
Visitor Services Project

Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area



The Visitor Services Project
Santa
Monica
Mountains
National
Recreation
Area

Visitor Services Project Report 55
Cooperative Park Studies Unit



Visitor Services Project Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

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Report 55

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Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Western Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Professor Freddie McClain and the sociology students at LA Pierce College, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the staff at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area for their assistance with this study. Impact Photo Graphics donated the wildlife postcards used for survey follow-ups. 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
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area during May 2-9, 1993. A total of 1455 questionnaires were distributed and 971 returned, a 67% response rate.
- This report first profiles Topanga Banjo-Fiddle Contest visitors and then general Santa Monica Mountains visitors. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary.

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors

- Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were often families (43%). They were in groups of two people (42%). Forty-two percent of visitors were 36-50 years old. Most (98%) were white, not of Hispanic origin and 99% spoke English at home.
- Visitors from foreign countries comprised 2% of the banjo-fiddle contest visitors. United States visitors attending the banjo-fiddle contest came mainly from California (98%).
- Most banjo-fiddle contest visitors (60%) were visiting Paramount Ranch for the first time. More visitors had visited Paramount Ranch during the past 12 months than any other Santa Monica Mountains site. They usually stayed three to four hours at the site. Most (96%) used cars to get to the park on this visit.
- Banjo-fiddle contest visitors (47%) relied mainly on special advertising as their source of information about the park. Visitors' most common activities were attending special events (92%) and sightseeing (52%).
- The average visitor group expenditure (excluding lodging) for banjo-fiddle contest visitors was \$31. The average per capita expenditure (excluding lodging) for these visitors was \$10.

General visitors

- General visitors were with families (35%) or friends (30%) and in groups of two (38%). Forty-two percent of visitors were 26-40 years old. Most (61%) were repeat visitors to the specific site they were visiting. Most (95%) were white, not of Hispanic origin and 96% spoke English at home. Visitors from foreign countries comprised 7% of general visitors; 93% of United States visitors came from California.
- Thirty-one percent of general visitors were at the site for the first time; 26% visit less than once a month. A higher proportion of visitors use the sites on weekends (46%) than weekdays (30%). A higher proportion of visitors went to Malibu Creek State Park during the past 12 months than any other site in the park. General visitors usually stayed two to three hours. On this visit, 91% of the visitors used cars to get to the park.
- Most general visitors (56%) learned about the park from previous visits. Their activities included sightseeing (71%) and hiking (61%).
- For general visitors, the average visitor group expenditure including lodging was \$24. The average per capita expenditure including lodging was \$9.
- Visitors made many additional comments.

<p>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 83844-1133 or call (208) 885-7129.</p>

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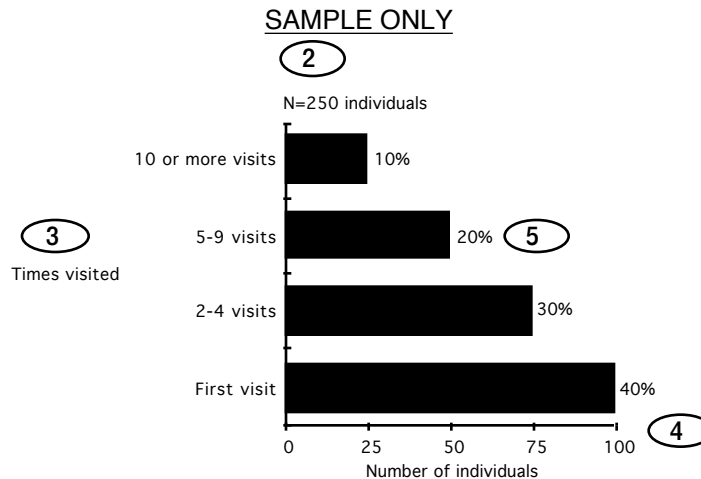
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INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a study of two groups of visitors to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (referred to as "Santa Monica Mountains"). Visitors attending the Topanga Banjo-Fiddle Contest at Paramount Ranch on May 2, 1993 were surveyed. A separate visitor study of general visitors to nine sites at Santa Monica Mountains was conducted May 3-9, 1993. Both studies used the same questionnaire and were conducted by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho.

A Methods section discusses the procedures and limitations of the study. Two Results sections follow, with each 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 describes the graph's information.
- 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding. Interpret data with an 'N' of less than 30 with **CAUTION!** as the results may be unreliable.
- 3: Vertical information describes categories.
- 4: Horizontal information shows the number or proportions in each category.
- 5: In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.

METHODS

Questionnaire design and administration

Interviews were conducted and questionnaires distributed to a sample of selected visitors visiting Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area during May 2-9, 1993. Visitors completed the questionnaire during or after their trip and then returned it by mail.

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

Visitors were sampled as they entered selected units of the national recreation area: Cheeseboro Canyon, Franklin and Fryman Canyons, Malibu Creek State Park, Malibu Pier, Paramount Ranch, Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa, Sycamore Canyon, Topanga State Park, and Will Rogers State Park.

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, group type and the age of the adult who would complete the stamped questionnaire. This individual was asked his or her name, address and telephone number for the later mailing of a reminder-thank you postcard.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder-thank you postcard was mailed to all participants. Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and entered into a computer. Frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated using a standard statistical software package. Respondents' comments were summarized.

This study collected information on both visitor groups and individual group members. Thus, the sample size ("N"), varies from figure to figure. For example, while Figure 1 shows information for 163 groups, Figure 4 presents data for 492 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies the information illustrated.

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

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 166 questionnaires were returned, Figure 1 shows data for only 163 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.

Like all surveys, this study has limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results.

Limitations

1. It is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflect actual behavior. This disadvantage applies to all such studies and is reduced by having visitors fill out the questionnaire as they visit the park.

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of May 2-9, 1993. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors using other sites in the park or to visitors during other times of the year.

3. Caution is advised when interpreting any data with a sample size of less than 30, as the results may be unreliable. Whenever the sample size is less than 30, the word "**CAUTION!**" is included in the graph, figure or table.

TOPANGA BANJO-FIDDLE CONTEST VISITOR RESULTS

Visitors contacted

A total of 287 visitor groups were contacted; 86% accepted questionnaires. One hundred sixty-six visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, a 67% response rate.

Table 1 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. Non-response bias was insignificant.

Table 1: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	247	43.7	158	43.8
Group size	247	3.2	163	3.5

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 27 people. Forty-two percent of Topanga Banjo-Fiddle Contest visitors came in groups of two people, 34% came in groups of three or four. Forty-three percent of visitors came in family groups, as shown in Figure 2. Most visitors (99%) were not in guided tour groups (see Figure 3).

Figure 4 shows varied age groups; the most common were visitors aged 36-50 (42%) and 10 years or younger (13%). Most visitors (60%) were first time visitors (see Figure 5). Most visitors (98%) were white, not of Hispanic origin; 12% were Hispanic, 5% were American Indian/Alaska native, as shown in Figure 6. Asked what languages were spoken at home, 99% of the visitors said they speak English (see Figure 7). Other languages included French, Hebrew, Italian, German, Russian, and Iranian.

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 2% of the banjo-fiddle contest visitation. Caution should be used in interpreting Map 1 and Table 2 which show the distribution of international visitors; the number of respondents was very small. Map 2 and Table 3 show that the majority of United States visitors came from California (98%), with smaller proportions from many other states.

