

Visitor Services Project  
Gateway  
National Recreation Area



Visitor Services Project Report 32  
Cooperative Park Studies Unit

 University of Idaho



# **Visitor Services Project**

## **Gateway**

### **National Recreation Area**

Dwight L. Madison

**Report 32**

February 1991

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Dwight Madison is the VSP Eastern Coordinator with the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, National Park Service, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Gateway National Recreation Area 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**  
**Gateway**  
**National Recreation Area**  
**Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a study of visitors to Gateway National Recreation Area during July 8-14, 1990. Seven hundred sixty-seven questionnaires were distributed and 505 returned, a 66% response rate.
- The data reflect the use patterns of visitors to selected sites during the designated study period. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors using other sites, or using Gateway during other times of the year.
- The report profiles Gateway visitors. The separate appendix has visitors' comments about the park and their visit. A summary of these comments is included in both the report and the appendix.
- Thirty-nine percent of visitors were in family groups. Thirty-five percent of visitors were 26 to 45 years old. Thirty-six percent of visitors had visited Gateway National Recreation Area ten or more times.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 2% of the visitation to Gateway National Recreation Area. Eighty-seven percent of American visitors came from New Jersey and New York.
- Fifty-nine percent of visitors stayed between two to five hours in the park. Swimming (45%), "other" activities identified as walking, sun bathing and bicycling (37%), picnicking (28%) and fishing (24%) were the most common activities of visitors on the day they received the survey.
- Swimming (43%), fishing (32%), picnicking (31%), and "other" activities identified as walking, sun bathing and bicycling (25%), were the most common activities visitors had done in past visits to the park.
- Visitors identified restroom facilities (84%) and parking facilities (79%) as extremely to very important in the planning for the future of Gateway National Recreation Area. Boat launch access was identified as least important by the visitors surveyed.
- Sixty-seven percent of visitors obtained information about the park from previous visits, 43% from friends and/or relatives and 17% from maps.
- Forty-eight percent of visitors used the road signs and 47% contacted the park staff for interpretive/information services. The road signs, the park folder/map, and contact with park staff received high usefulness ratings. Sales publications received the lowest usefulness ratings.
- Visitors were asked if they would like to be involved in the park's planning and programs. Twenty-five percent said yes and mentioned involvement in interpretive programs and helping to pick up litter as the areas where they would be interested.
- Visitors made many more general comments about their visits to the park.

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For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Sociology Project Leader, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843 or call (208)885-7129.

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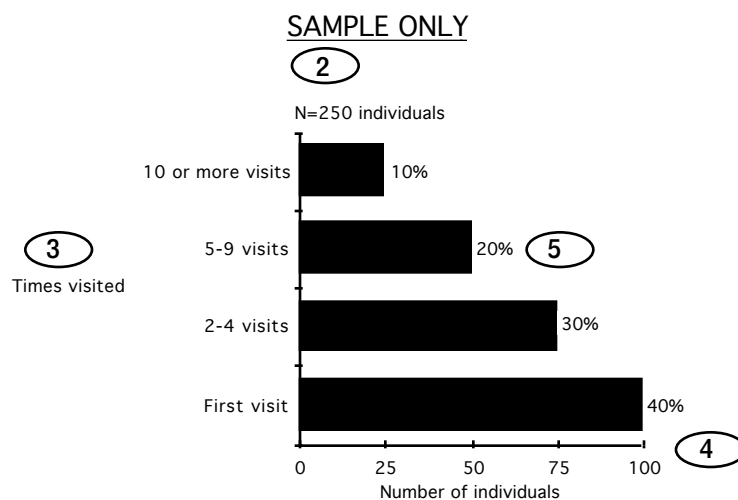
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## INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a Visitor Services Project (VSP) study undertaken at Gateway National Recreation Area (referred to as "Gateway"). The study was conducted the week of July 8-14, 1990, by the the staff of Gateway National Recreation Area and the Cooperative Park Studies Unit of the University of Idaho. A list of VSP publications is on the inside back cover of this report.

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

Many 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 is a general description of the information contained in the graph.
- 2: A note above gives the 'N', or number of cases in the sample, and a specific description of the information in the chart. Use **CAUTION** when interpreting any data where the sample size is less than 30 as the results may be unreliable.
- 3: The vertical information describes categories.
- 4: The horizontal information shows the number of items that fall into each category. In some graphs, proportions are shown.
- 5: In most graphs, percentages are included to provide additional explanation.

## **METHODS**

### **General strategy**

Interviews were administered and questionnaires distributed to a sample of visitors entering Gateway during July 8-14, 1990. Visitors completed the questionnaire during or after their trip and then returned it by mail.

### **Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire design followed the standard format of previous Visitor Services Project studies. See the end of this report for a copy of the questionnaire.

### **Sampling**

Visitors were contacted at five sites: the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, Jacob Riis Park, Canarsie Pier, Great Kills Park and Sandy Hook Beaches. Visitors entering these sites were sampled by using selected intervals to contact entering vehicles or people. The number of contacts for each site reflected the site's portion of the five site's combined total visitation.

### **Questionnaire administration**

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, the interview took approximately two minutes. These interviews included determining group size and the age of the adult who would complete the questionnaire. This person was then requested to supply their name, address and telephone number so that a reminder-thank you postcard could later be mailed.

### **Data analysis**

Two weeks after the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Four weeks after the survey, a special letter and a replacement questionnaire were mailed to those participants whose questionnaires had not yet been received. Six weeks after the survey another special letter and a second replacement questionnaire was mailed to those participants whose questionnaires had not yet been received. Questionnaires arriving within a ten week period were coded and entered into a computer. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated using a standard statistical software package. Respondents' comments were summarized.

### **Sample size, missing data and reporting errors**

This study collected information on both visitor groups and on individual group members. Thus, the sample size ('N'), varies from figure to figure. For example, while information is shown in Figure 1 for 489 groups, Figure 3 has data for 1535 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

Occasionally, a respondent may not have answered all of the questions, or may have answered some incorrectly. Unanswered questions create missing data and cause the number in the sample to vary from figure to figure. For example, although 505 questionnaires were returned by visitors, Figure 1 shows data for only 489 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 which should be taken into account when interpreting the results:

1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage is applicable to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire during or soon after visiting the park.
2. The data reflect the use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the designated study period of July 8-14, 1990. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors using other Gateway sites, or to visitor at Gateway during other times of the year.
3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data where the sample size is less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever data presented for a sample are less than 30, the word "**CAUTION**" is included in the graph.

### **Special Conditions**

During the time of the study period it was raining and overcast for six out of seven days at Gateway National Recreation Area. This caused a lower than average visitation to the park.

## RESULTS

### A. Visitors contacted

A total of eight hundred six visitor groups were contacted; 767 agreed to participate. Thus, the acceptance rate was 95%. Five hundred five visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, a 66% response rate.

**Table 1: Distribution and percentages of returned questionnaires by site**

| Site Name                  | Number of returned questionnaires | % of returned questionnaires |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Riis Park                  | 81                                | 16                           |
| Carnarsie Pier             | 20                                | 4                            |
| Jamica Bay Wildlife Refuge | 8                                 | 2                            |
| Sandy Hook                 | 296                               | 59                           |
| <u>Great Kills Park</u>    | <u>100</u>                        | <u>20</u>                    |
| Total                      | 505                               | 101*                         |

\*Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Table 2 shows a comparison of information collected from both the sample of visitors contacted who accepted questionnaires and the final sample of visitors who returned their questionnaires. Non-response bias for group size is insignificant. For age there is some response bias: the average age of actual respondents was somewhat older than the average age of the total sample .

**Table 2: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents**

| Variable          | Total | sample |      | Actual respondents |      |
|-------------------|-------|--------|------|--------------------|------|
|                   |       | N      | Avg. | N                  | Avg. |
| Age of respondent |       | 825    | 40.4 | 491                | 43.7 |
| Group size        |       | 825    | 5.1  | 489                | 5.9  |

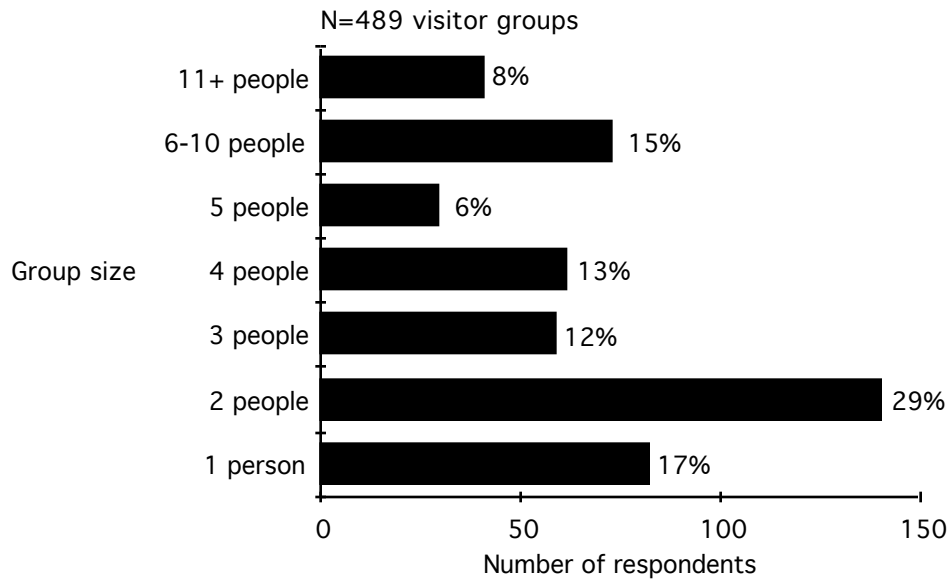
### B. Characteristics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 150 people. Twenty-nine percent of Gateway visitors came in groups of two people, 17% came alone. Thirty-nine percent of visitors came in family groups, as shown in Figure 2; 36% came in groups of friends, or family and friends.

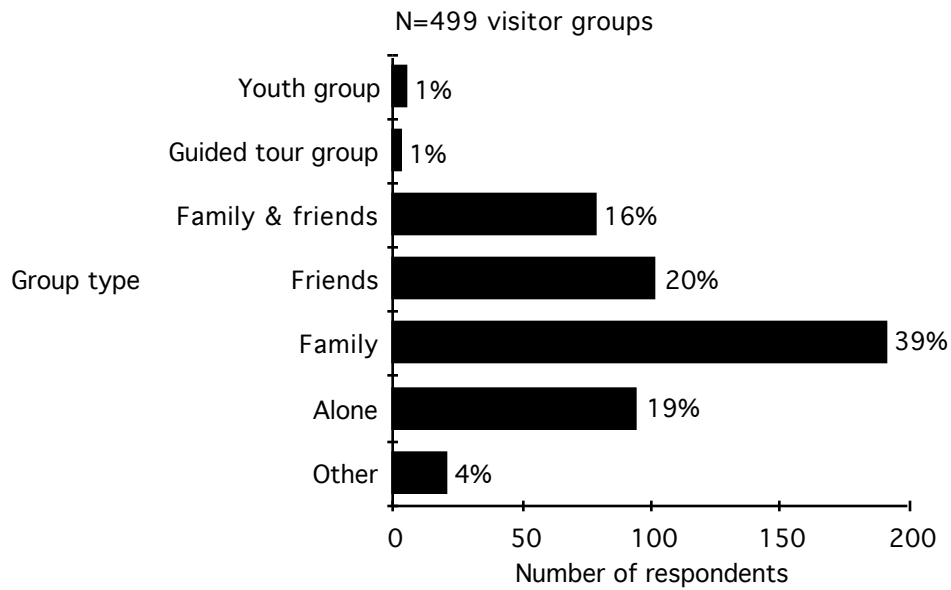
Figure 3 shows a wide range of age groups; the most common being adults aged 26-45 (35%) and children under 16 years of age (34%). Thirty-six percent of visitors had visited Gateway ten or more times, 25% percent had visited 2-4 times, and 23% were visiting Gateway for the first time as seen in Figure 4.

Foreign visitors comprised 2% of all visitation. Map 1 and Table 3 show that these foreign visitors came from the USSR and Sweden. Map 2 and Table 4 show that most American visitors came from New Jersey (46%), New York (41%) and Pennsylvania (5%).

