

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Obed Wild and Scenic River (WSR) visitors during September 11 – October 4, 2012. A total of 334 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 177 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 53.0% response rate.

Group size and type	Forty-two percent of visitor groups consisted of two people and 31% consisted of three or four people. Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups consisted of friends and 30% consisted of family groups.
State of residence and residents of the area	United States visitors were from 16 states and comprised 99% of total visitation during the survey period, with 81% from Tennessee. Forty-seven percent of visitor groups were residents of the area (within 50 miles of the park).
Frequency of visits	Eighty-one percent of visitors first visited the park in 2001-2012 and 12% first visited in 1981-2000. Forty-one percent of visitors visited the park six or more times in their lifetime and for 30% this was their first visit.
Age, gender, ethnicity, and race	Forty-one percent of visitors were ages 21-35 years, 19% were 51-65 years old, and 8% were ages 15 years or younger. Sixty percent of respondents were male. One percent of visitors were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-three percent of visitors were White and 3% were Asian.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (83%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit through friends/relatives/word of mouth (66%), previous visits (47%), and maps/brochures (30%). Most visitor groups (92%) received the information they needed. Fifty-four percent of visitor groups prefer to use the park website to obtain information for a future visit, while 41% prefer maps/brochures and 40% friends/relatives/word of mouth.
Park as destination	During the on-site interview, 76% of visitor groups said the park was their primary destination, for 12% the park was one of several destinations, and for 12% the park was not a planned destination.
Primary reason for visiting the area and the park	The most common primary reasons for visiting the park area among non-resident visitor groups were to visit the park (58%) and visit friends/relatives in the area (9%). Fifty-five percent of visitor groups chose to visit the park because of the scenery and 47% visited because of climbing opportunities.
Services or products needed in the park or in the area	Most visitor groups (96%) found the support services or products they needed either inside the park or in the area; 4% did not.
Transportation	Seventy-six percent of visitor groups used one vehicle to arrive at the park, while 17% used two vehicles.
Overnight stays	Twenty-seven percent of visitor groups stayed overnight in the area within 50 miles of the park.
Length of visit	Of the visitor groups that spent less than 24 hours in the park, the average length of stay was 4.4 hours. Of the visitor groups that spent 24 hours or more, the average length of stay was 3.7 days. The average length of stay for all visitor groups was 21.9 hours, or .9 days.

Executive Summary (continued)

Local attractions visited	Twenty-nine percent of visitor groups visited other local attractions on this visit. Of those visitor groups that visited other local attractions, 51% visited Frozen Head State Park, 32% visited Catoosa Wildlife Management Area, and 26% visited Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area.
Sites visited	The most common places visited in the park were Lilly Bridge (66%), Lilly Bluff Overlook (56%), and NPS visitor center (32%).
Activities on visit	The most common activity was hiking/walking (61%). Forty-seven of visitor groups participated in rock climbing activities, of which 83% were sport climbing and 25% were bouldering. The most common sites at which visitor groups rock climbed were Lilly Bluff (58%), South Clear Creek (43%), and Lilly Boulder Field (24%).
Activities on future visits	The most common activities in which visitor groups would prefer to participate on future visits were hiking/walking (75%), stopping at scenic overlooks (59%), swimming (57%) and camping (57%).
Services and facilities	The services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the trails (73%), toilet facilities (60%), and assistance from park staff (45%).
Protecting park resources and attributes	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park, resources and attributes included clean water (97%), clean air (93%), natural features (92%), and scenic views (90%).
Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within 50 miles of the park) was \$97. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$25. The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$52.
Ranger-led programs on a future visit	Thirty-two percent of visitor groups were interested in attending ranger-led programs on a future visit. Of those visitor groups interested in ranger-led programs, the most preferred length of program included ½ to 1 hour (43%) and 1 to 2 hours (27%).
Methods of learning about the park	Ninety-four percent of visitor groups were interested in learning about the park, most often through the following methods: self-guided with printed materials (62%), park website (44%), ranger-led programs (40%), and outdoor exhibits (39%).
Items available for purchase at the books store	Forty-two percent of visitor groups were interested in having items available for purchase at the visitor center bookstore. The most common items were additional publications (54%), souvenir items (49%), and convenience items (45%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (95%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Obed WSR as “very good” or “good.” One percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” and no group 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) 885-2585 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.