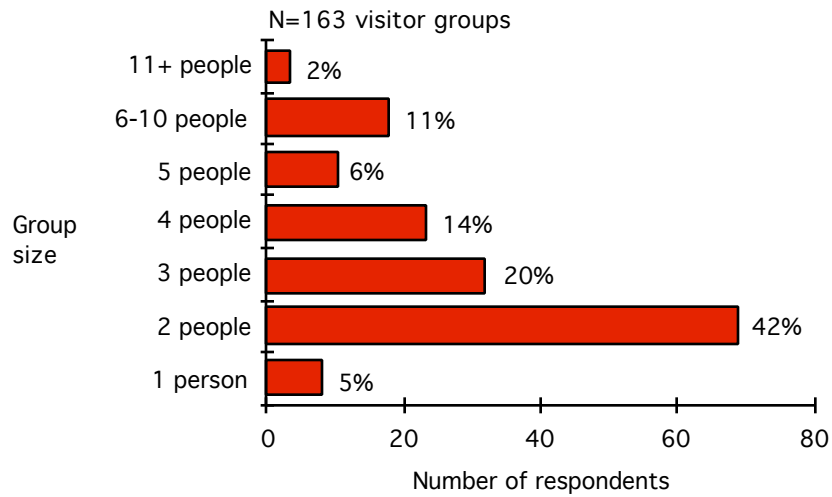


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

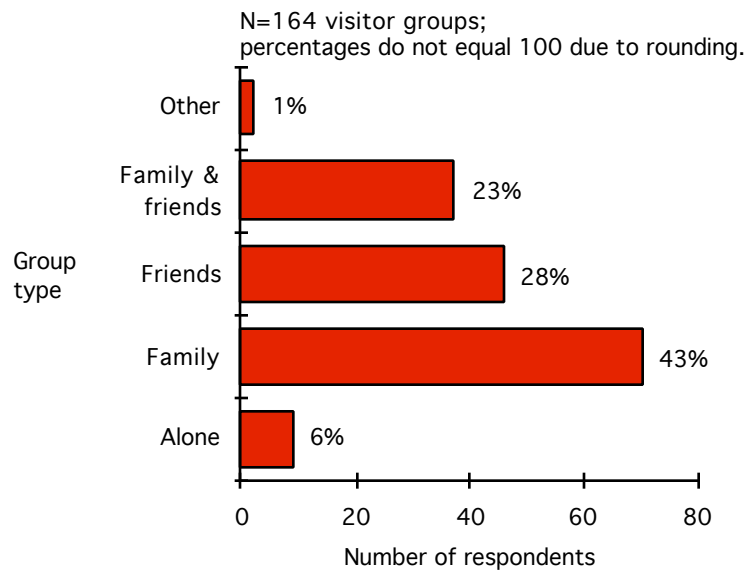


Figure 2: Visitor group types

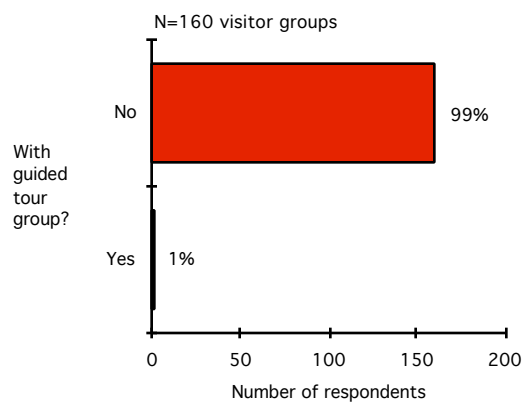


Figure 3: Visitors with guided tour groups

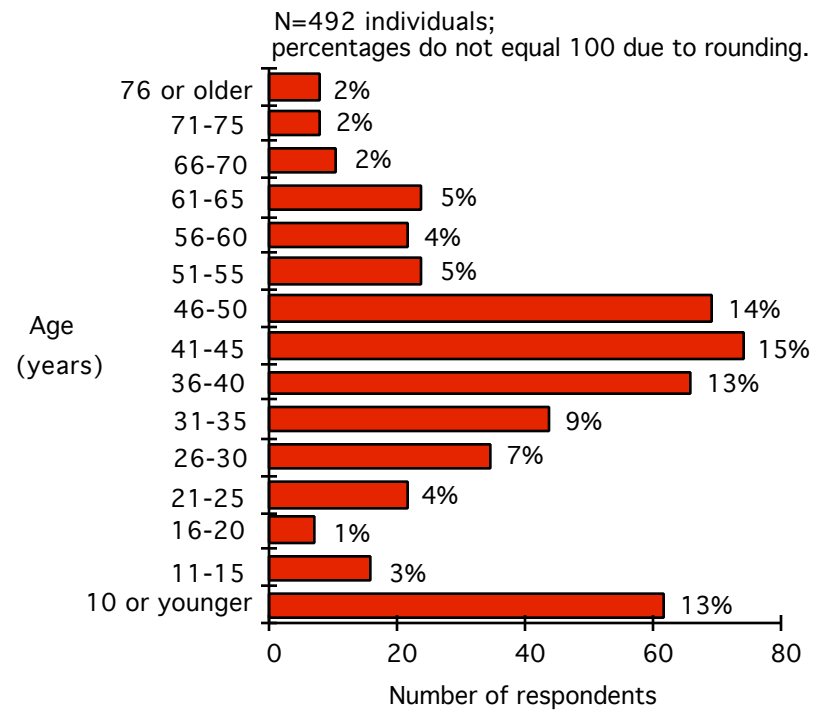


Figure 4: Visitor ages

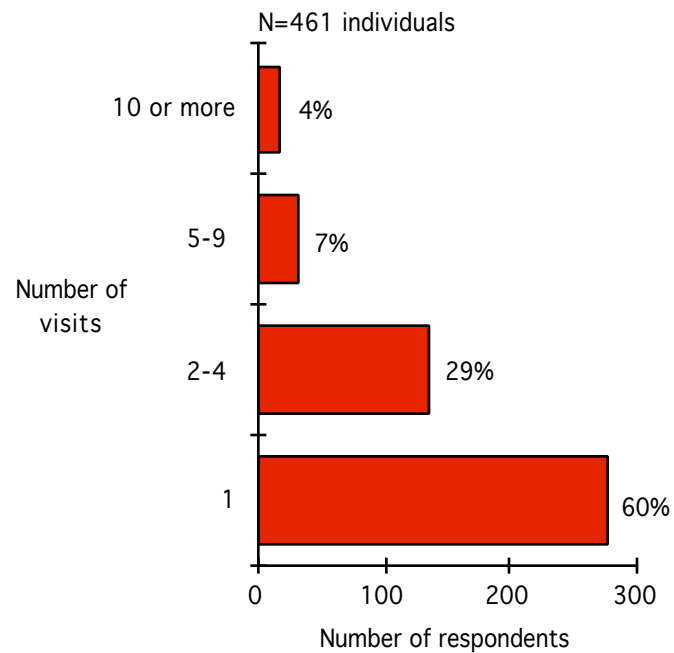


Figure 5: Number of visits

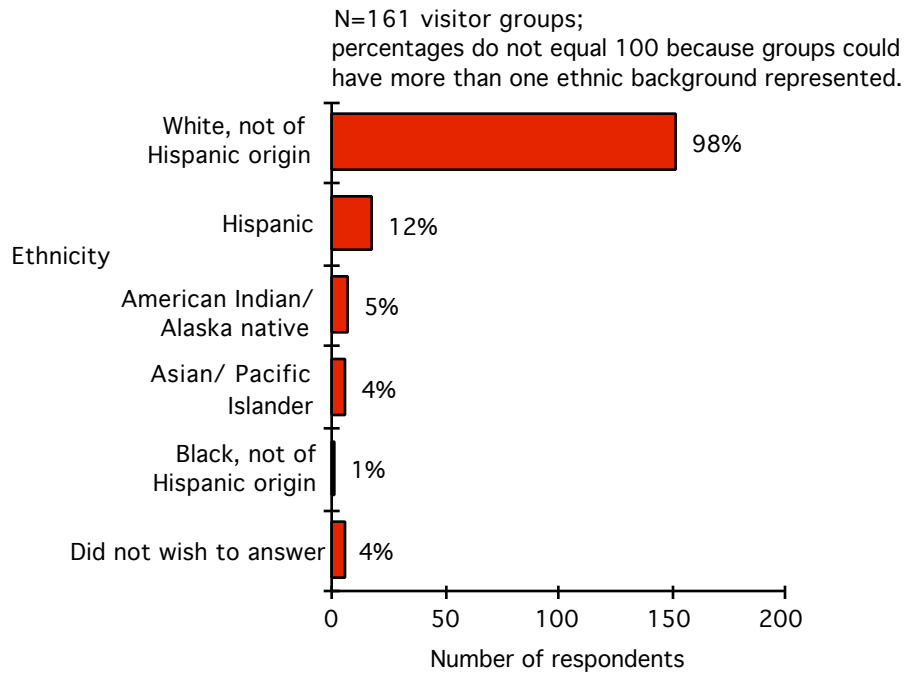


Figure 6: Ethnicity

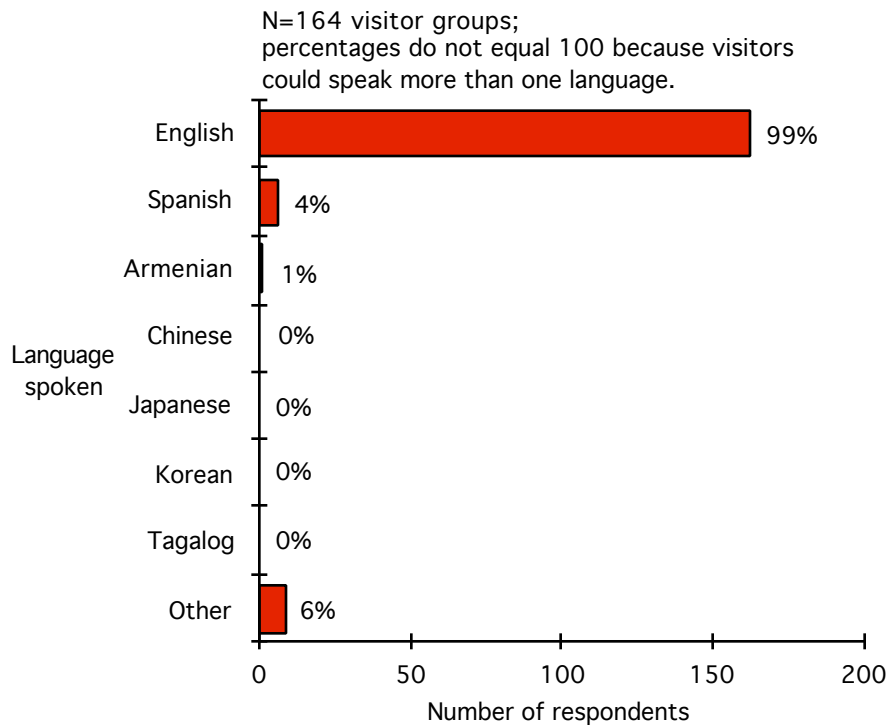


Figure 7: Languages spoken

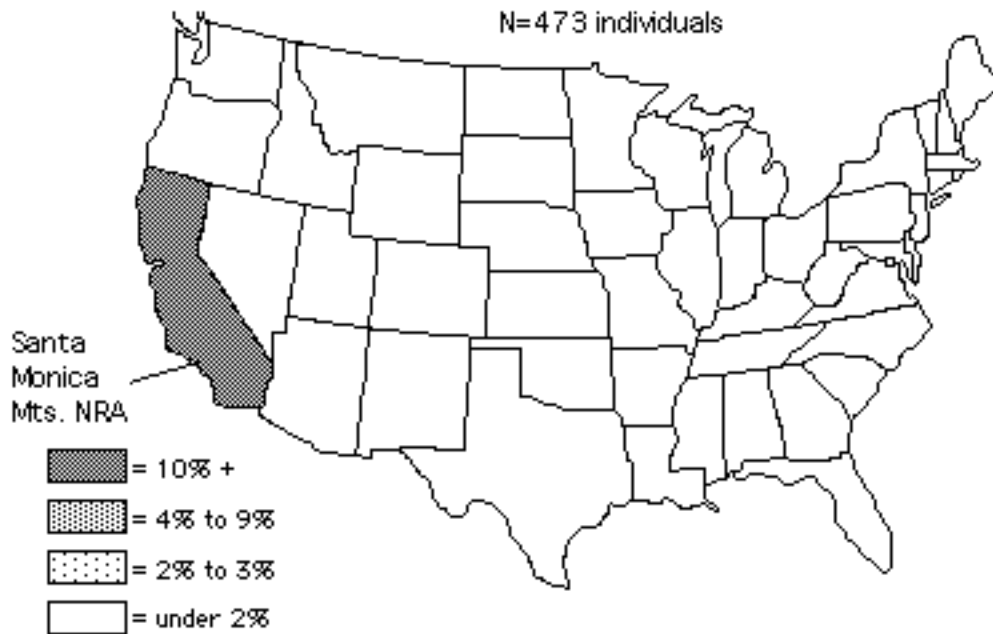


Map 1: Proportion of international visitors by country

Table 2: Visitors by country of residence

N=9 individuals;
 percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.
CAUTION!