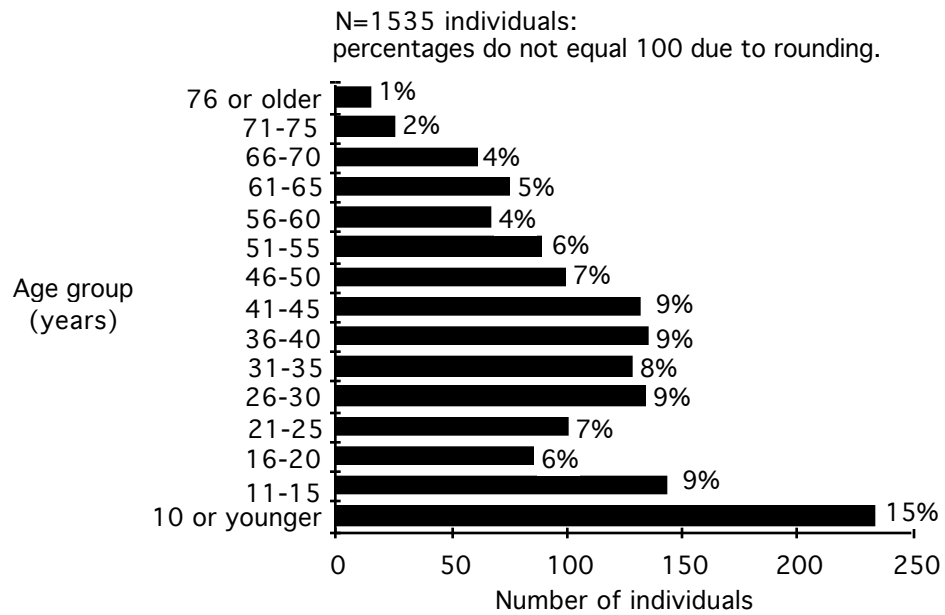




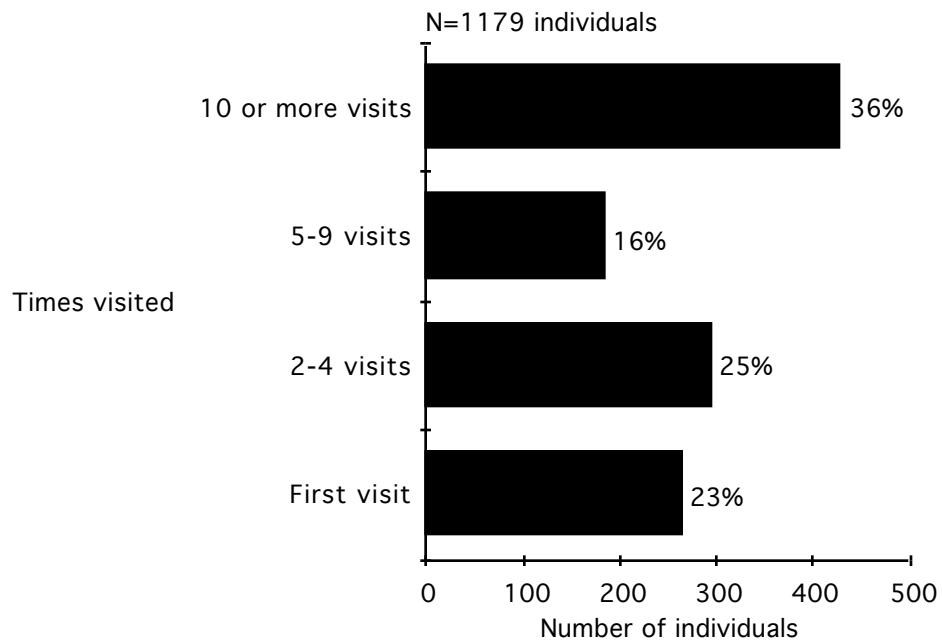
**Figure 1: Visitor group sizes**



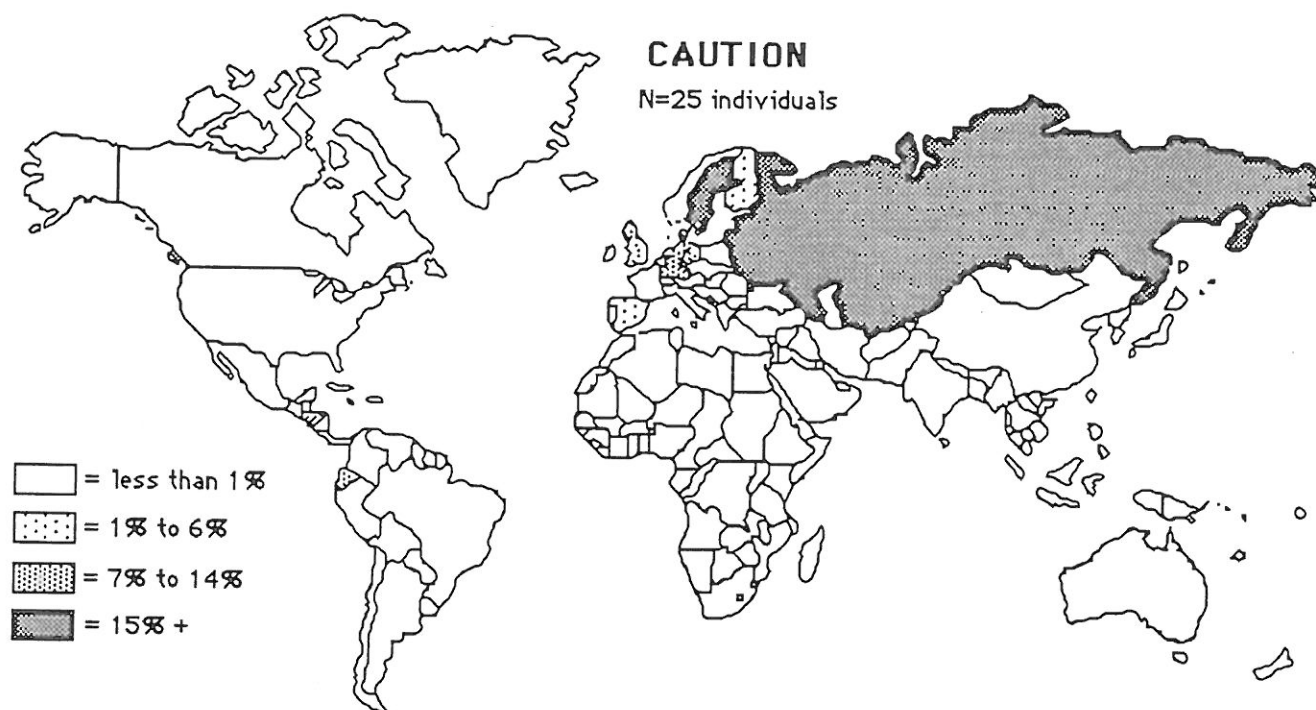
**Figure 2: Visitor group types**



**Figure 3: Visitor ages**



**Figure 4: Number of visits**



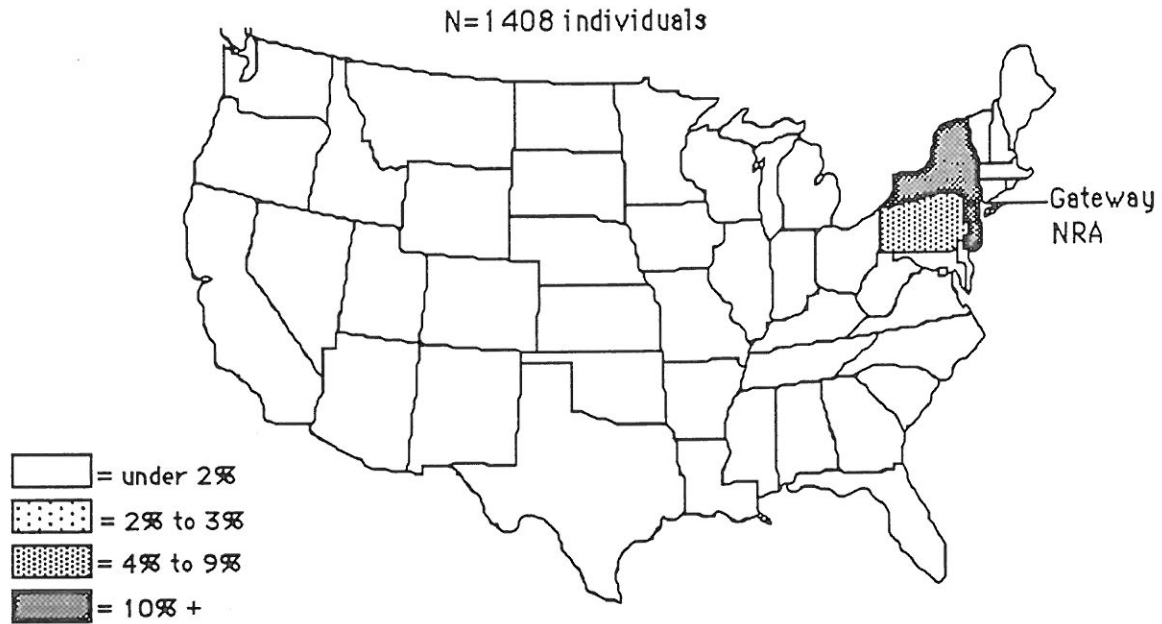
**Map 1: Proportion of foreign visitors by country**

**Table 3: Proportion of visitors from foreign countries**

N=25 individuals from foreign countries

**CAUTION**

| Country         | Number of<br>individuals | % of foreign<br>visitors |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| USSR            | 6                        | 24                       |
| Sweden          | 5                        | 20                       |
| Ecuador         | 3                        | 12                       |
| Germany         | 3                        | 12                       |
| Hong Kong       | 2                        | 8                        |
| Other Countries | 6                        | 24                       |



**Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state**

**Table 4: Proportion of visitors from each state**

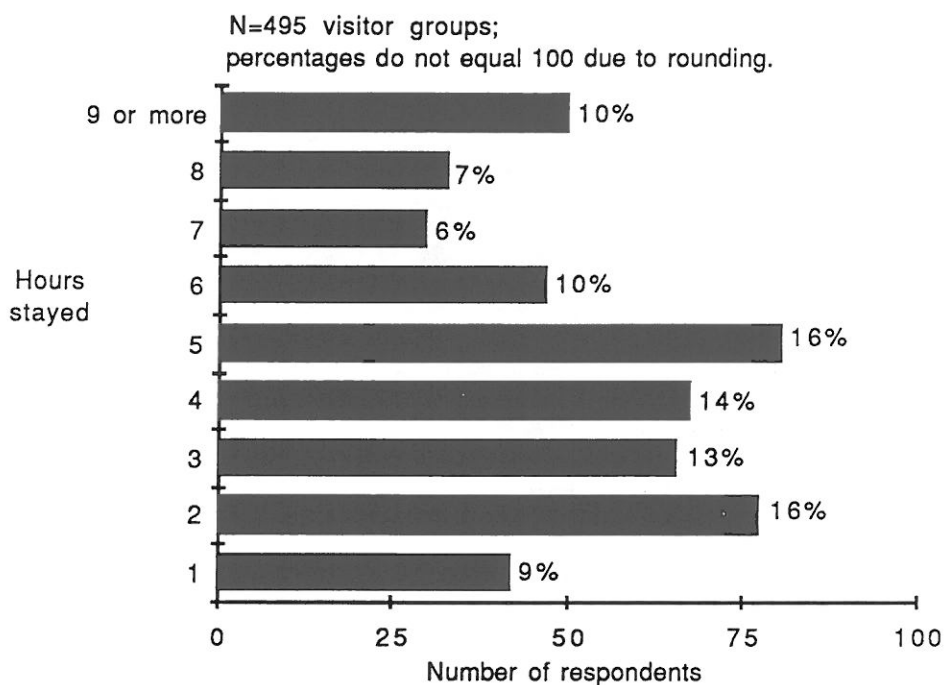
N=1408 individuals;

individual state percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

| State                        | Number of<br>individuals | % of<br>visitors |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| New Jersey                   | 641                      | 46               |
| New York                     | 576                      | 41               |
| Pennsylvania                 | 68                       | 5                |
| Others (14 states < 1% each) | 123                      | 9                |

### C. Length of stay

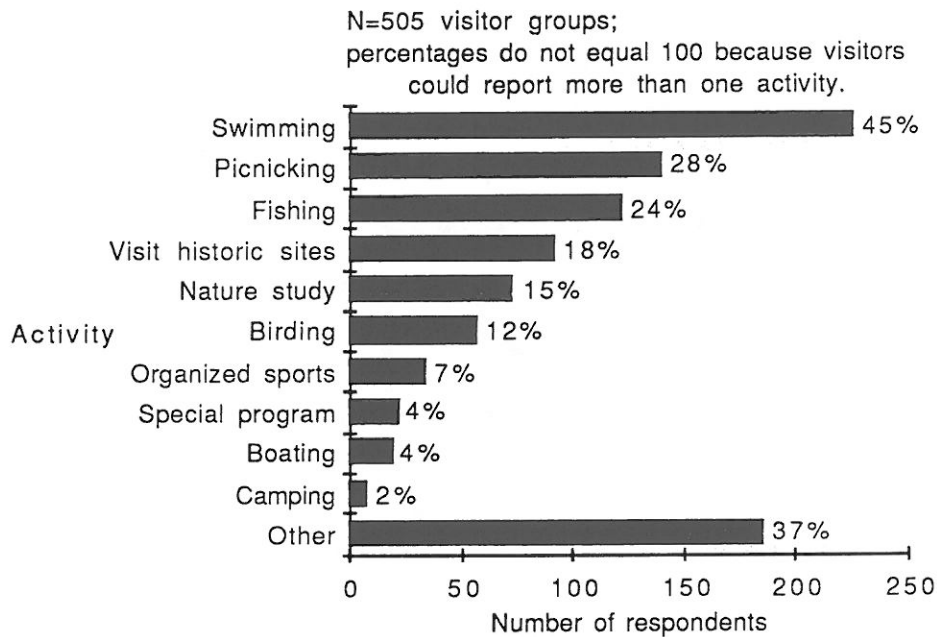
Figure 5 shows that 59% of visitor groups stayed between two to five hours at Gateway. Thirty-three percent of visitors stayed six hours or more.



