poor.”

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>.