Country	Number of individuals	% of international visitors
New Zealand	6	67
Iran	1	11
Italy	1	11
Great Britain	1	11



Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state

Table 3: Proportion of visitors from each state

N=473 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	% of U.S. visitors
California	462	98
Arizona	2	<1
Pennsylvania	2	<1
Colorado	1	<1
Maryland	1	<1
New York	1	<1
Unidentified states	4	1

**Frequency
of visits**

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were asked how often they visit the site where they received the questionnaire, including this visit. Sixty-one percent of the visitors were visiting Paramount Ranch for the first time, while 34% visited less than once a month (see Figure 8). Most (90%) visit the site on weekends, as shown in Figure 9. Seventy-five percent of the visitors do not visit the site at a particular time of day, while 18% visit at a particular time of day (see Figure 10). Of those visiting at a particular time of day, 61% arrived between 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. (see Figure 11, although caution should be used in interpreting this graph).

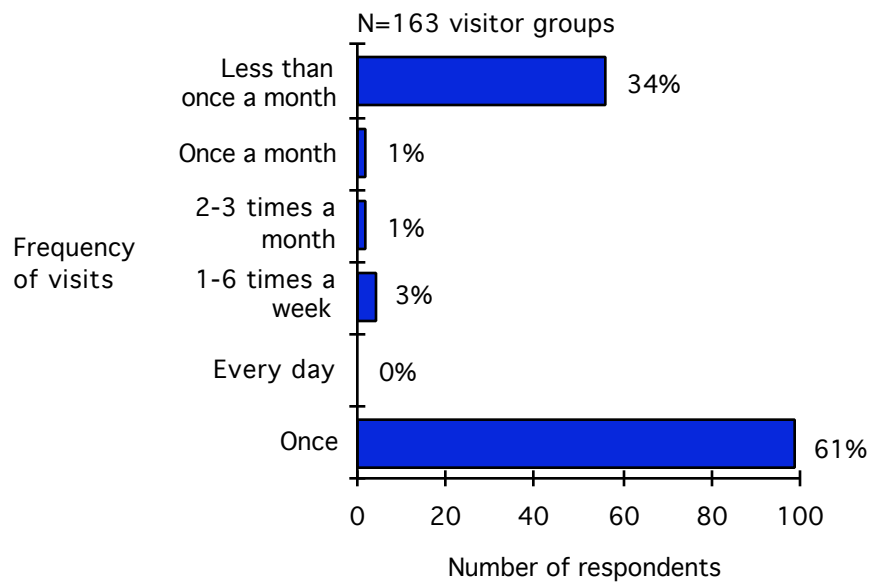


Figure 8: Frequency of visits

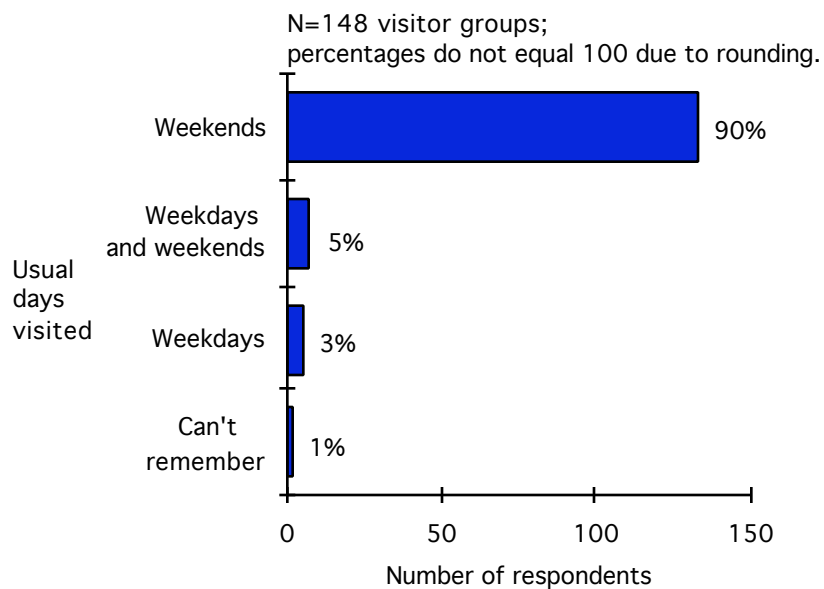


Figure 9: Usual days of visit

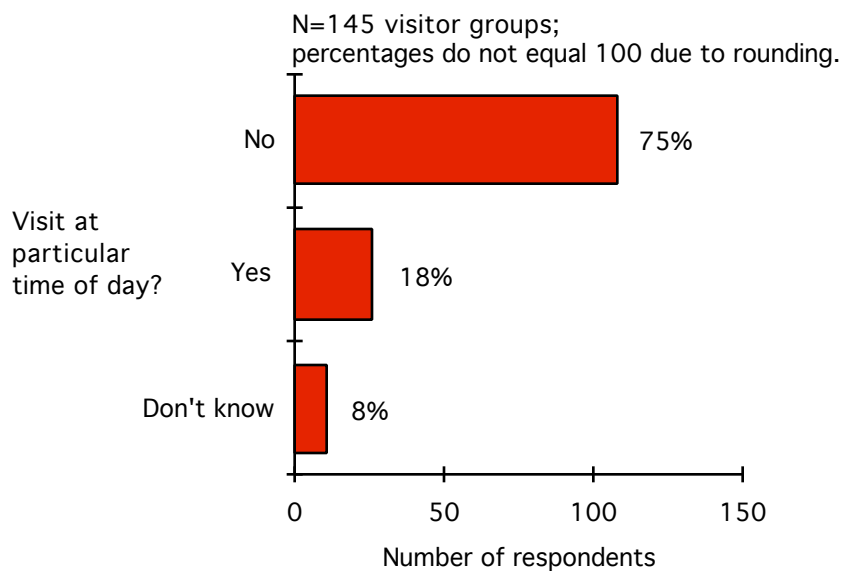


Figure 10: Visit at particular time of day?

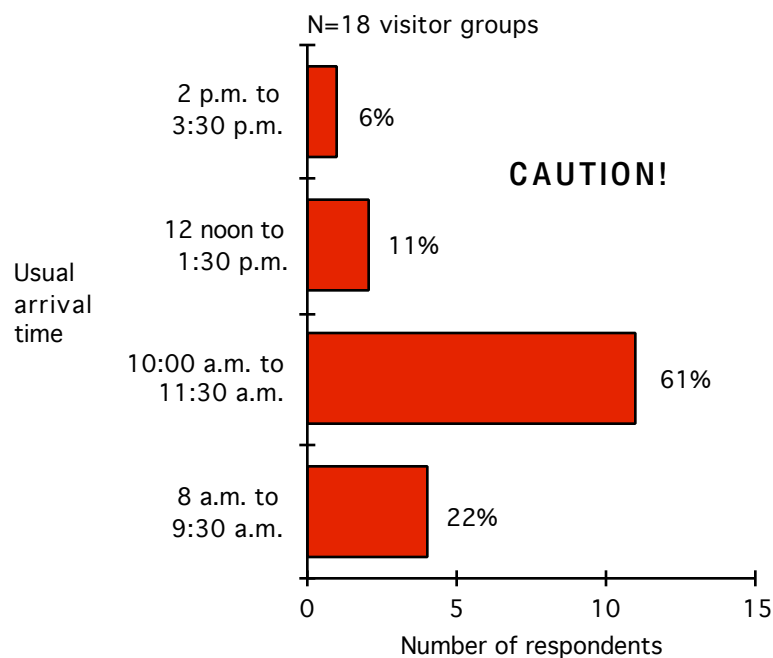


Figure 11: Usual time of arrival at site

Length of stay

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were asked how long they usually stay at the site where they received the questionnaire. Fifty-two percent of the visitors stayed three to four hours; 37% stayed five to ten hours (see Figure 12).

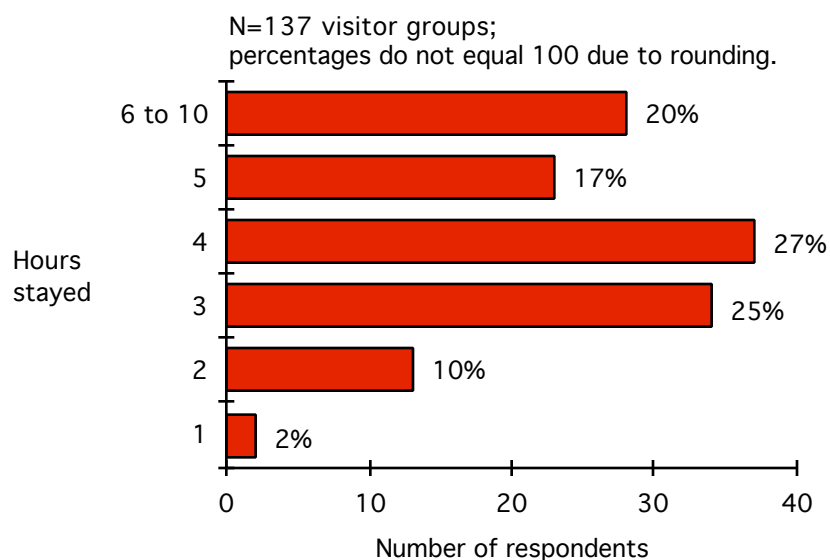


Figure 12: Length of stay at site

Figure 13 shows the proportion of banjo-fiddle contest visitor groups **Activities** who participated in various activities during this visit. Common activities were visiting attending a special event (92%) sightseeing (52%), picnicking (29%) and hiking (23%). Seven percent of the visitors described "other" activities they pursued such as listening to banjos, taking scenic drive, and dancing.