**Figure 5: Number of hours visitors spent at Gateway**

#### D. Activities

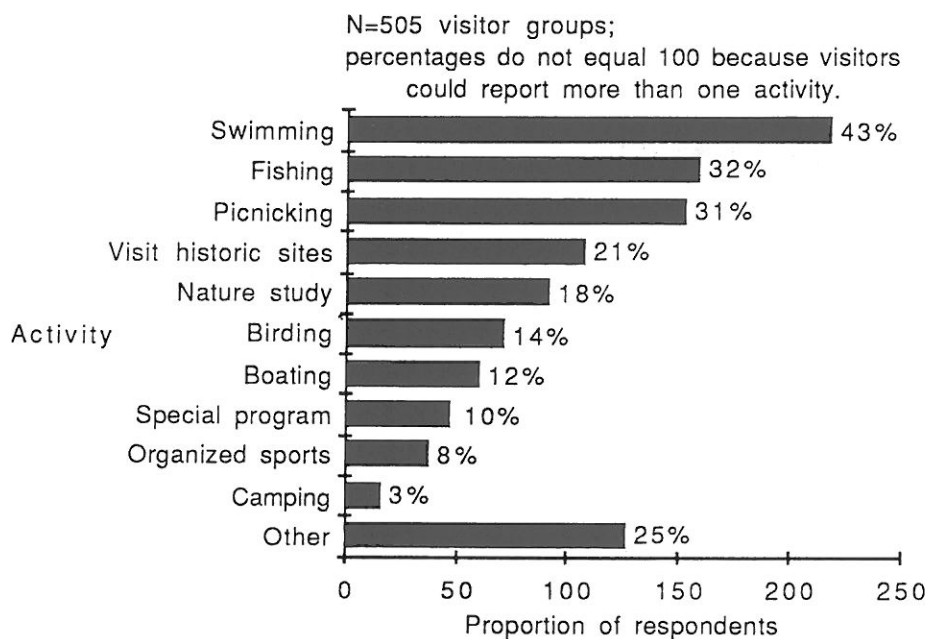
Figure 6 shows the proportion of visitor groups who participated in each activity during their visit. Common activities were swimming (45%), "other" activities, identified as walking, sun bathing, bicycling, surfing, wind surfing and relaxing (37%), picnicking (28%) and fishing (24%).



**Figure 6: Proportion of visitor groups participating in each activity**

### E. Past Activities

Figure 7 shows the proportion of visitor groups who participated in each activity during past visits. Common activities were swimming (43%), fishing (32%), and picnicking (31%). Some "other" past activities were identified as walking, sun bathing, bicycling, surfing, wind surfing and relaxing (25%).

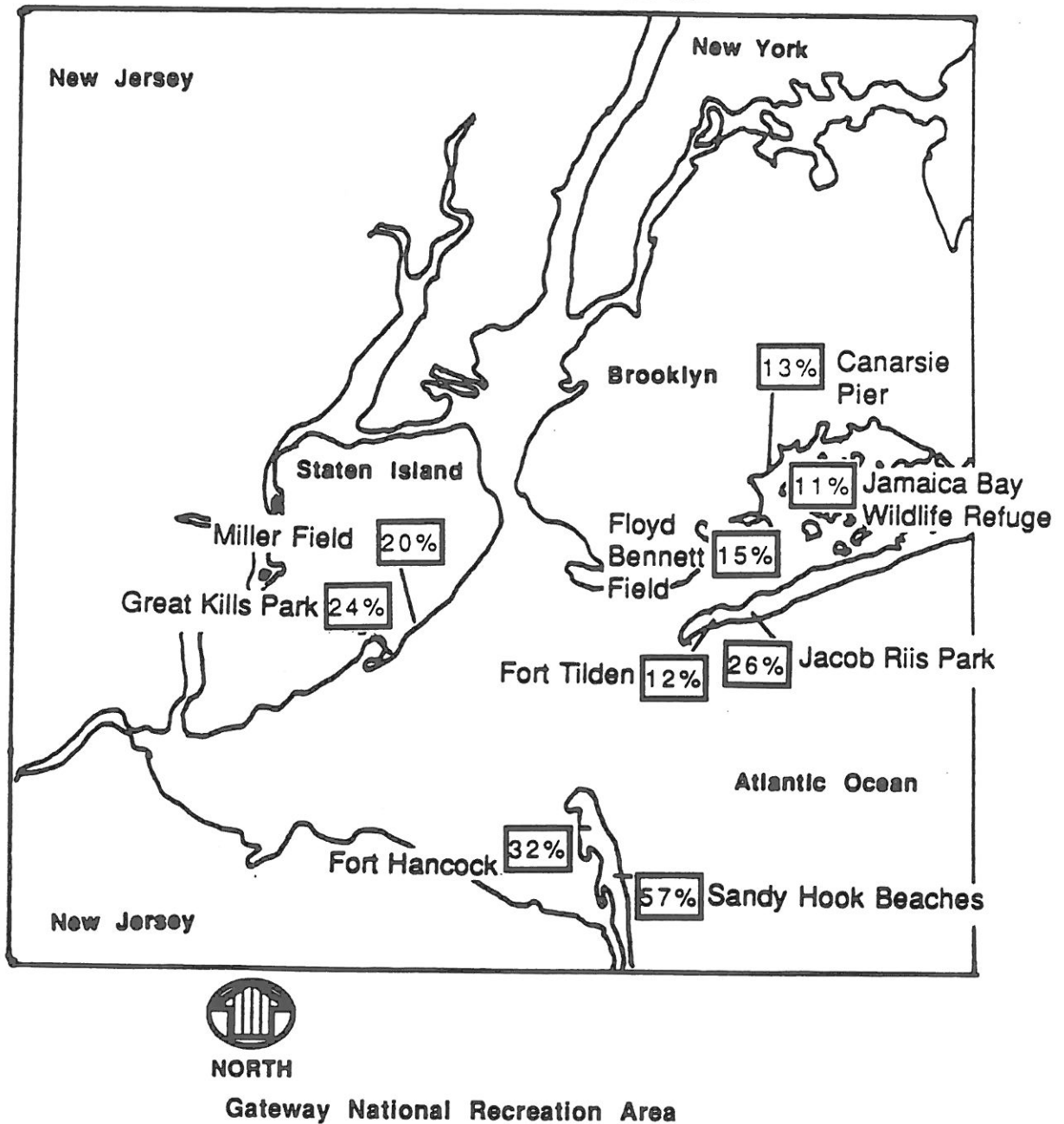


**Figure 7: Proportion of visitor groups participating in each past activity**

### F. Locations

Map 3 shows the proportion of visitor groups that had visited selected sites in Gateway prior to the day they received the survey. Fifty-seven percent of visitor groups had visited the Sandy Hook Beaches, 32% had visited Fort Hancock and 26% had visited Jacob Riis Park.

N=505 visitor groups;  
percentages do not equal 100 because  
visitors could have visited more than one site.



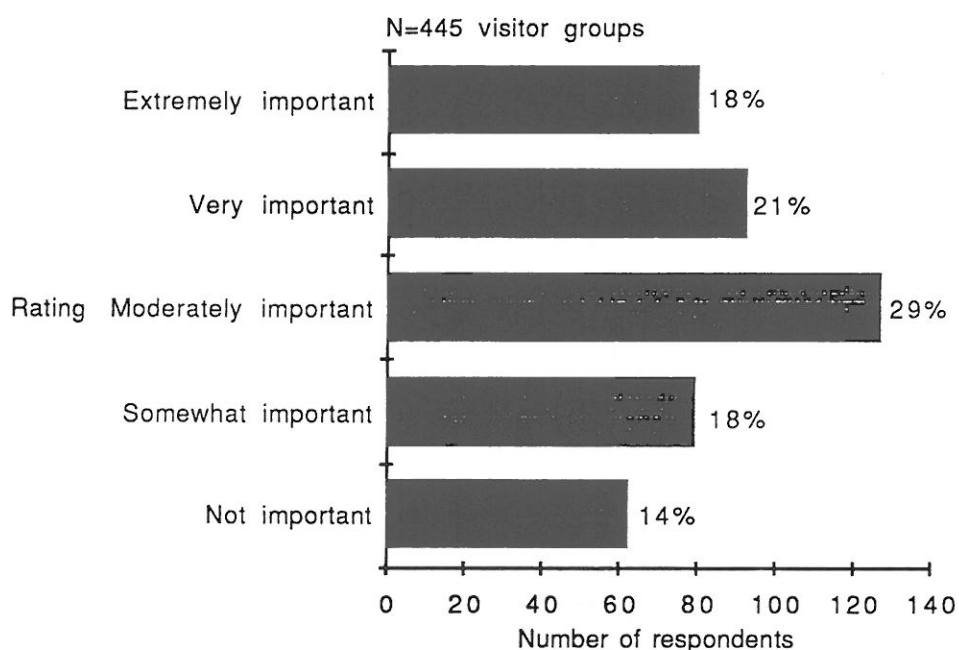
Map 3: Proportion of visitor groups that visited each site



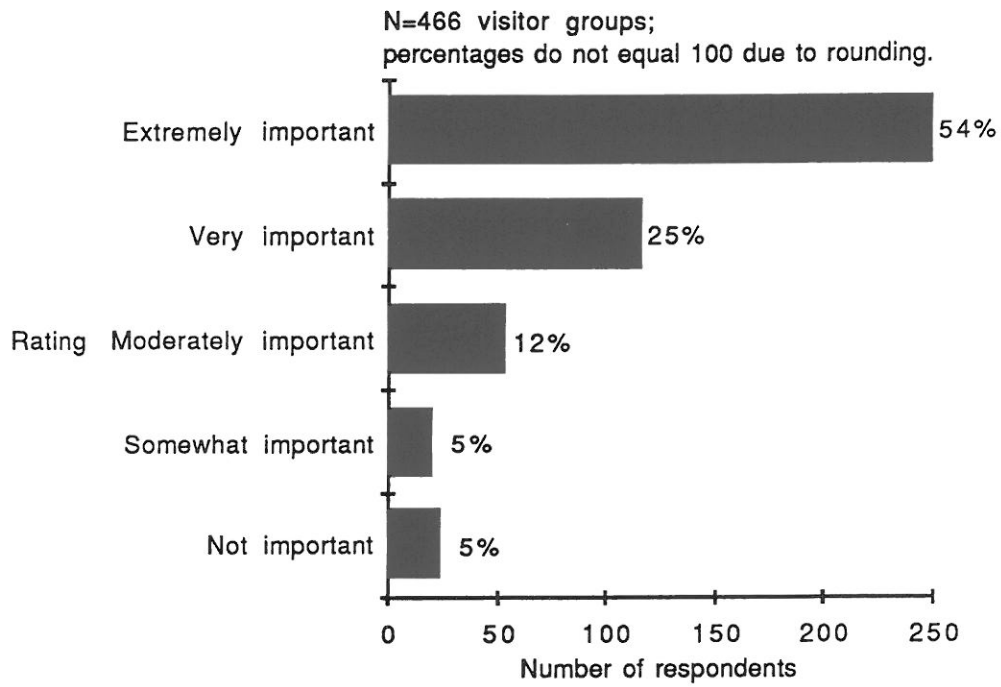
### G. Importance of future services/facilities

Visitors were asked if they were planning for the future of Gateway National Recreation Area how would they rate the importance of the following services or facilities: information flyers, parking facilities, restroom facilities, visitor information areas, contact with park rangers, boat launch access, picnic areas, fishing areas, bike trails and jogging trails. A five point scale was provided: 1= extremely important, 2= very important, 3= important, 4= somewhat important, and 5= not important.

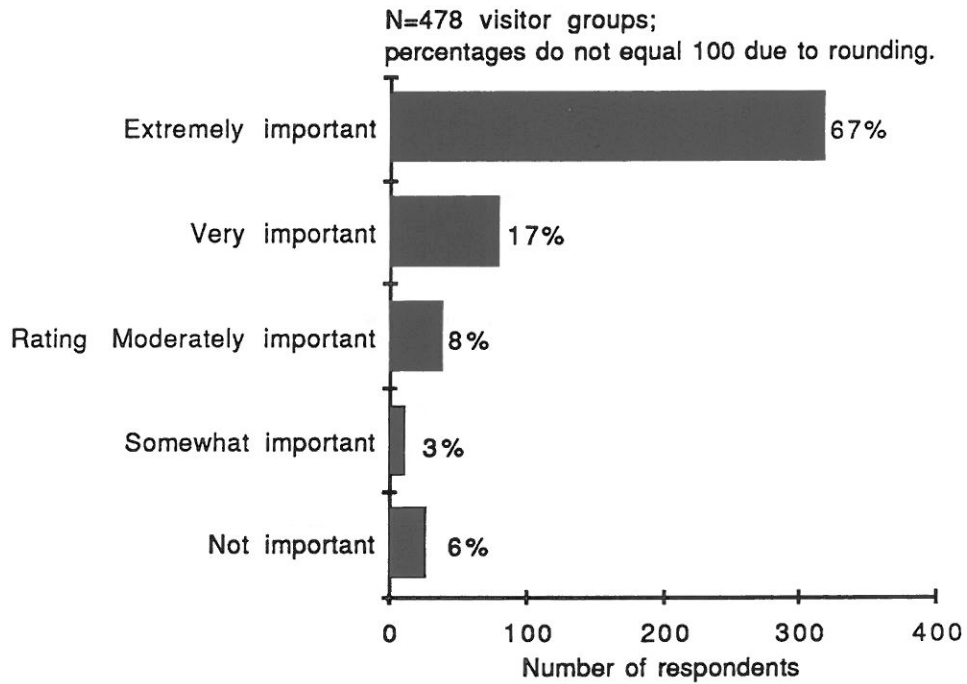
Figures 8-17 show that visitors rated several services/facilities from very to extremely important: restroom facilities (84%), parking facilities (79%) and fishing areas (52%). The visitors also rated several services/facilities from not important to somewhat important: boat launch access (55%), jogging trails (36%), and information flyers (32%).



