

**Visitor Services Project
Fire Island National Seashore
Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at park facilities within Fire Island National Seashore (NS) during July 19-27, 2008. A total of 1,135 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 636 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 56% response rate.
- This report profiles a systematic random sample of visitors at park facilities within Fire Island NS. 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.
- Thirty-three (33%) percent of visitor groups were in groups of two (2) and 30% were in groups of five (5) or more. Forty-six (46%) percent of visitor groups were in family groups.
- United States visitors comprised 97% of total visitors, from New York (84%) and 37 other states and Puerto Rico. International visitors represented 3% of total visitation, with 34% from Canada, 11% from Australia, and 12 other countries.
- Fifty-four (54%) percent of visitors were ages 36-65 years, 7% were 66 years or older, and 18% were ages 15 years or younger. Six (6%) percent of visitor groups reported physical conditions that made it difficult to access or participate in park services or activities.
- Forty-three (43%) percent of visitors had visited the park once in the past 12 months, while 34% had visited five (5) or more times.
- Prior to this visit, 80% of visitor groups were aware that Fire Island NS is a unit of the National Park System and 67% were aware of the difference between Fire Island NS and other public beaches.
- Prior to this visit, most visitor groups obtained information about Fire Island NS through previous visits (72%) and friends/relatives/word of mouth (48%). Most visitor groups (91%) obtained the information they needed. Nine (9%) percent of visitor groups did not obtain any information about the park prior to their visit.
- Most visitor groups (88%) were residents of the local area (within 45 miles of any park entry point). Visiting Fire Island NS was the primary reason that brought 59% of the non-resident visitor groups to the park area, while 19% came to visit friends and relatives in the area.
- Of visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours visiting the park, 42% spent five (5) or more hours. For those who visited for more than 24 hours, 38% spent four (4) or more days. The average length of stay, including those who spent less than 24 hours and those who spent more, was 27 hours (1.1 days).
- Of the sites operated by the National Park Service, 60% of visitor groups visited the beaches, and 41% visited the Fire Island Lighthouse. Among sites not operated by the National Park Service, Robert Moses State Park was the most common destination, receiving 50% of visitor groups.
- Of the activities in which visitors engaged on *past* trips to Fire Island NS, beach activities was the most common (90%), followed by spending time with family and friends (80%). The most common activities on *this* trip were also beach activities (76%) and spending time with family and friends (68%).
- Most visitor groups (89%) rated the overall quality of facilities services, and recreational opportunities at Fire Island NS as “very good” or “good.” One (1%) percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “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>.