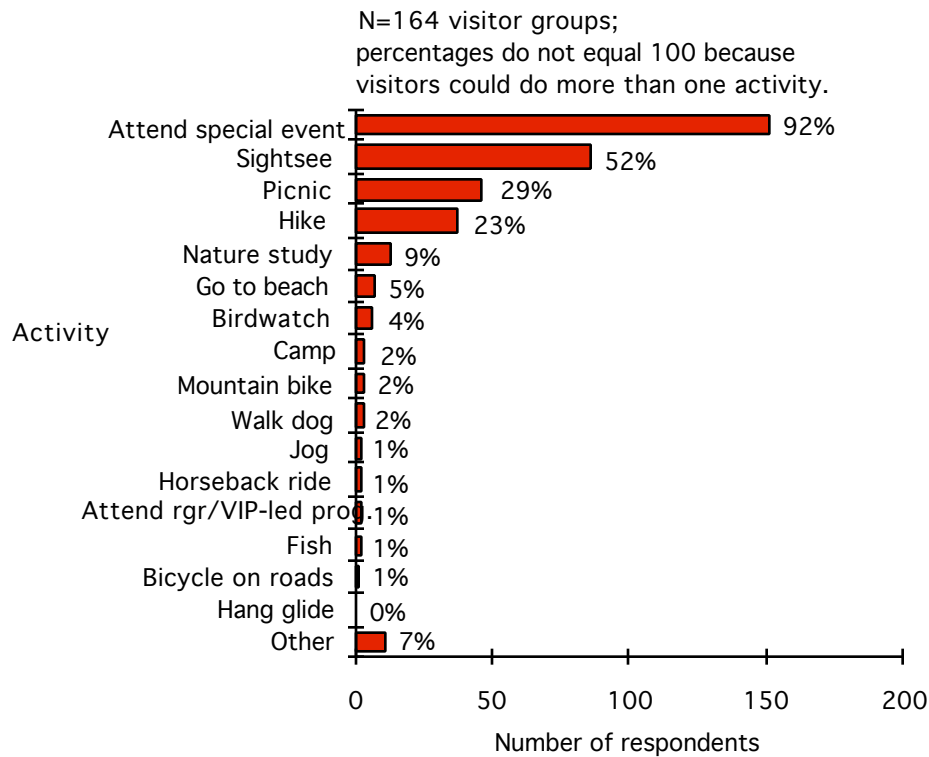


Figure 13: Visitor activities

**Knowledge
about park**

Most banjo-fiddle contest visitors (82%) were aware of the park's existence prior to their visit (see Figure 14). Visitors were asked how knowledgeable they considered themselves to be about about the park (including sites, locations, park rules, etc.). Most visitors (86%) said they were not knowledgeable to somewhat knowledgeable (see Figure 15).

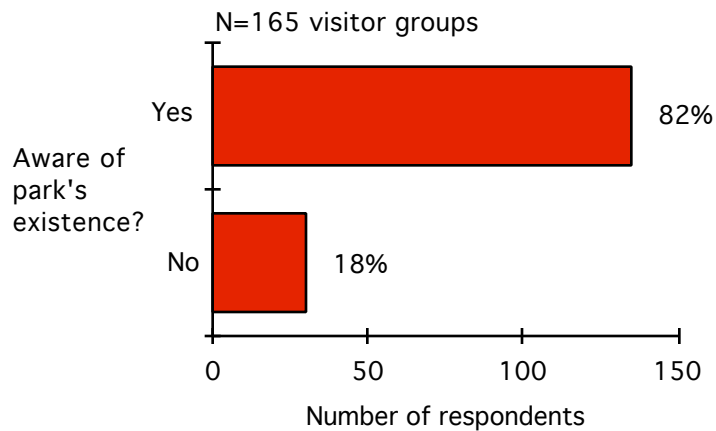


Figure 14: Awareness of park's existence

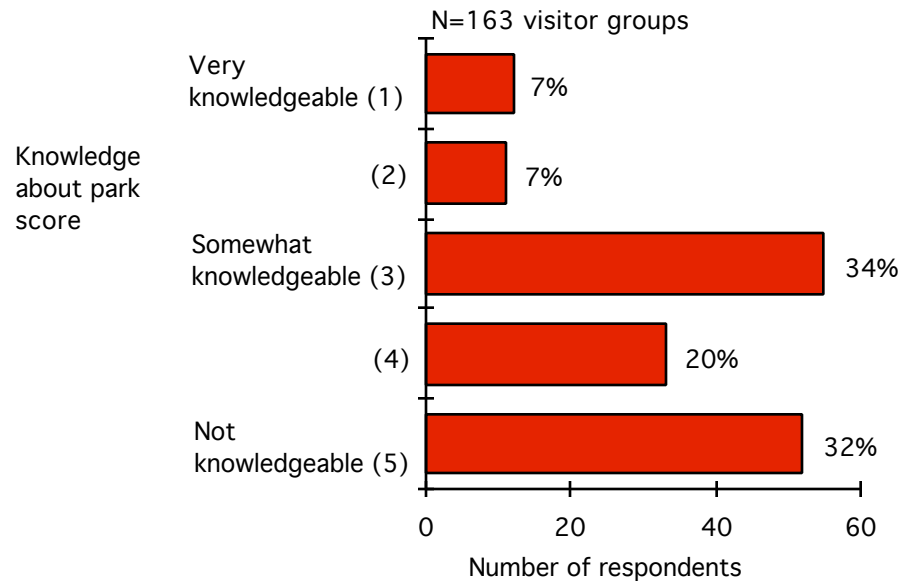


Figure 15: Knowledge about park

The most often used sources of information about the park for banjo-fiddle contest visitors were special advertising (47%), previous visits (40%), and newspaper/magazine (36%), as shown in Figure 16. "Other" sources included living in area, university professor/class, magazine, Sierra Club, state park ranger, friends and radio.

Sources of park information

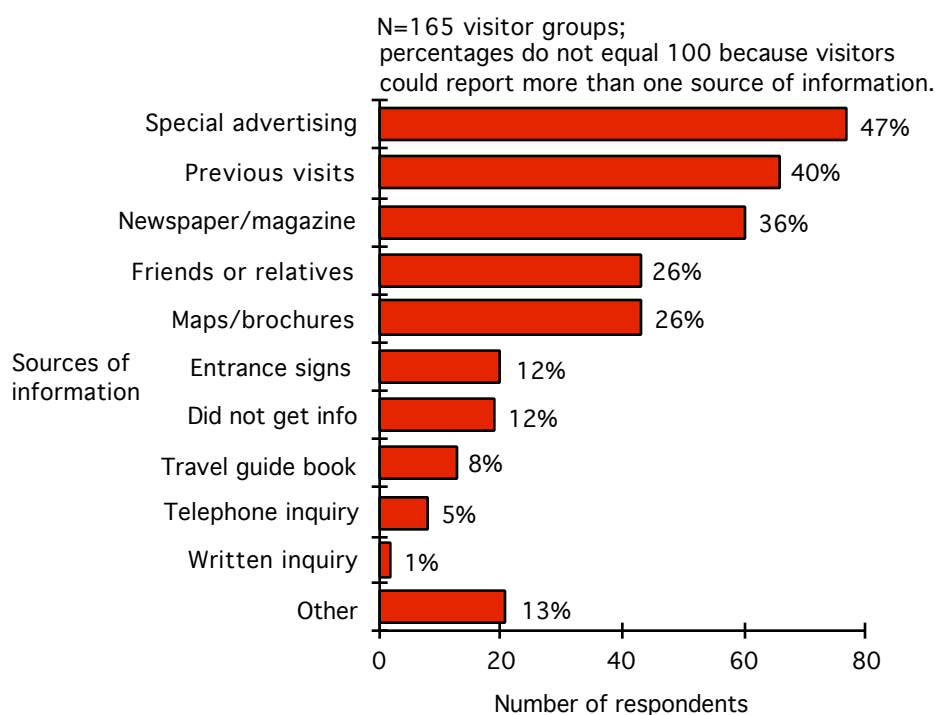


Figure 16: Sources of park information

Sites visited

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were asked to identify the sites they visited at Santa Monica Mountains during the past 12 months. Most (94%) said they had visited Paramount Ranch, followed by Leo Carrillo State Beach (33%), Topanga SP (31%), Point Mugu SP (26%), Malibu Creek SP (25%), and Will Rogers SHP (24%), as shown in Figure 17. Some visitors identified other sites not listed on the map which they had visited including Charmlee Park, Mulholland corridor, Backbone Trail, Cold Creek, Cold Canyon, Rio Hondo, and Rustic Canyon.

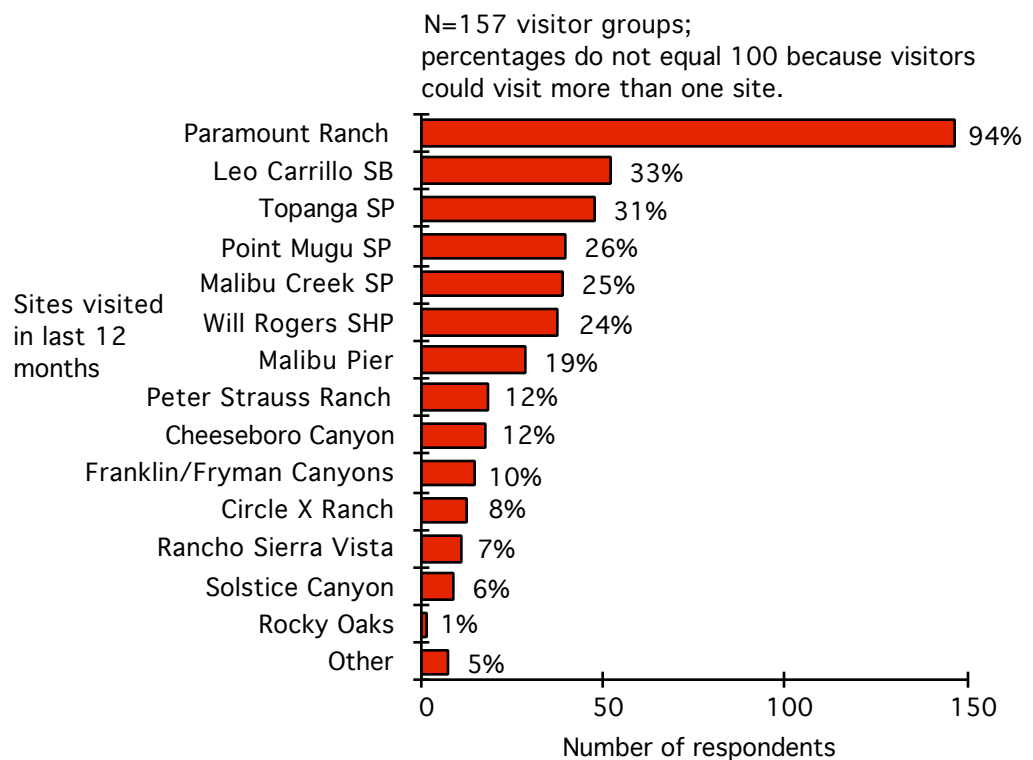


Figure 17: Sites visited during the past 12 months

Banjo-fiddle-contest visitors were asked what forms of transportation they used to get to Santa Monica Mountains on this visit. Visitors most often used a car to get to the park on this visit (96%), as shown in Figure 18. Other forms of transportation were motorcycles, recreational vehicles and carpool.