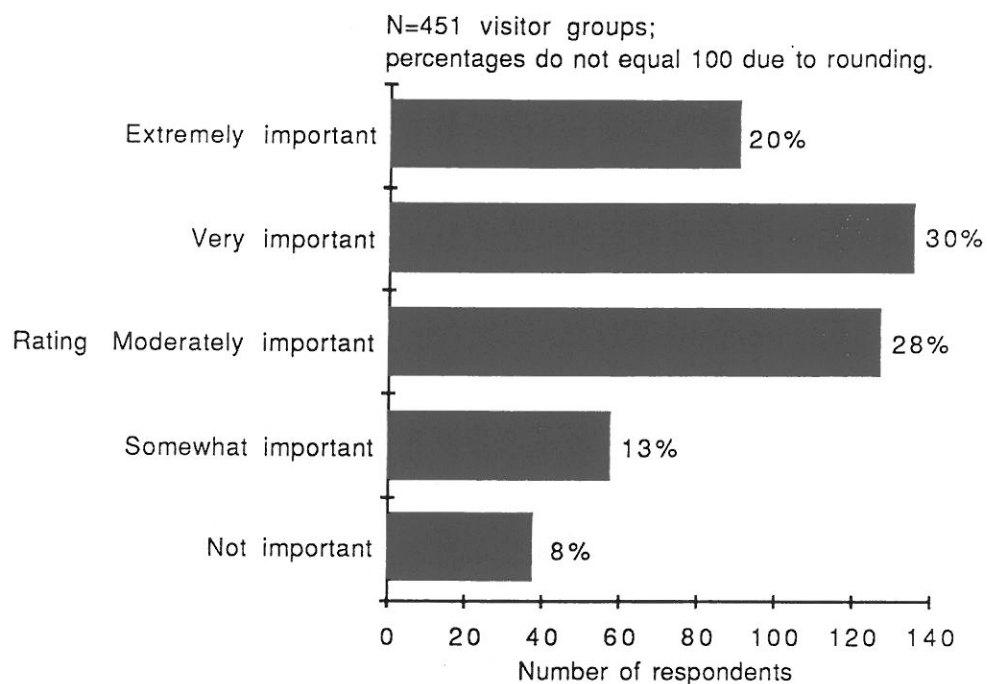
**Figure 8: Importance of information flyers**



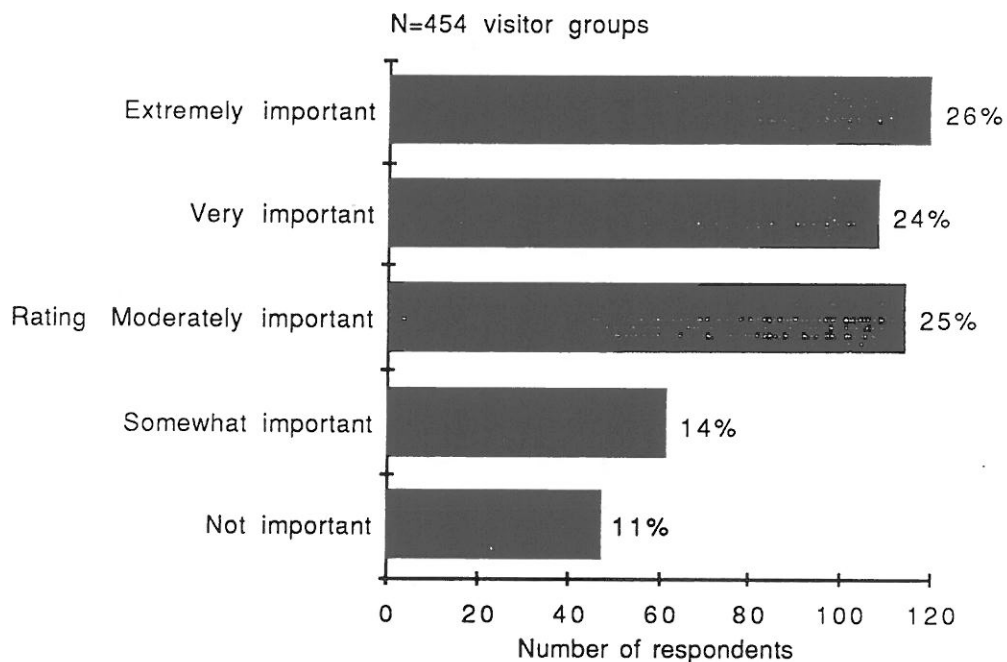
**Figure 9: Importance of parking facilities**



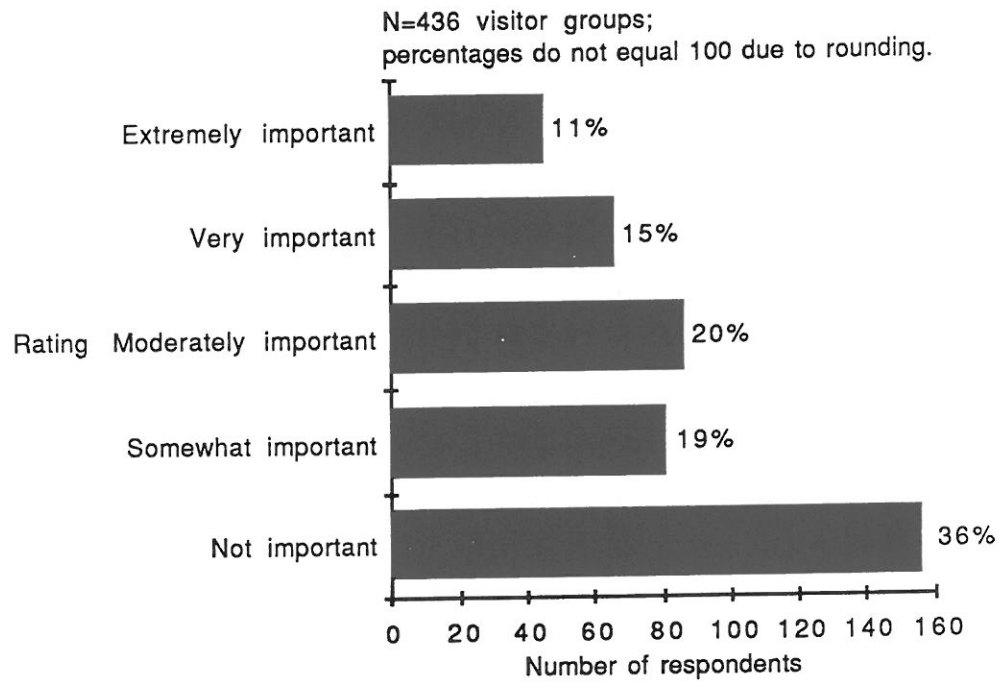
**Figure 10: Importance of restroom facilities**



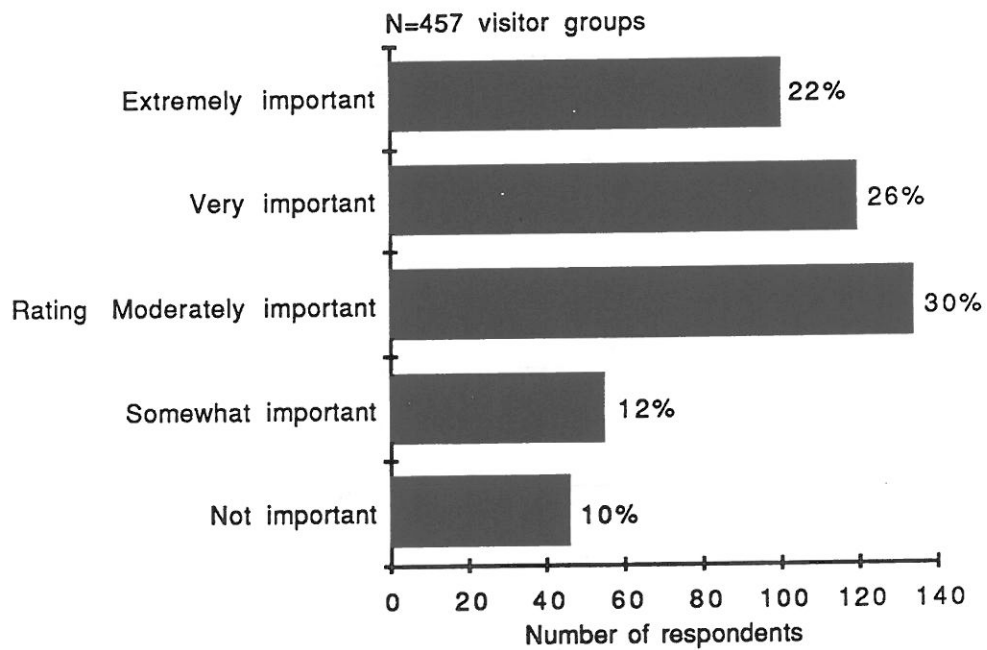
**Figure 11: Importance of visitor information areas**



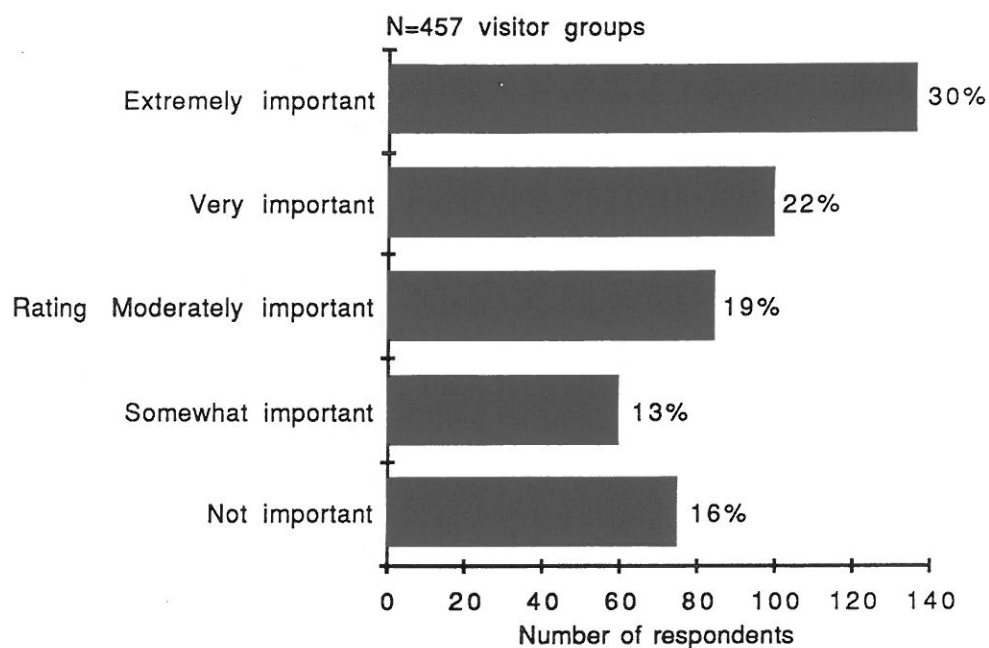
**Figure 12: Importance of contact with park rangers**



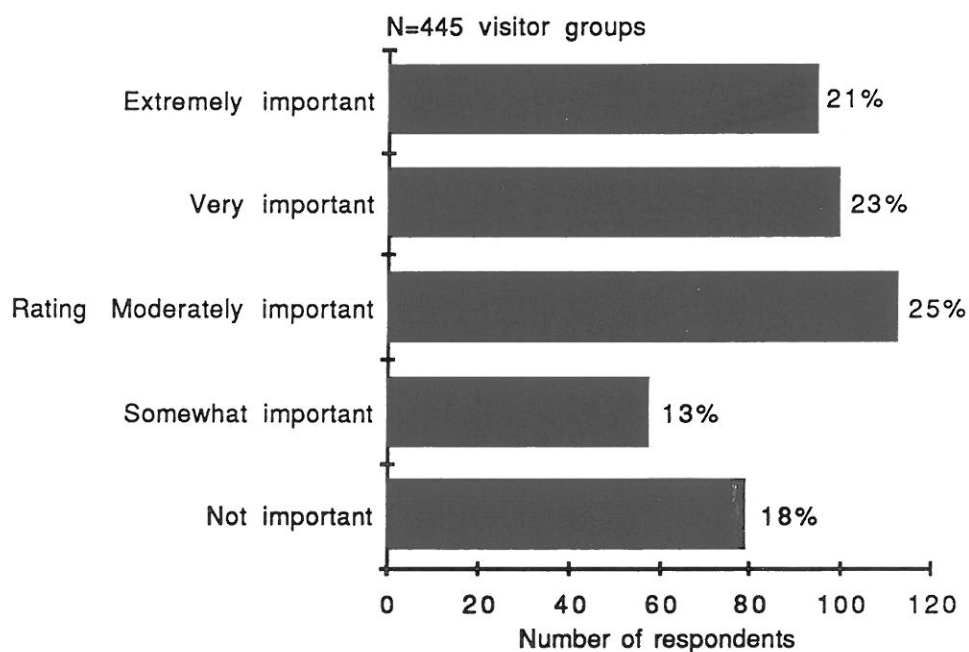
**Figure 13: Importance of boat launch access**



