

Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site (NHS) visitors during July 27 – September 7, 2013. A total of 351 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 248 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 70.7% response rate.

Group size and type	Sixty-five percent of visitor groups consisted of two or three people and 25% were in groups of four or more. Seventy-three percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups, 11% were alone, and 10% were with friends.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 35 states and comprised 98% of total visitation during the survey period, with 57% from Massachusetts. There were too few international visitors to provide reliable data.
Frequency of visits	Ninety-three percent of visitors visited the park once in the past 12 months. For 80% this was their first visit in their lifetime, while 13% had visited two or three times.
Age, ethnicity, race, educational level, and income level	Thirty-eight percent of visitors were ages 56 years or older, 24% were ages 15 years or younger, and 17% were 41 to 55 years old. Three percent were Hispanic or Latino. Ninety-two percent of visitors were White and 4% were Asian. Thirty-nine percent of respondents had completed a graduate degree and 34% had a bachelor's degree. Twenty-one percent of respondents reported an income level of \$75,000-\$99,999, 17% had an income of \$100,000-\$149,999, and 16% had an income of \$50,000-\$74,999.
Physical conditions	Six percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access services or participate in activities.
Awareness of park prior to visit	Sixty-eight percent of visitor groups were aware that Saugus Iron Works NHS is a unit of the National Park System. Forty-four percent of visitor groups were aware that Saugus Iron Works NHS is only open seasonally, from May 1 through October 31.
Information sources	Most visitor groups (86%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit most often through the Saugus Iron Works NHS website (62%), friends/relatives/word of mouth (33%), and previous visits (20%). Most visitor groups (89%) received the information they needed. Seventy percent of visitor groups prefer to use Saugus Iron Works NHS website to obtain information for a future visit, while 27% prefer previous visits, and 23% prefer travel guides/tour books.
Use of electronic devices	Sixty-eight percent of visitor groups brought electronic devices with them on this trip. The devices most often brought were a smartphone (79%) and a GPS wayfinding device (34%).
Park website	Fifty-nine percent of visitor groups obtained the information they needed on the park website to plan their visit. Seventy percent of visitor groups rated the information on the park website as "extremely helpful" or "very helpful" in planning their visit.
Park as destination	During the on-site interview 58% of visitor groups said the park was their primary destination, and for 36%, the park was one of several destinations.

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Reasons for visiting the park	The most common reasons for visiting the park were to learn about early iron production in Colonial America (71%), visit and explore the reconstructed iron works (64%), and learn about the life, culture, and history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (55%).
Adequacy of directional signs	Sixty-nine percent of visitor groups felt the directional signs to the park in the local communities were adequate and 66% felt the highway signs directing them to the park were adequate.
Length of visit	Forty-five percent of visitor groups spent two hours in the park, 28% spent three or more hours, and 27% spent up to one hour. The average length of stay was 1.9 hours.
Time spent at park	Fifty-one percent of visitor groups did not have a planned amount of time to spend at the park. Thirty-one percent spent about the same amount of time as planned, while 14% spent more time than planned.
Places visited in the park	The most common places visited in the park were the visitor center (93%), blast furnace (93%), forge (91%), and museum (89%).
Activities on this visit	The most common activities were visiting the museum/viewing exhibits (91%), watching orientation film (65%), and attending ranger or volunteer-led talks/programs/tours (51%). The most common activities that were the primary reason for visiting the park were visiting the museum/viewing exhibits (35%) and attending ranger or volunteer-led talks/programs/tours (24%).
Ranger-led talks/ programs/tours	Forty-seven percent of visitor groups participated in ranger or volunteer-led talks/ programs/tours. The most common reasons preventing visitor groups from participating in ranger or volunteer-led talks/programs/tours were programs not offered at time of visit (50%) and did not have time for this activity (28%).
Visitor center bookstore sales items	Seventy-one percent of visitor groups visited the Eastern National bookstore at the visitor center. Ninety-eight percent of visitor groups thought the bookstore space was adequate. Fourteen percent of visitor groups would like more items available for purchase that are not currently available.
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most often used by visitor groups were the visitor center (87%), museum and exhibits (85%), restrooms (74%), and park brochure/map (72%).
Interaction with park staff	Most visitor groups (98%) had interactions with park staff. The interaction receiving the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings was courtesousness (98%).
Elements affecting park experience	Sixty-two percent of visitor groups felt that large trees used for wood for reconstructing structures would “enhance” their experience. Forty-seven percent of visitor groups felt that recycled plastic to look like wood for reconstructing structures would “detract from” their experience.
Interest in a future visit to the park	Seventy-eight percent of visitor groups would consider visiting the park again in the future.

Executive Summary (continued)

Recommend visiting the park to others	One hundred percent of visitor groups would recommend visiting the park to others.
Preferred length of ranger or volunteer-led programs on a future visit	Sixty-eight percent of visitor groups preferred a program length of 1/2 - 1 hour, while 16% preferred a program length of under 1/2 hour.
Preferred time of day to attend ranger-led program on a future visit	Fifty-four percent of visitor groups preferred a program time of 10 am – noon, 17% preferred a program time of noon - 2 pm, and 16% preferred a program time of 2 pm - 4 pm.
Methods of learning about the park on a future visit	Most visitor groups (97%) were interested in learning about the park through ranger-guided walks/talks (77%), trailside exhibits (58%), films, movies, videos (55%), and indoor exhibits (53%).
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (96%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Saugus Iron Works NHS as “very good” or “good.” Less than 1% rated the overall quality as “poor.” No visitor group rated the overall quality as “very 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>.