Forms of transportation

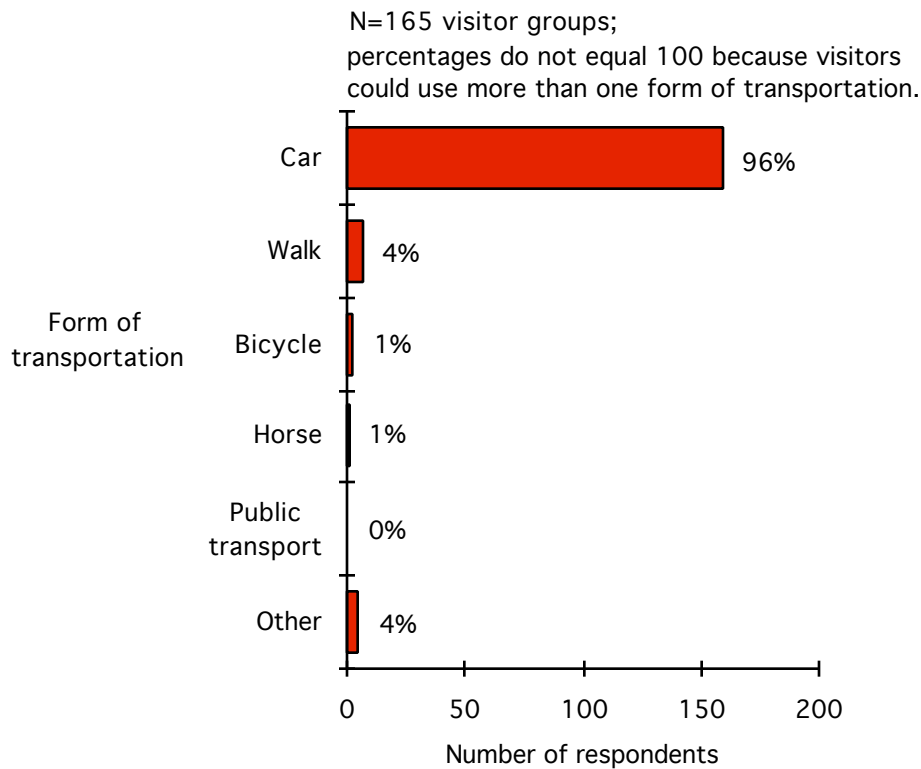


Figure 18: Forms of transportation

Reasons for visit

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors identified their reasons for visiting Santa Monica Mountains. Their reasons were to enjoy special events (92%), enjoy scenic view (35%) and escape from the city (25%), as shown in Figure 19. "Other" reasons of the visitors listed included to relax and have fun, hike, observe wildlife, and see a movie set.

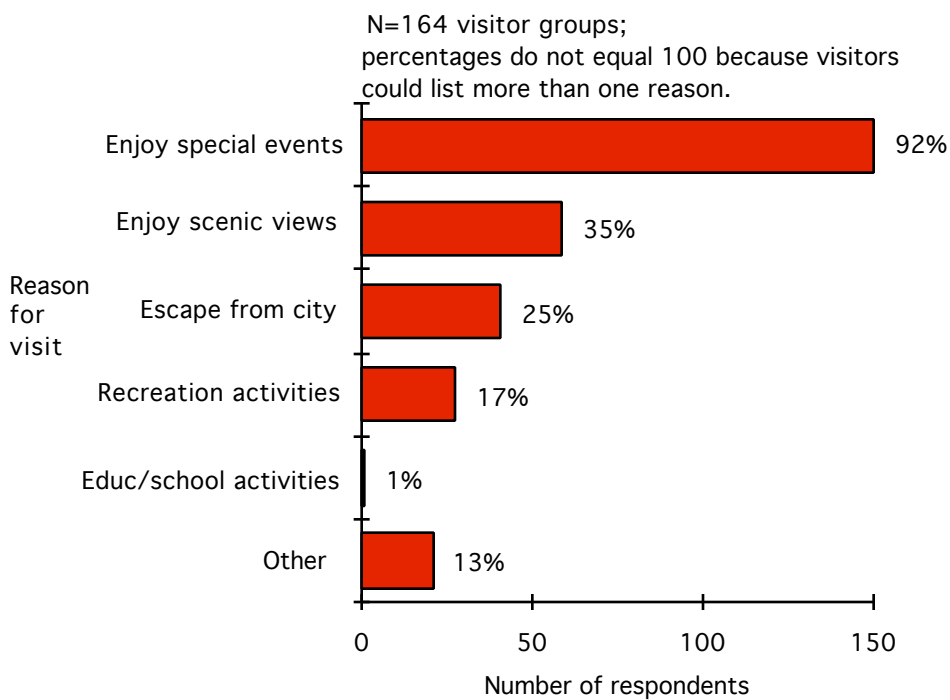


Figure 19: Reasons for visiting

The visitor services most used by banjo-fiddle contest visitors were parking areas (69%), highway directional signs (41%), park maps/brochures (34%) and picnic areas (31%), as shown in Figure 20.

**Visitor
services: use,
importance
and quality**

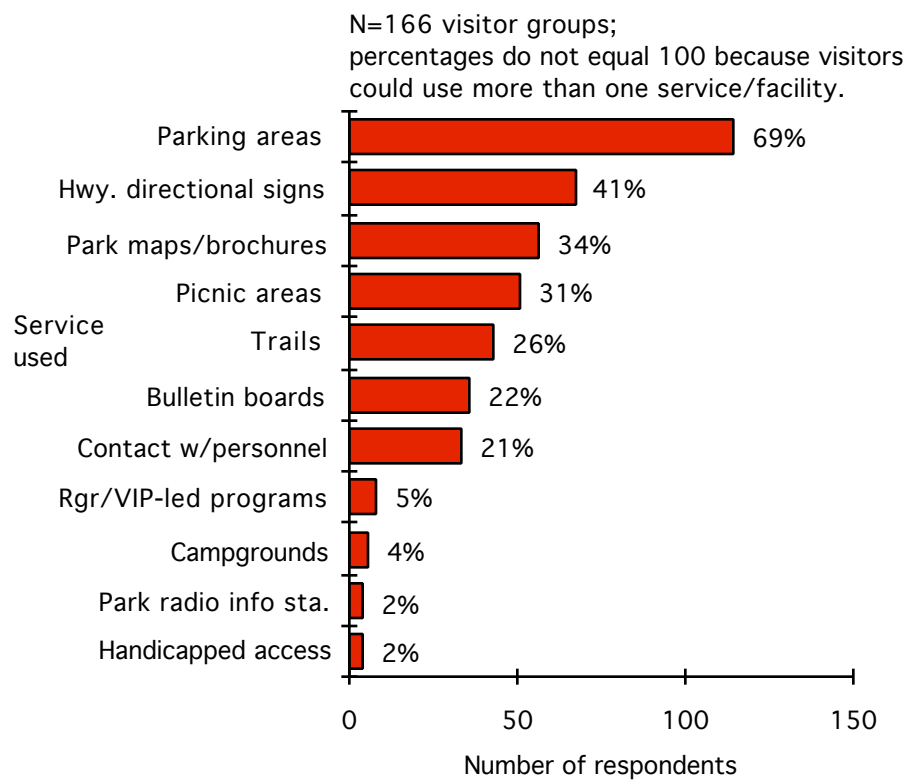


Figure 20: Use of visitor services

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors rated the importance and quality of visitor services they used. They used a five point scale (see boxes below).

IMPORTANCE 1=extremely important 2=very important 3=moderately important 4=somewhat important 5=not important	QUALITY 1=very good 2=good 3=average 4=poor 5=very poor
--	--

Figure 21 shows the average importance and quality ratings for each service. An average score was determined for each service based on ratings by visitors who used that service. This was done for both importance and quality. The results were plotted on the grid shown in Figure 21. Services were all rated above average in importance and quality.

Figures 22-32 show that several services received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: trails (93%), highway directional signs (84%), and parking areas (78%). The highest "somewhat important" to "not important" ratings were for park maps/brochures (19%) and contact with park personnel (12%).

Figures 33-43 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" quality ratings: trails (71%), picnic areas (61%), and parking areas (60%). The services receiving the highest "poor" to "very poor" quality ratings were highway directional signs (18%) and bulletin boards (10%).