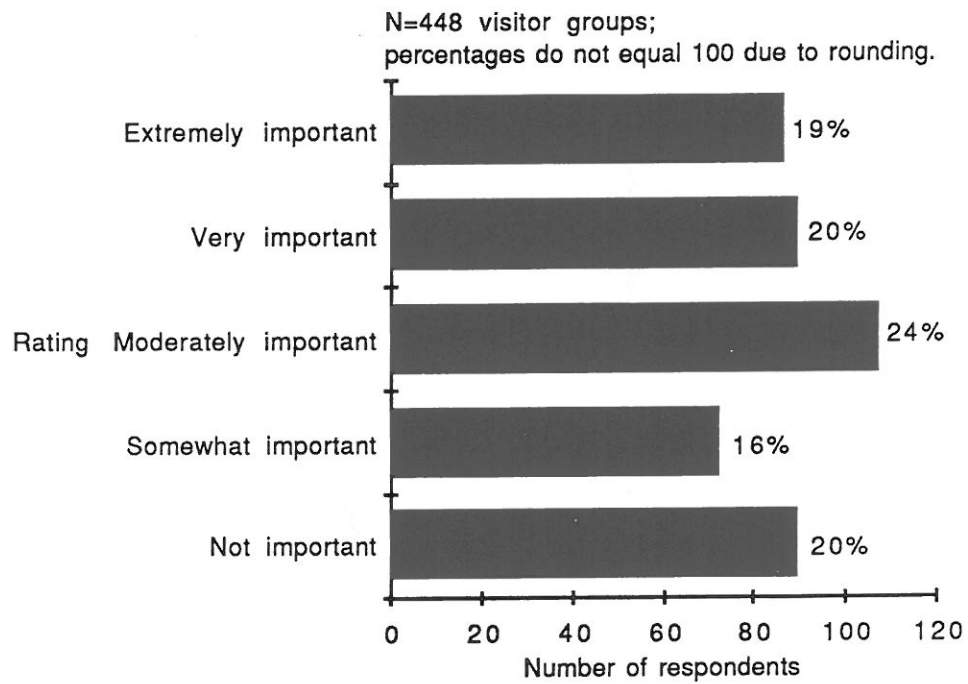
**Figure 14: Importance of picnic areas**



**Figure 15: Importance of fishing areas**



**Figure 16: Importance of bike trails**



**Figure 17: Importance of jogging trails**

#### H. Information sources prior to visit

The survey asked visitors how they obtained information about Gateway prior to their visit. Sixty-seven percent of the visitor groups obtained their information from previous visit(s), while 43% received information from friends/relatives and 17% from maps. "Other" sources of information included visitors who lived in the area, self exploration, and library research.

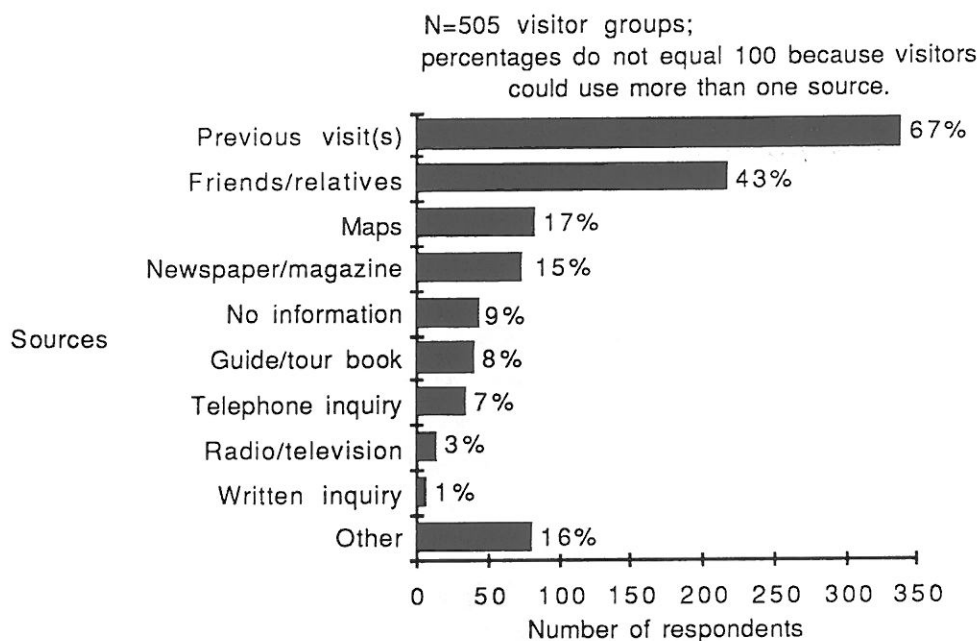
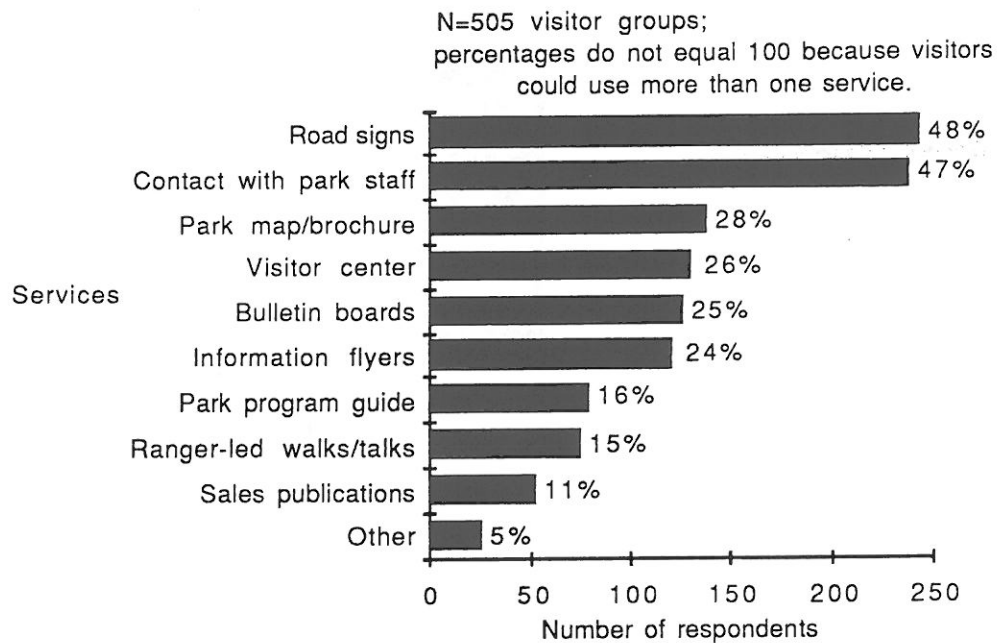


Figure 18: Information sources prior to visit

### I. Interpretive/information services evaluation

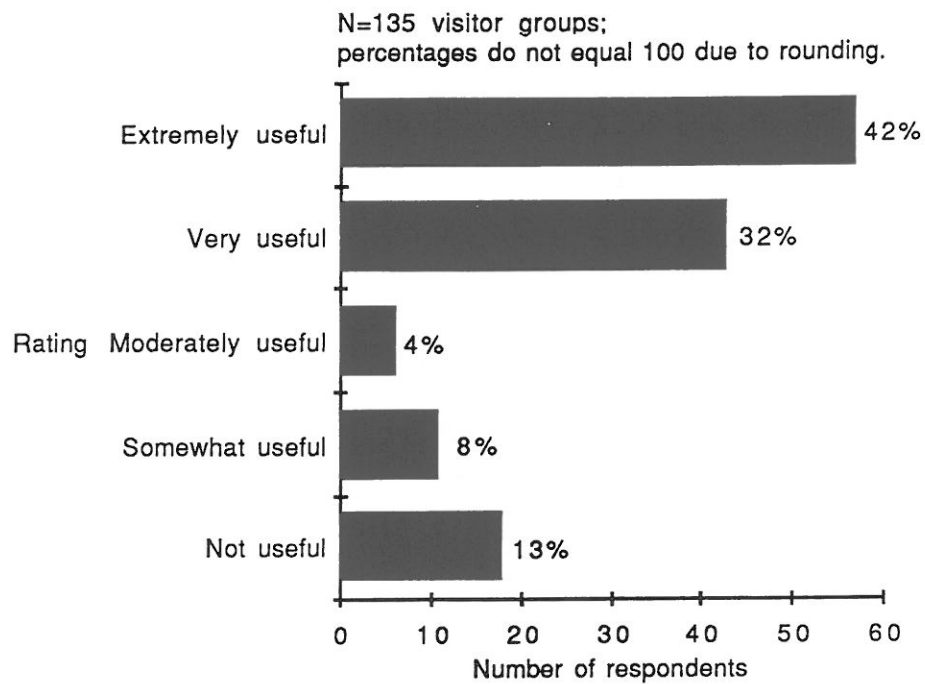
The survey asked visitors which information or interpretive services they used during their visit and their usefulness. Figure 19 shows that 48% of visitor groups used the road signs, 47% contacted the park staff and 28% used the park folder/map. "Other" sources of information were identified as boat launch signs, golf course signs, and the slide show.

Visitors rated the usefulness of each service. Figures 20-29 show that visitors commonly rated several services from "very" to "extremely useful:" road signs (79%), park folder/map (74%) and contact with park staff (71%). The service rated lowest, from "somewhat" to "not useful" was sales publications (61%).

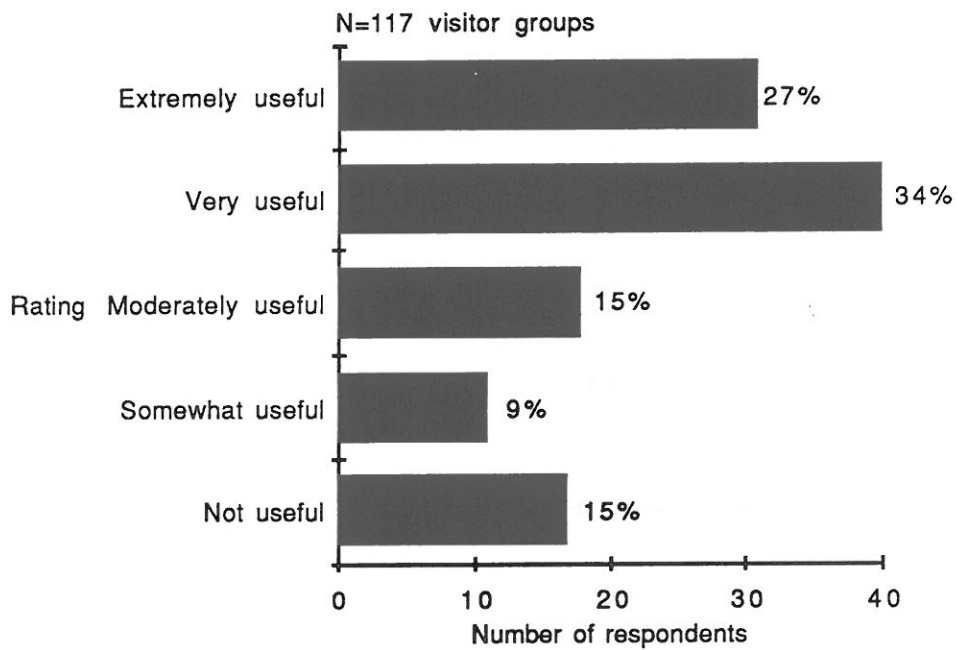


**Figure 19: Proportion of visitors that used each information and interpretive service**

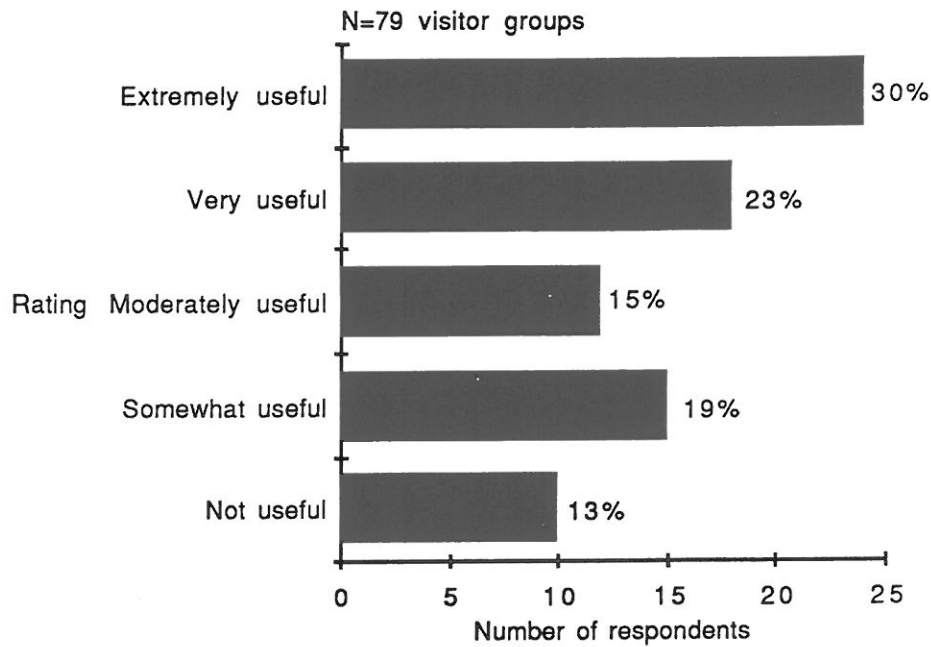




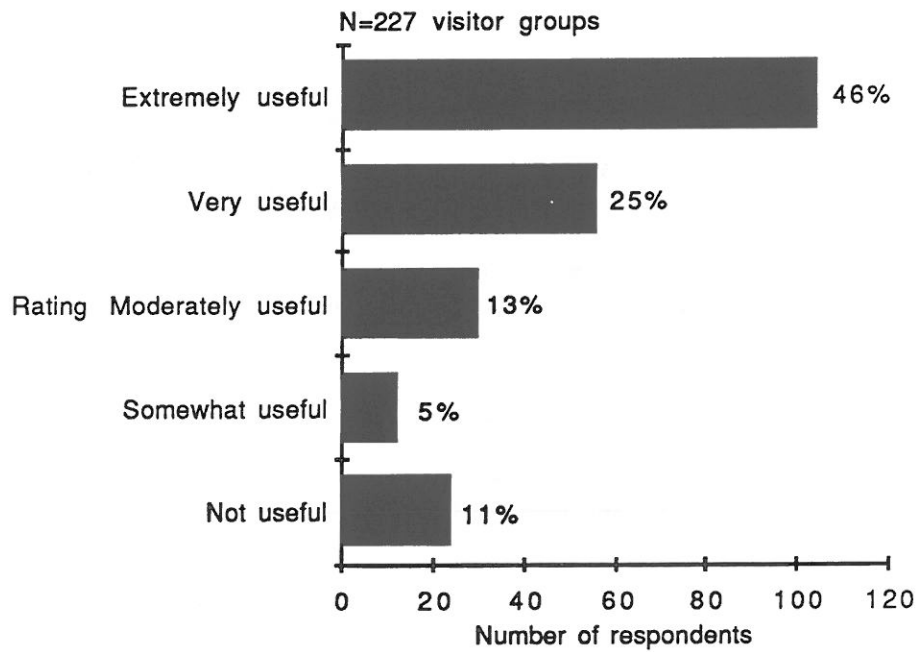
**Figure 20: Visitor ratings of park folder/map**



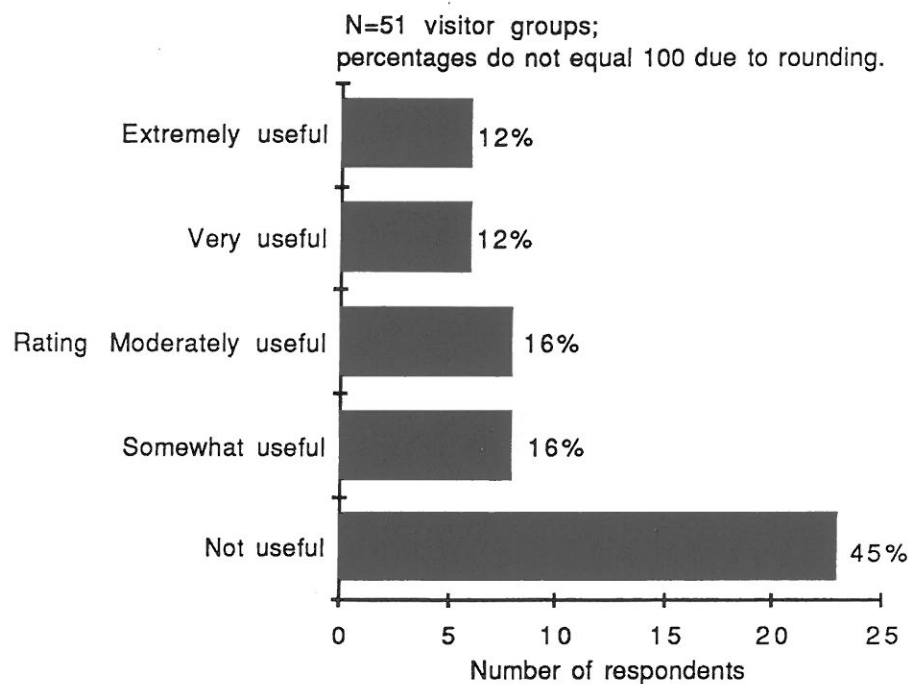
**Figure 21: Visitor ratings of information flyers**



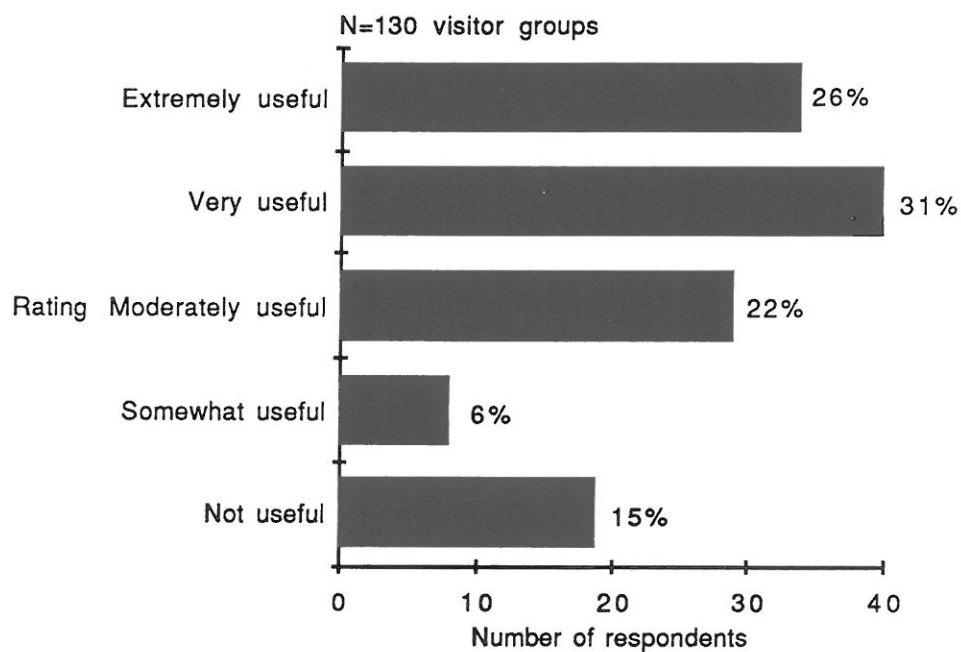
**Figure 22: Visitor ratings of park program guide**



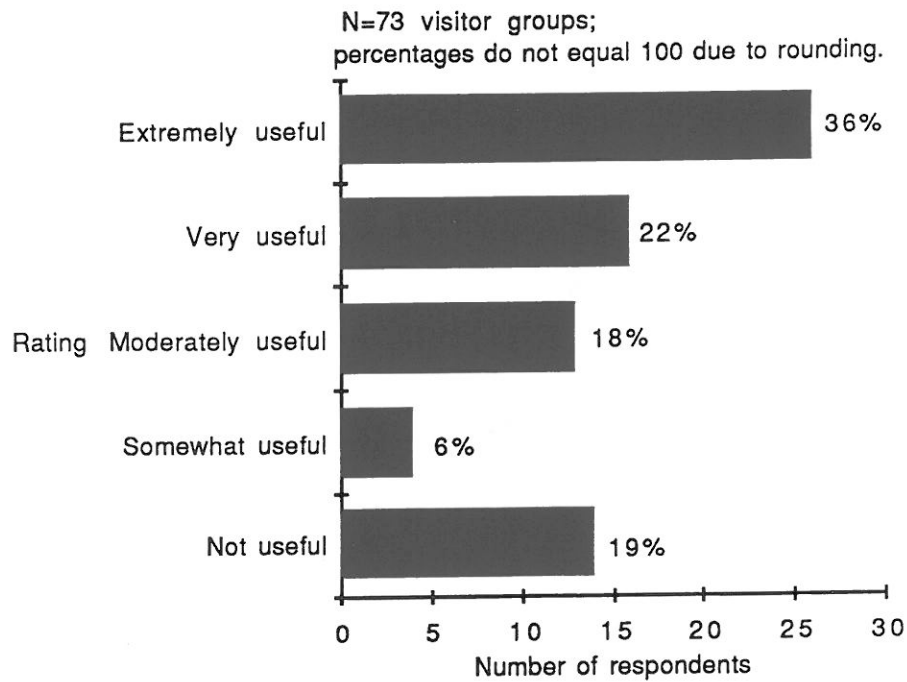
**Figure 23: Visitor ratings of contact with park staff**



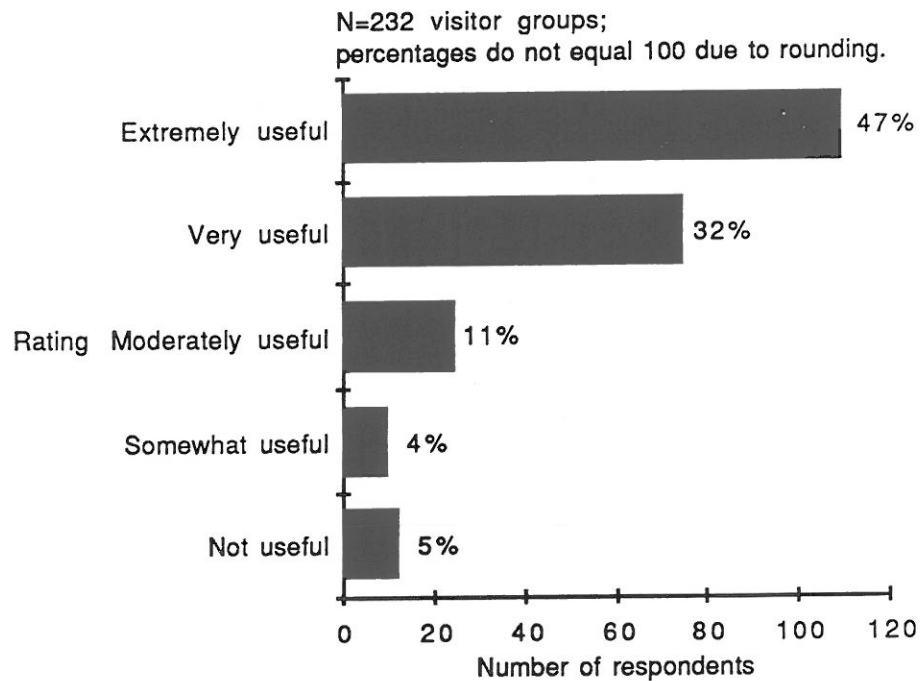
**Figure 24: Visitor ratings of sales publications**



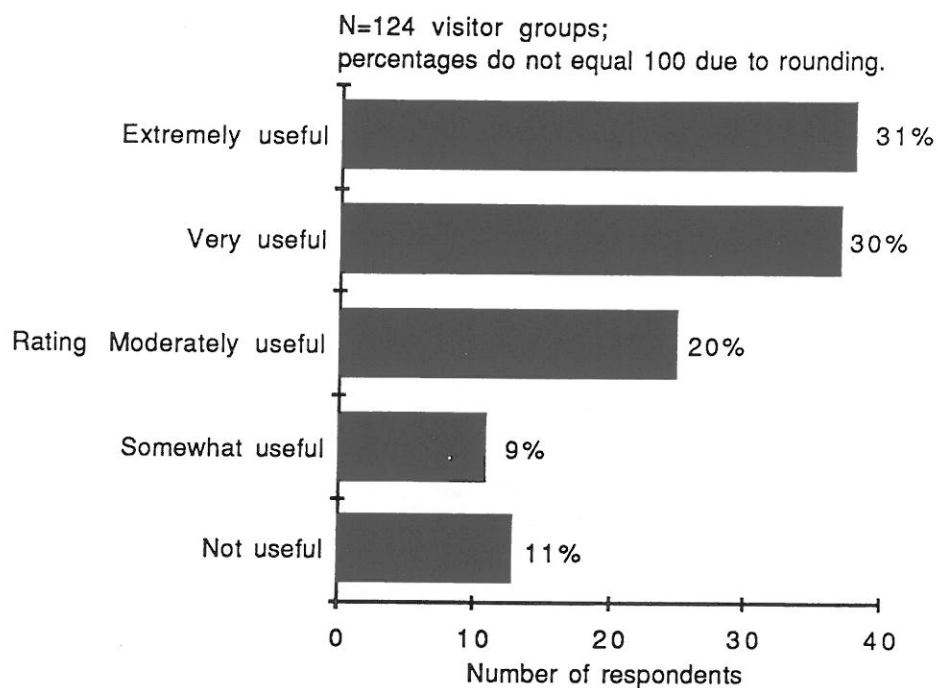
**Figure 25: Visitor ratings of visitor center exhibits**