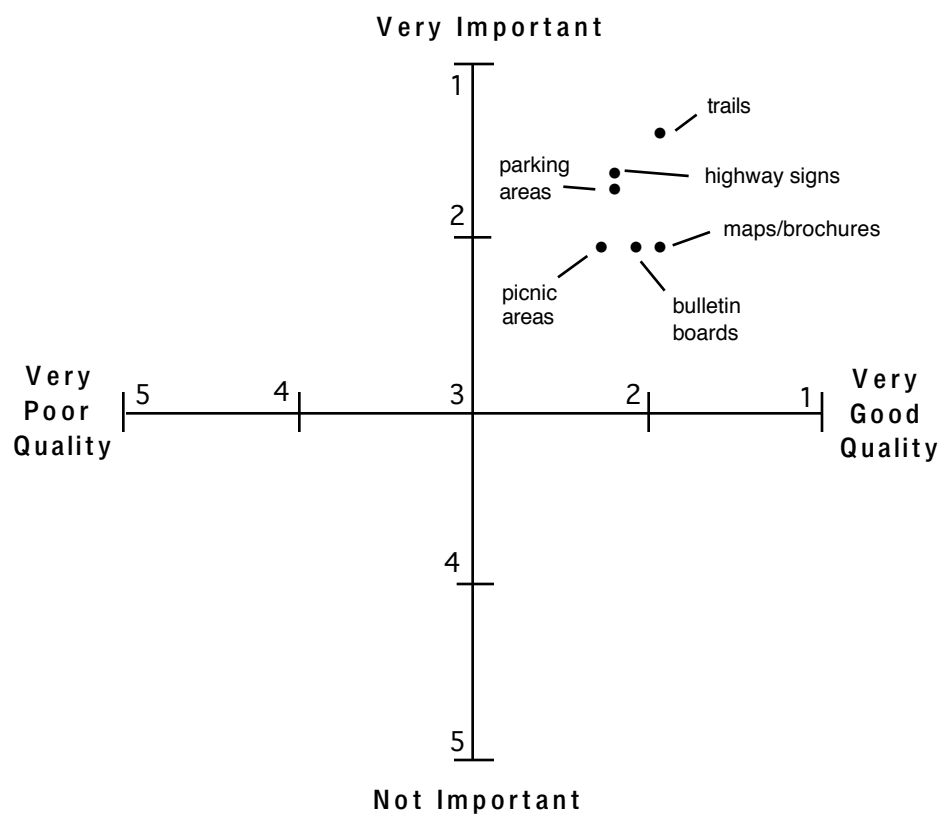


Figure 21: Average ratings of visitor services' importance and quality

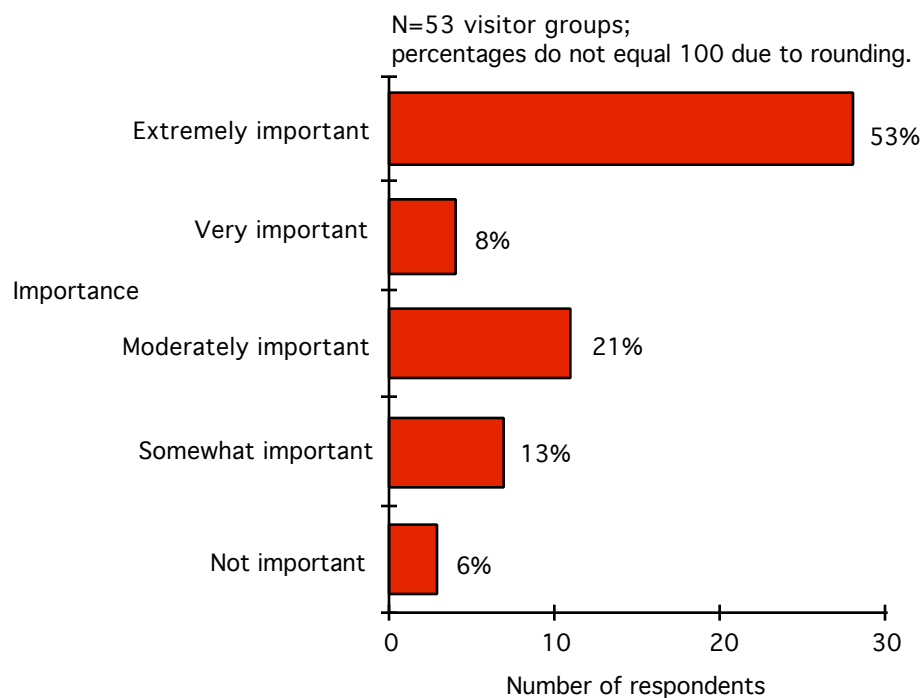


Figure 22: Importance of park maps/brochures

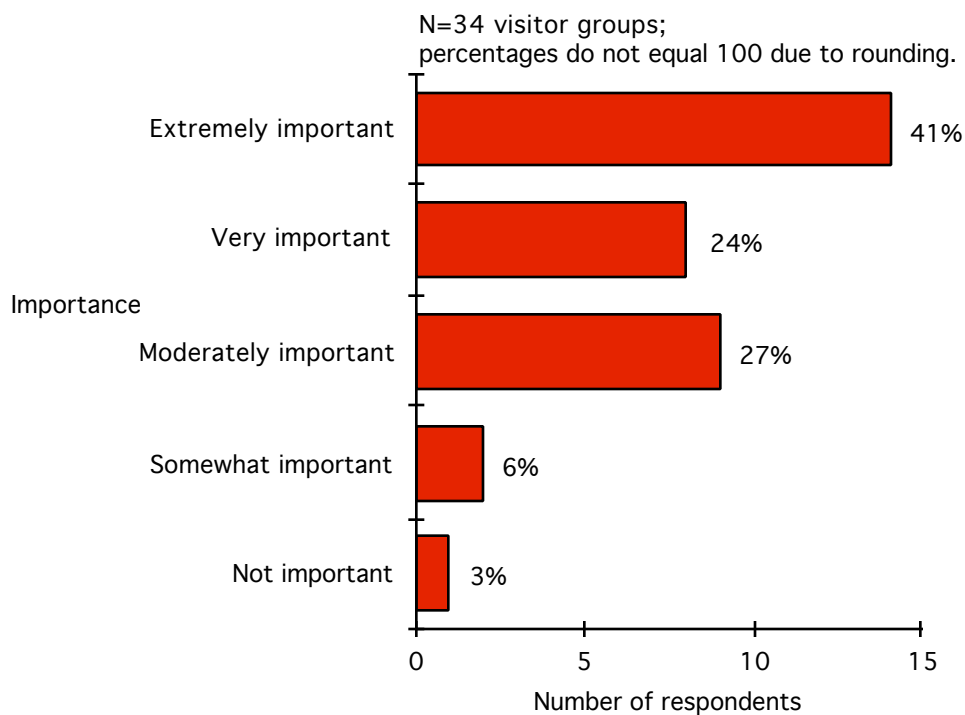


Figure 23: Importance of bulletin boards

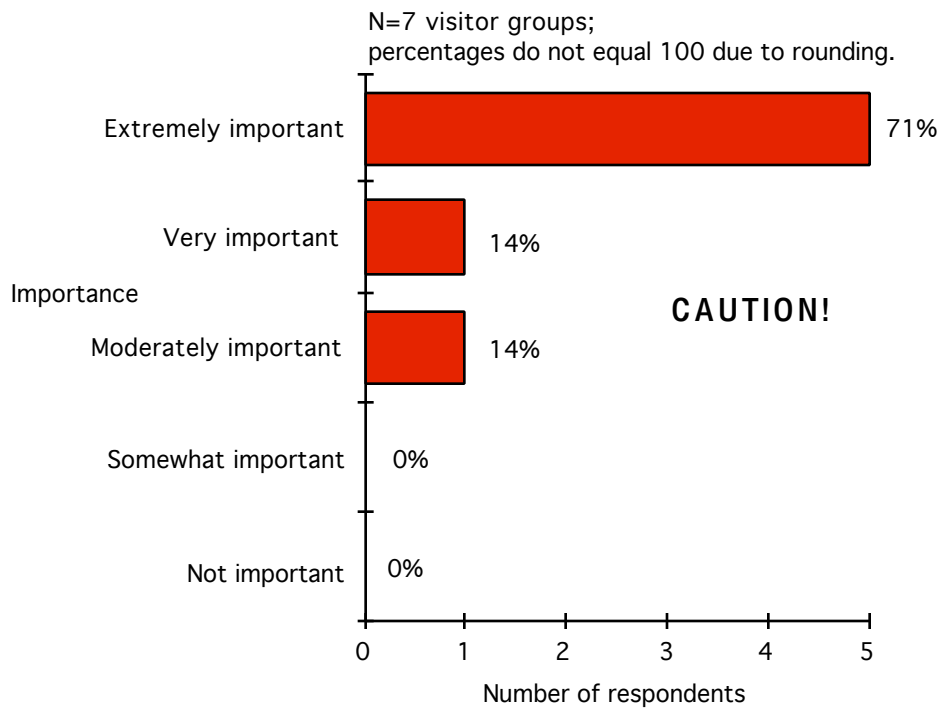


Figure 24: Importance of ranger/volunteer-led programs

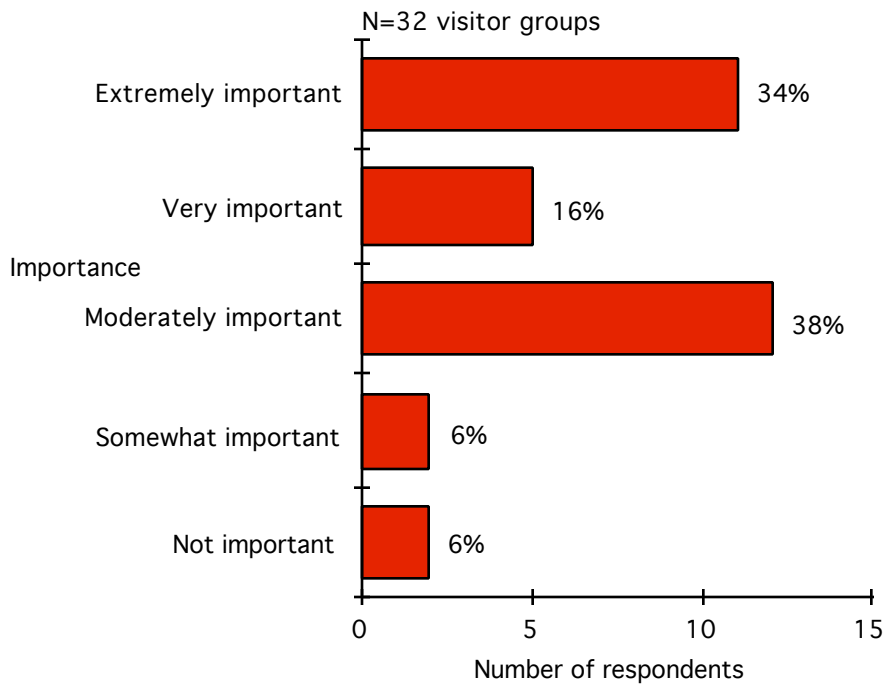


Figure 25: Importance of contact with park personnel

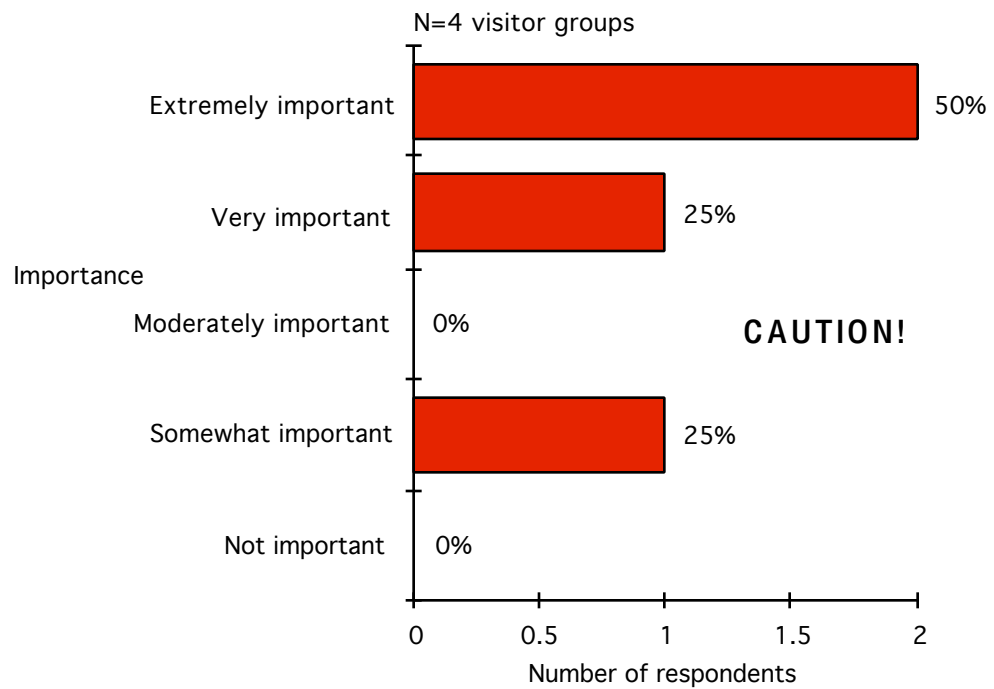


Figure 26: Importance of park radio information station

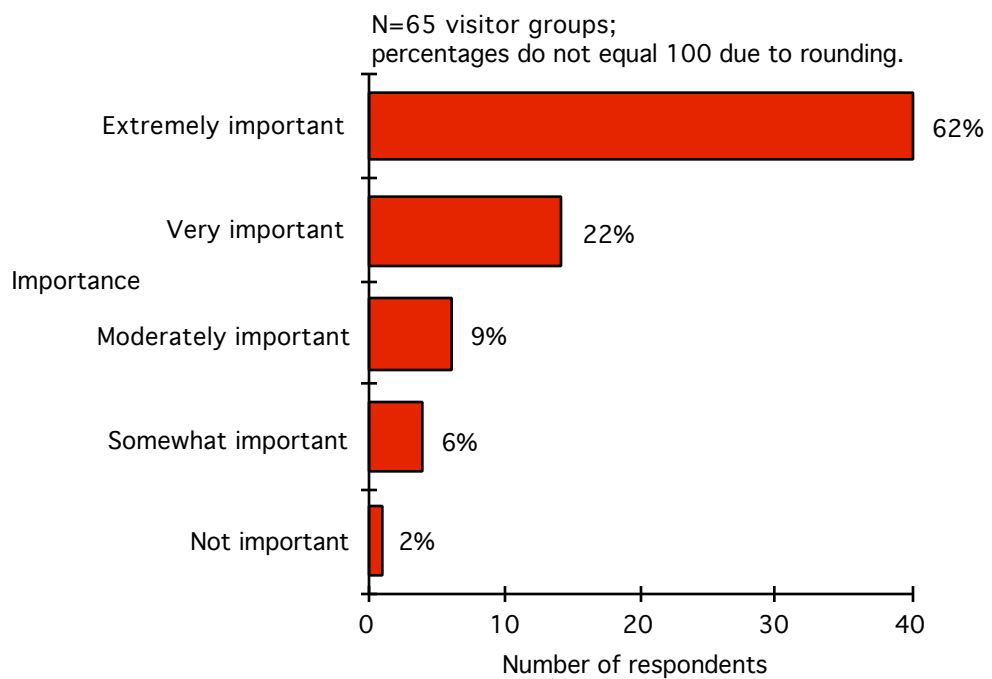


Figure 27: Importance of highway directional signs

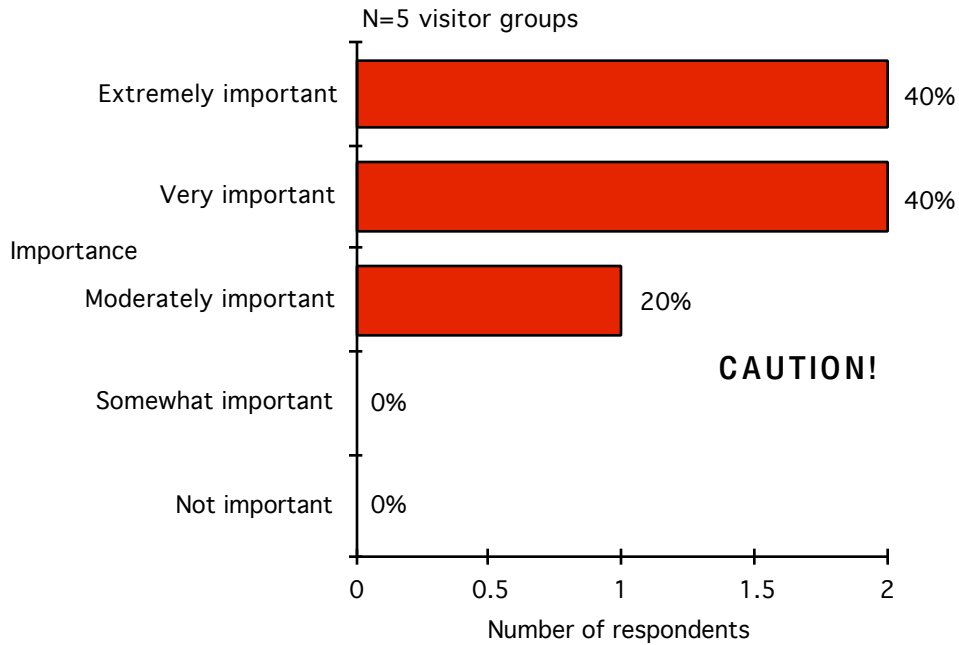


Figure 28: Importance of handicapped access

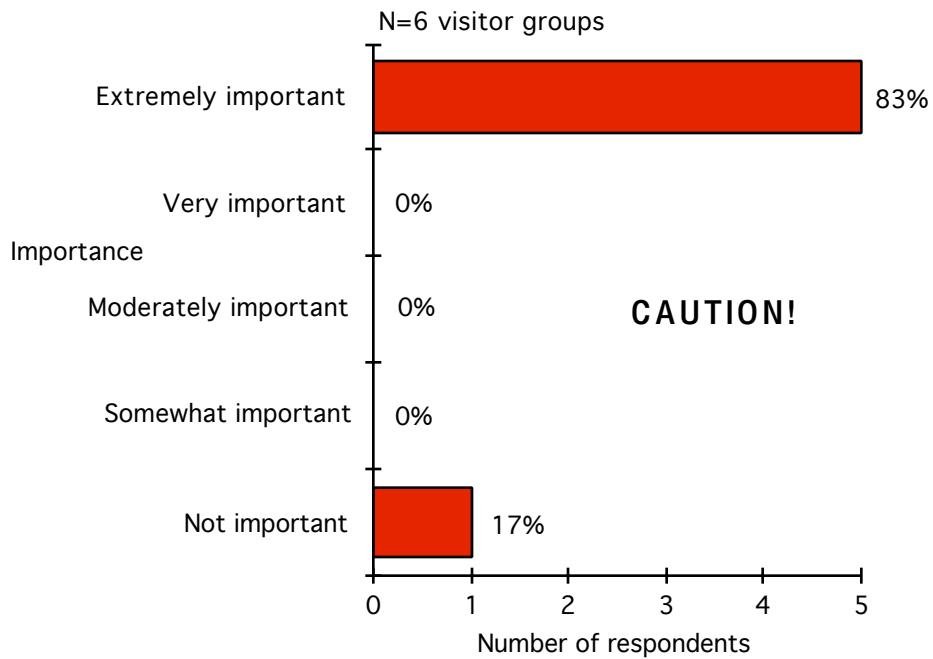


Figure 29: Importance of campgrounds

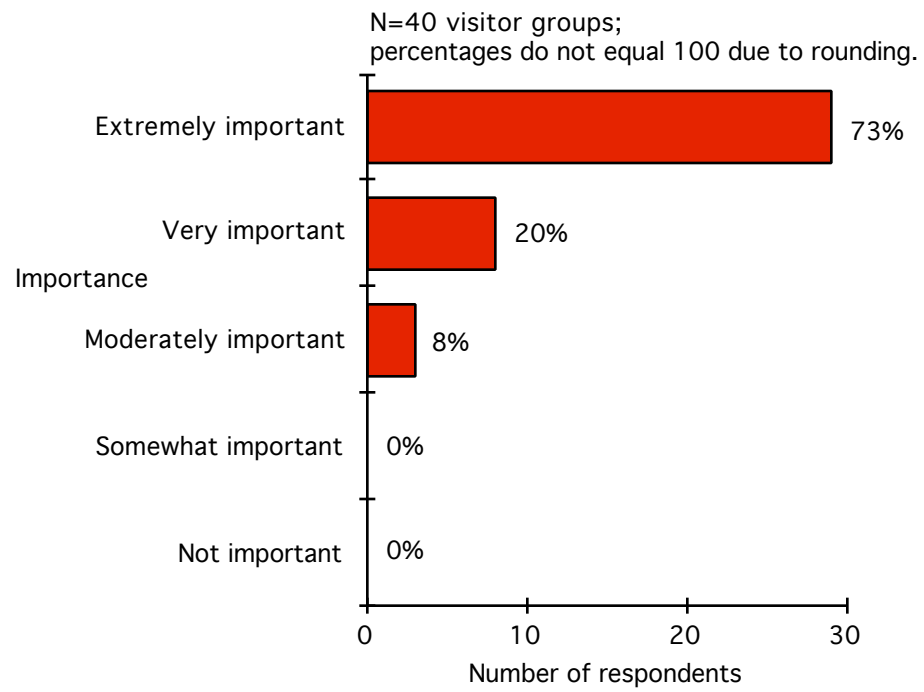