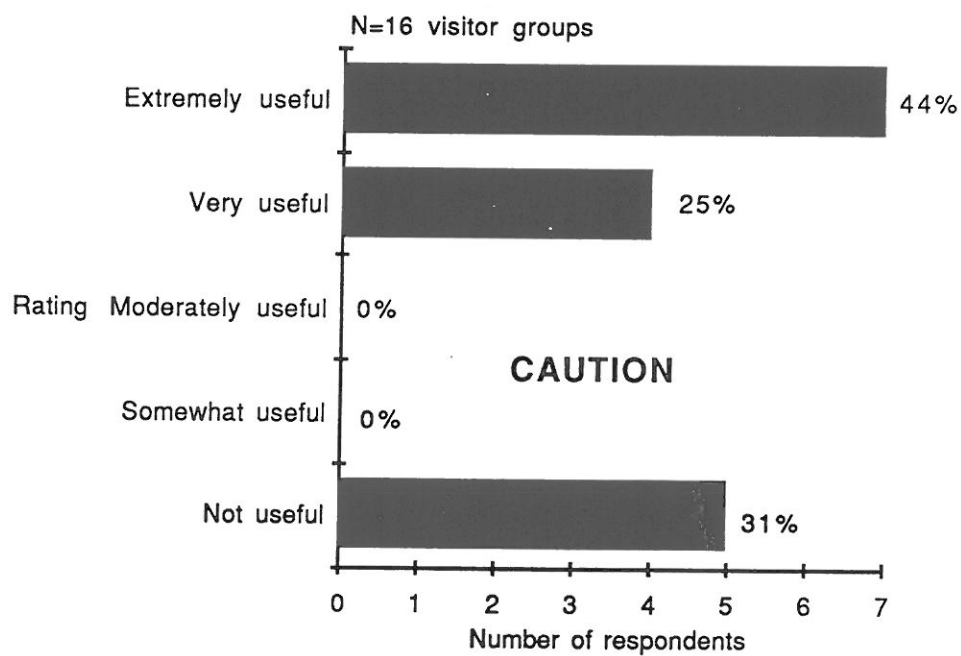
**Figure 26: Visitor ratings of ranger-led walks/talks**



**Figure 27: Visitor ratings of road signs**



**Figure 28: Visitor ratings of bulletin boards**



**Figure 29: Visitor ratings of other sources of information**

### J. Visitors' involvement in park planning

Visitors were asked if they would like to be involved in the park's planning and programs. Figure 30 shows that 25% said yes and 75% said no. Those visitors who answered yes were then asked how they would like to be involved. Some of the answers included involvement in interpretive programs, helping to pick up litter, and in any capacity.

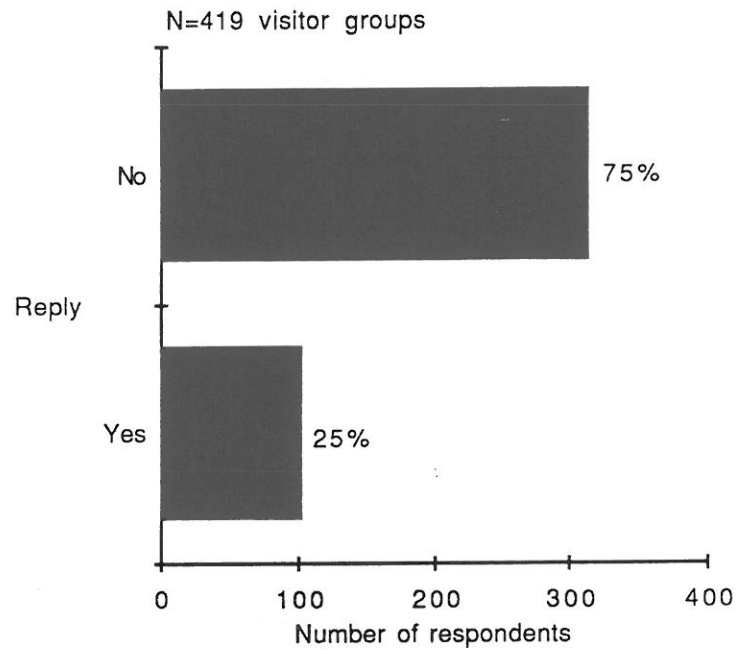


Figure 30: Visitor involvement in park's planning & programs

## K. Visitor likes

Question 11 asked visitors what they liked most about their visit to Gateway. Visitors especially liked the clean, well-maintained beaches and parks; the park's fishing areas, plus the peace and quiet of Gateway National Recreation Area.

### Visitor likes

N=936 comments;

many visitors made more than one comment.

| Comment | Number of<br>times mentioned |
|---------|------------------------------|
|---------|------------------------------|

#### PERSONNEL

##### National Park Service

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Rangers friendly/helpful                     | 29 |
| Park staff friendly and helpful              | 18 |
| Area frequently patrolled by law enforcement | 18 |
| Life guards friendly/helpful                 | 5  |
| Availability of rangers                      | 4  |
| Park police friendly                         | 2  |
| Other comments                               | 4  |

#### INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

##### Nonpersonal

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Museum in visitor center | 6 |
| Visitor center           | 3 |
| Other comments           | 1 |

##### Personal

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Nature study        | 4 |
| Ranger guided tours | 4 |
| Nature walks        | 3 |
| Other comments      | 3 |

#### FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

##### General

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Beach clean/well maintained | 75 |
| Park clean/well maintained  | 57 |
| Clean restrooms             | 20 |
| Access to boat ramp         | 7  |
| Convenient restrooms        | 6  |
| Sports facilities           | 5  |

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Trash cans accessible                | 4 |
| No boardwalk                         | 4 |
| Picnic areas                         | 4 |
| Sandy Hook                           | 4 |
| Fort Hancock                         | 3 |
| Lighthouse                           | 3 |
| Reconstruction of Canarsie pier      | 3 |
| Baseball fields well-maintained      | 2 |
| Facilities provided in swimming area | 2 |
| Other comments                       | 2 |

### Roads and Trails

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Ample/convenient parking   | 26 |
| Good hiking/jogging trails | 8  |
| Dune trails                | 4  |
| Nature trails              | 4  |
| Good bike trails           | 4  |
| Mileage markers on trails  | 3  |
| Wooded path to beach       | 2  |
| Roads to Crooks Point      | 2  |
| Other comments             | 7  |

### POLICIES

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Clothing-optional beach        | 16 |
| Low cost of entrance fee       | 6  |
| Life guards on duty            | 5  |
| Feeling of safety and security | 2  |
| Park regulations not strict    | 2  |
| Other comments                 | 9  |

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

|                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Fishing areas               | 55 |
| The beach                   | 42 |
| The natural setting         | 34 |
| Clean water                 | 24 |
| Bird watching               | 23 |
| Historic sites              | 20 |
| Wildlife                    | 16 |
| Large spacious beach area   | 14 |
| Nature                      | 5  |
| Marshlands                  | 4  |
| Clean air                   | 3  |
| Protection of nesting areas | 3  |
| Other comments              | 3  |



**CONCESSIONS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Snack bar                                 | 5 |
| Golf course                               | 3 |
| Enjoyed local restaurant                  | 2 |
| Enjoyed entertainment at local restaurant | 2 |
| Other comments                            | 6 |

**VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Appreciate chance to give opinion about park | 2 |
|--|---|

**GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Peace and quiet              | 46 |
| Scenic views                 | 27 |
| No crowds                    | 27 |
| Walking                      | 20 |
| Swimming                     | 19 |
| Close to home                | 18 |
| Friendly people              | 12 |
| Enjoying breezes             | 10 |
| Sunbathing                   | 9  |
| Access to ocean              | 8  |
| Sitting & relaxing           | 6  |
| The weather                  | 6  |
| Bicycling                    | 6  |
| The sun                      | 5  |
| Surfing                      | 5  |
| Waves                        | 5  |
| Watching boats go by         | 5  |
| Jogging                      | 4  |
| Diversity of activities      | 4  |
| Visiting friends             | 3  |
| Wind surfing                 | 3  |
| Everything                   | 3  |
| Music at Canarsie pier       | 2  |
| Beautiful women on the beach | 2  |
| Kite flying                  | 2  |
| Other comments               | 6  |

**L. Visitor dislikes**

Question 12 asked visitors what they disliked most about their visit to Gateway. They especially disliked the dirty/polluted ocean and beaches, the restrooms not being cleaned, and high entrance fees.

**Visitor dislikes**

N=619 comments;

many visitors made more than one comment.

| Comment | Number of<br>times mentioned |
|---------|------------------------------|
|---------|------------------------------|

**PERSONNEL****National Park Service**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Not enough rangers on patrol | 4 |
| Other comments               | 3 |

**INTERPRETIVE SERVICES**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Not enough interpretive signs explaining buildings | 4 |
| Museum too small                                   | 2 |
| Other comments                                     | 7 |

**FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE****Roads and Trails**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Not enough parking spaces                  | 17 |
| Not enough water fountains along trails    | 5  |
| Trails not paved                           | 4  |
| Parking lot full of potholes               | 4  |
| Boardwalk needs repair                     | 3  |
| Not enough benches near trails             | 3  |
| Park roads bumpy                           | 3  |
| Highway to beaches too crowded             | 2  |
| Not enough bike trails                     | 2  |
| Too much foliage overgrown on trails       | 2  |
| Trails to beach difficult for older people | 2  |
| Other comments                             | 6  |

**Buildings and utilities**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Restrooms not clean               | 33 |
| Park buildings in bad shape       | 21 |
| Not enough restrooms              | 17 |
| Too much litter in park           | 12 |
| Restrooms out of order            | 11 |
| No shower facilities near beaches | 6  |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Not enough trash cans on beaches   | 5 |
| Lack of areas to change clothes    | 4 |
| Restrooms too far away             | 4 |
| Not enough covered picnic areas    | 3 |
| Not enough sheltered areas         | 3 |
| No soap in restrooms               | 2 |
| Construction at Canarsie Pier      | 2 |
| Not enough picnic areas near water | 2 |
| Other comments                     | 9 |

## POLICIES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Entrance fee too high                       | 25 |
| Radios too loud                             | 8  |
| Speeders hazardous to walkers/joggers       | 5  |
| Too many law enforcement people around      | 4  |
| Too much traffic                            | 4  |
| People not being ticketed for littering     | 4  |
| Picnic areas not designated on beaches      | 4  |
| People allowed to sit on grass              | 3  |
| Unruly visitors                             | 3  |
| Tolls too expensive                         | 3  |
| Need permit to park near fishing areas      | 3  |
| Walkers/joggers allowed on roads            | 3  |
| People allowed to park illegally            | 3  |
| No ball playing areas designated on beaches | 2  |
| Boaters too close to swimmers               | 2  |
| Nude bathers on guarded beaches             | 2  |
| Pass needed to fish at Crookes Point        | 2  |
| Fishing area replaced by boat yard          | 2  |
| Other comments                              | 17 |

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Dirty/polluted beaches           | 104 |
| Ocean dirty/polluted             | 35  |
| Litterbugs                       | 14  |
| Too much broken glass on beaches | 12  |
| Too much poison ivy              | 6   |
| Rocks near bulkhead dangerous    | 5   |
| Flies                            | 4   |
| Not enough fishing areas         | 4   |
| Mosquitos                        | 4   |
| Fishing has dropped off          | 4   |
| Rats                             | 3   |
| Bugs                             | 2   |
| Too many rocks on beach          | 2   |
| Other comments                   | 4   |

**CONCESSIONS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Food too expensive                      | 6 |
| Not enough snack bars                   | 4 |
| No snack bar at clothing optional beach | 3 |
| Food service unsanitary                 | 2 |
| Snack bar closes too early              | 2 |
| Other comments                          | 4 |

**GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| No complaints                      | 40 |
| The weather                        | 29 |
| The crowds                         | 11 |
| Parking                            | 2  |
| Not enough sports programs offered | 2  |
| Other comments                     | 5  |

### M. Comment summary

Question 13 asked visitors if there was anything else they would like to tell us about their visit to Gateway National Recreation Area. The appendix of this report contains unedited visitor comments. A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions regarding what visitors feel is necessary for the park's survival, others reflect perceived needs for policies, programs, services and facilities toward the improvement of visitor experiences. A wide variety of topics are mentioned, including natural features, personnel, maintenance and regulations.

### Visitor comment summary

N=491 comments;  
many visitors made more than one comment.

| Comment   | Number of times<br>mentioned |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>PERSONNEL</b>                                |                              |
| <b>National Park Service</b>                    |                              |
| Park rangers friendly/helpful                   | 13                           |
| Park staff helpful and friendly                 | 7                            |
| Park staff does a good job                      | 7                            |
| Rangers need to enforce park regulations        | 7                            |
| Park police rude                                | 2                            |
| Life guards do a good job                       | 2                            |
| Park rangers too harsh                          | 2                            |
| More park rangers needed                        | 2                            |
| Other comments                                  | 9                            |
| <b>INTERPRETIVE SERVICES</b>                    |                              |
| <b>Nonpersonal</b>                              |                              |
| More exhibits about area pollution needed       | 5                            |
| More interpretive signs needed in park          | 5                            |
| Old buildings need interpretive signs           | 3                            |
| More fishing information needed                 | 3                            |
| <b>Personal</b>                                 |                              |
| More interpretive programs need to be offered   | 5                            |
| Enjoy park interpretive programs                | 4                            |
| Park needs mailing list for interpretive events | 4                            |
| Park needs to open a visitor center             | 2                            |
| Other comments                                  | 8                            |

## FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

### General

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Clean up beaches                                   | 17 |
| Park well-maintained                               | 15 |
| Repair/fix up old buildings in the park            | 9  |
| More shower facilities needed                      | 7  |
| Need to create jogging/hiking trails near beaches  | 6  |
| Pick up broken glass on the beach                  | 6  |
| More park benches needed                           | 5  |
| More trash cans needed                             | 5  |
| Clean up the restrooms                             | 5  |
| Build areas to change clothes                      | 4  |
| Clean up fishing areas                             | 4  |
| More picnic facilities needed                      | 4  |
| More restrooms needed at clothing optional beaches | 3  |
| Open fort areas to the public                      | 3  |
| Better playgrounds for kids needed                 | 2  |
| Fence in handball court                            | 2  |
| Build more restrooms                               | 2  |
| More water fountains needed                        | 2  |
| Like the extra trash cans on the beaches           | 2  |
| Put speed bumps in the park                        | 2  |
| Other comments                                     | 22 |

### POLICIES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Entrance fee too high                               | 13 |
| Discourage development in the park                  | 11 |
| Enforce litter laws                                 | 10 |
| Continue support of clothing optional beach         | 9  |
| Park needs yearly pass                              | 9  |
| Enforce no alcohol regulation                       | 6  |
| Like recycling program in the park                  | 3  |
| Lower parking fees                                  | 3  |
| Park is mismanaged                                  | 3  |
| Too many speeders in the park                       | 3  |
| Park needs better security at night                 | 3  |
| Enforce drug regulations                            | 3  |
| Do something about traffic on route 36              | 2  |
| Park well managed                                   | 2  |
| Organize volunteer clean up programs                | 2  |
| Make Sandy Hook accessible by public transportation | 2  |
| Other comments                                      | 14 |

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| NPS does a good job         | 2 |
| Appreciate job NPS is doing | 2 |
| Other comments              | 2 |

**VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Thanks for asking opinions | 2 |
| Other comments             | 2 |

**GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Enjoyed visit                                     | 53 |
| We visit the park often                           | 35 |
| We plan to return                                 | 13 |
| Keep up the good work                             | 11 |
| Good to have a natural area near the city         | 10 |
| Park good place to relax                          | 9  |
| Park is beautiful                                 | 9  |
| Park has improved over the years                  | 7  |
| Would like to be more involved in park activities | 3  |
| Food overpriced                                   | 4  |
| Other comments                                    | 6  |

## MENU FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Park personnel who wish to see other tables, graphs, and maps in order to learn more about their visitors may request such information from the VSP. Two kinds of analyses are available:

1) Two-way comparisons compare two characteristics at a time. For example, if knowledge is desired about which information services a particular age group consulted, request a comparison of information services by age group; if knowledge about how the use of information services varied among group types is required, request a comparison of information services by group type.

2) Three-way comparisons compare a two-way comparison to a third characteristic. For example, if knowledge is desired about participation in activities by different group types, and sizes, request a comparison of visitor activities by group type by group size; if knowledge about which activities different age groups by group size participated in is needed, request a comparison of visitor activities by age group by group size.

Consult the complete list of the characteristics for which information was collected from Gateway visitors. Simply select the variables from the list and write them in the spaces provided for either two-way or three way comparisons. Blank order forms follow the example below.

### SAMPLE

Analysis Order Form  
Visitor Services Project  
Report 32 (Gateway)

Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_

Person requesting analysis: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (commercial): \_\_\_\_\_

The following list specifies all of the variables available for comparison from the visitor survey conducted in your park. Consult this list for naming the characteristics of interest when requesting additional two-way and three-way comparisons.

|  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| • Group size                               | • Number of visits                   | • Information/interpretive service usefulness |
| • Group type                               | • Length of stay                     | • Information/interpretive service used       |
| • Age                                      | • Site visited                       | • Activity past visits                        |
| • State residence                          | • Activity this visit                | • Obtain park information                     |
| • Importance of future services/facilities | • Involvement in planning & programs |   |

Two-way comparisons (please write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

INFORMATION SERVICES by AGE GROUP

by \_\_\_\_\_

Three-way comparisons (please write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

VISITOR ACTIVITIES by AGE GROUP by GROUP SIZE

by \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_

Special instructions

(IT may be helpful to know what format you need, the purpose for the information and so forth.)

Mail to:  
Cooperative Park Studies Unit  
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, Idaho 83843



**Analysis Order Form  
Visitor Services Project  
Report 32 (Gateway)**

Date of request: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Person requesting analysis: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (commercial): \_\_\_\_\_

The following list specifies all of the variables available for comparison from the visitor survey conducted in your park. Consult this list for naming the characteristics of interest when requesting additional two-way and three-way comparisons.

- Group size                      • Number of visits              • Information/interpretive service usefulness
- Group type                     • Length of stay                • Information/interpretive service used
- Age                                • Site visited                    • Activity past visits
- State residence                • Activity this visit            • Obtain park information
- Importance of future services/facilities    • Involvement in planning & programs

Two-way comparisons (please write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Three-way comparisons (please write in the appropriate variables from the above list)

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Special instructions

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Mail to:  
Cooperative Park Studies Unit  
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, Idaho 83843

## Questionnaire

STAMP

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

**Visitor Services Project  
Cooperative Park Studies Unit  
Department of Forest Resources  
College of Forestry, Wildlife and  
Range Sciences  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, Idaho 83843**

## Publications of the Visitor Services Project

A number of publications have been prepared as part of the Visitor Services Project. Reports 1-4 are available at cost from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit upon request. All other reports are available from the respective parks in which the studies were conducted.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Mapping interpretive services: A pilot study at Grand Teton National Park, 1983.  | 20. Craters of the Moon National Monument, 1989.       |
| 2. Mapping interpretive services: Identifying barriers to adoption and diffusion of the method, 1984.                      | 21. Everglades National Park, 1989.                    |
| 3. Mapping interpretive services: A follow-up study at Yellowstone National Park and Mt. Rushmore National Memorial, 1984. | 22. Statue of Liberty National Monument, 1990.         |
| 4. Mapping visitor populations: A pilot study at Yellowstone National Park, 1984.  | 23. The White House Tours, President's Park, 1990.     |
| 5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex, 1985.   | 24. Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 1990.         |
| 6. Crater Lake National Park, 1986.  | 25. Yellowstone National Park, 1990.                   |
| 7. Gettysburg National Military Park, 1987.  | 26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, 1990. |
| 8. Independence National Historical Park, 1987.  | 27. Muir Woods National Monument, 1990.                |
| 9. Valley Forge National Historical Park, 1987.  | 28. Canyonlands National Park, 1991.                   |
| 10. Colonial National Historical Park, 1988.   | 29. White Sands National Monument, 1991.               |
| 11. Grand Teton National Park, 1988.   | 30. National Monuments, 1991.                          |
| 12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1988.  | 31. Kenai Fjords National Park, 1991.                  |
| 13. Mesa Verde National Park, 1988.  | 32. Gateway National Recreation Area, 1991.            |
| 14. Shenandoah National Park, 1988.  |  |
| 15. Yellowstone National Park, 1988.   |  |
| 16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study, 1988.   |  |
| 17. Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, 1989.  |  |
| 18. Denali National Park and Preserve, 1989.   |  |
| 19. Bryce Canyon National Park, 1989.  |  |

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For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact Dr. Gary E. Machlis, University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, Moscow, Idaho 83843 or call (208) 885-7129.

**Visitor Services Project**

**Gateway**

**National Recreation Area**

**Appendix**

**Visitor Services Project**

**Gateway**

**National Recreation Area**

**Appendix**

Dwight L. Madison

**Report 32**

February 1991

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Dwight Madison is the VSP Eastern Coordinator with the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, National Park Service, University of Idaho. I thank the staff at Gateway 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 their technical assistance.

## Visitor comment summary

N=491 comments;  
many visitors made more than one comment.

| Comment | Number of times<br>mentioned |
|---------|------------------------------|
|---------|------------------------------|

### PERSONNEL

#### National Park Service

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Park rangers friendly/helpful            | 13 |
| Park staff helpful and friendly          | 7  |
| Park staff does a good job               | 7  |
| Rangers need to enforce park regulations | 7  |
| Park police rude                         | 2  |
| Life guards do a good job                | 2  |
| Park rangers too harsh                   | 2  |
| More park rangers needed                 | 2  |
| Other comments                           | 9  |

### INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

#### Nonpersonal

|   |   |
|---|---|
| More exhibits about area pollution needed | 5 |
| More interpretive signs needed in park    | 5 |
| Old buildings need interpretive signs     | 3 |
| More fishing information needed           | 3 |

#### Personal

|   |   |
|---|---|
| More interpretive programs need to be offered   | 5 |
| Enjoy park interpretive programs                | 4 |
| Park needs mailing list for interpretive events | 4 |
| Park needs to open a visitor center             | 2 |
| Other comments                                  | 8 |

### FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

#### General

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Clean up beaches                                  | 17 |
| Park well-maintained                              | 15 |
| Repair/fix up old buildings in the park           | 9  |
| More shower facilities needed                     | 7  |
| Need to create jogging/hiking trails near beaches | 6  |
| Pick up broken glass on the beach                 | 6  |
| More park benches needed                          | 5  |
| More trash cans needed                            | 5  |
| Clean up the restrooms                            | 5  |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Build areas to change clothes                      | 4  |
| Clean up fishing areas                             | 4  |
| More picnic facilities needed                      | 4  |
| More restrooms needed at clothing optional beaches | 3  |
| Open fort areas to the public                      | 3  |
| Better playgrounds for kids needed                 | 2  |
| Fence in handball court                            | 2  |
| Build more restrooms                               | 2  |
| More water fountains needed                        | 2  |
| Like the extra trash cans on the beaches           | 2  |
| Put speed bumps in the park                        | 2  |
| Other comments                                     | 22 |

## **POLICIES**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Entrance fee too high                               | 13 |
| Discourage development in the park                  | 11 |
| Enforce litter laws                                 | 10 |
| Continue support of clothing optional beach         | 9  |
| Park needs yearly pass                              | 9  |
| Enforce no alcohol regulation                       | 6  |
| Like recycling program in the park                  | 3  |
| Lower parking fees                                  | 3  |
| Park is mismanaged                                  | 3  |
| Too many speeders in the park                       | 3  |
| Park needs better security at night                 | 3  |
| Enforce drug regulations                            | 3  |
| Do something about traffic on route 36              | 2  |
| Park well managed                                   | 2  |
| Organize volunteer clean up programs                | 2  |
| Make Sandy Hook accessible by public transportation | 2  |
| Other comments                                      | 14 |

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| NPS does a good job         | 2 |
| Appreciate job NPS is doing | 2 |
| Other comments              | 2 |

## **VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT**

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Thanks for asking opinions | 2 |
| Other comments             | 2 |

## **GENERAL IMPRESSIONS**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Enjoyed visit                             | 53 |
| We visit the park often                   | 35 |
| We plan to return                         | 13 |
| Keep up the good work                     | 11 |
| Good to have a natural area near the city | 10 |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Park good place to relax                          | 9 |
| Park is beautiful                                 | 9 |
| Park has improved over the years                  | 7 |
| Would like to be more involved in park activities | 3 |
| Food overpriced                                   | 4 |
| Other comments                                    | 6 |

**Printing Instructions for Gateway National Recreation Area  
Report & Appendix**

Gateway National Recreation Area Report Volume I

I need 27 copies: 26 bound copies and 1 copy unbound.

All copies should have a blue front & back cover

Inside Title page should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Report Summary page should be xeroxed on blue paper (single page).

Table of contents page should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Pages 1-36 should be duplexed on white paper.

Analysis order forms should be xeroxed on white paper (single page each)

Page 37 (Questionnaire title page) should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Questionnaire section duplex on white paper

Gateway National Recreation Area Appendix Section

I need 11 copies: 10 bound copies and 1 copy unbound.

All copies should have a blue front & back cover.

Inside Title page should be xeroxed on white paper (single page).

Pages 1-3 (Visitor comment summary) duplex on blue paper.

Visitor comment pages duplex on white paper.