Figure 30: Importance of trails

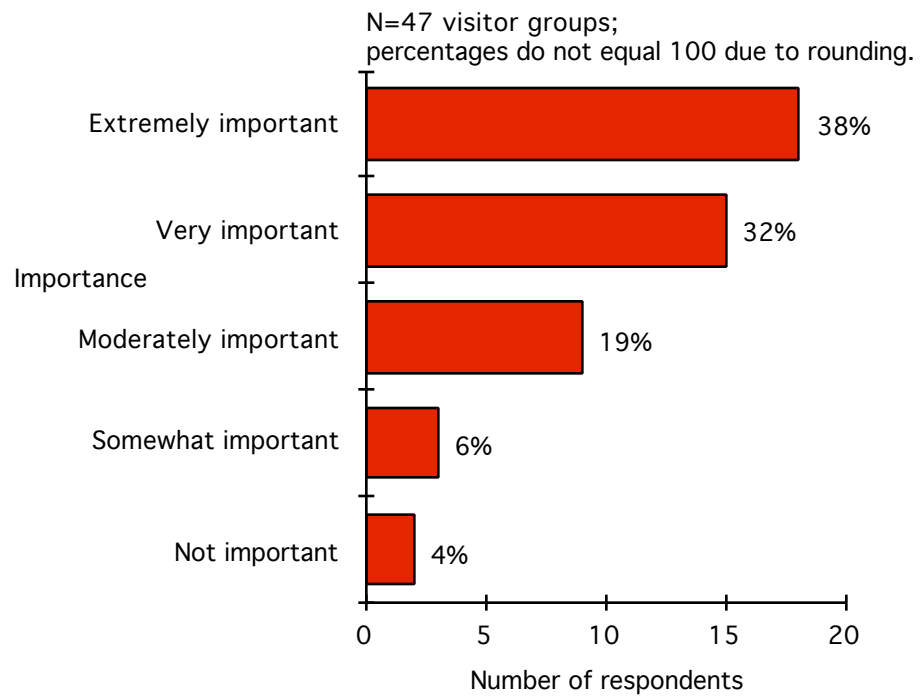


Figure 31: Importance of picnic areas

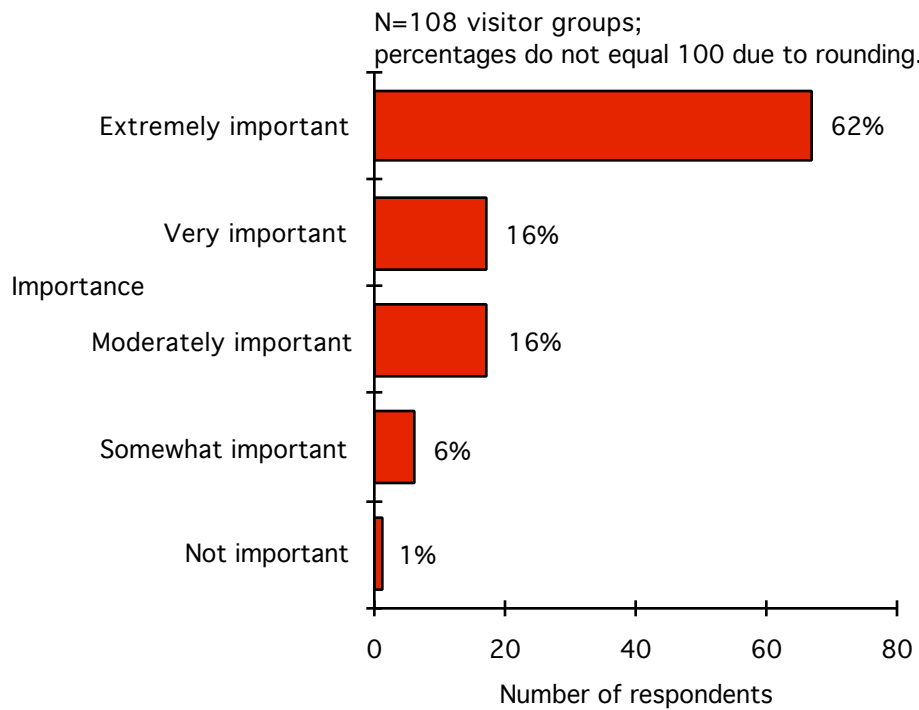


Figure 32: Importance of parking areas

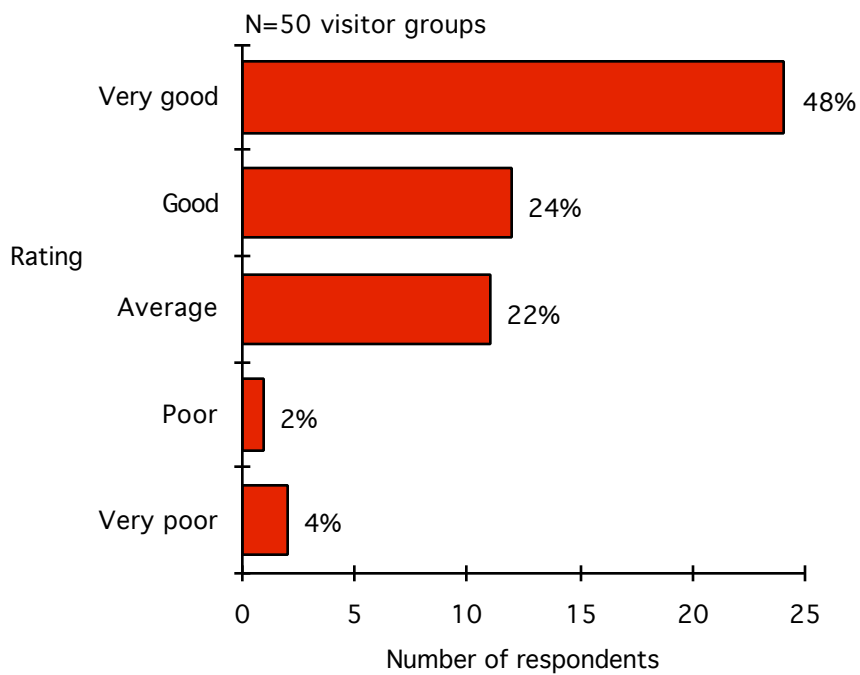


Figure 33: Quality of park maps/brochures

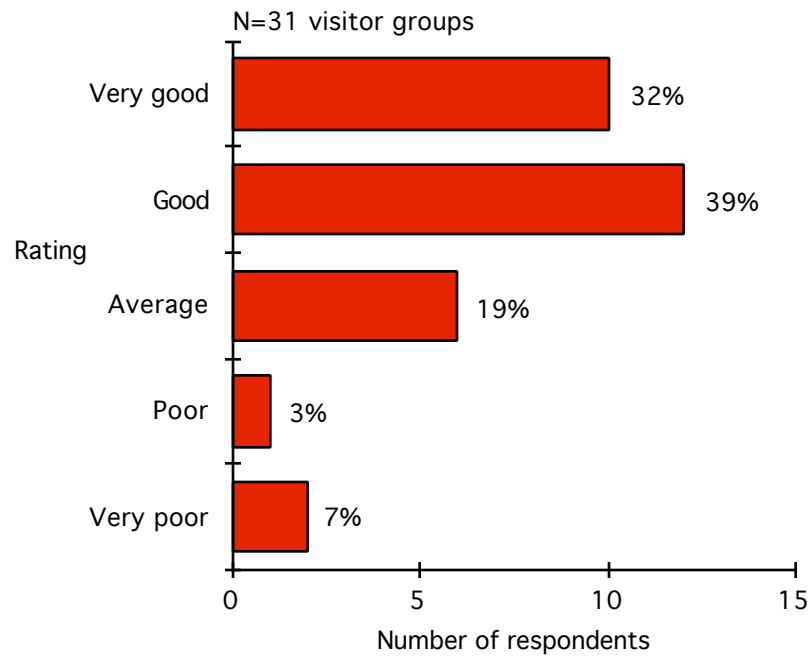


Figure 34: Quality of bulletin boards

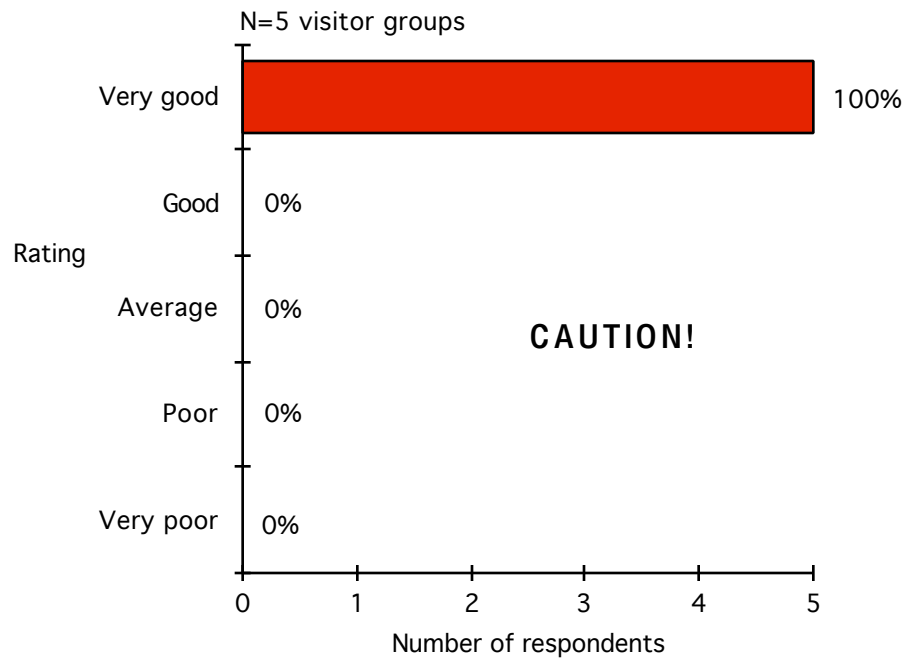


Figure 35: Quality of ranger/volunteer-led programs

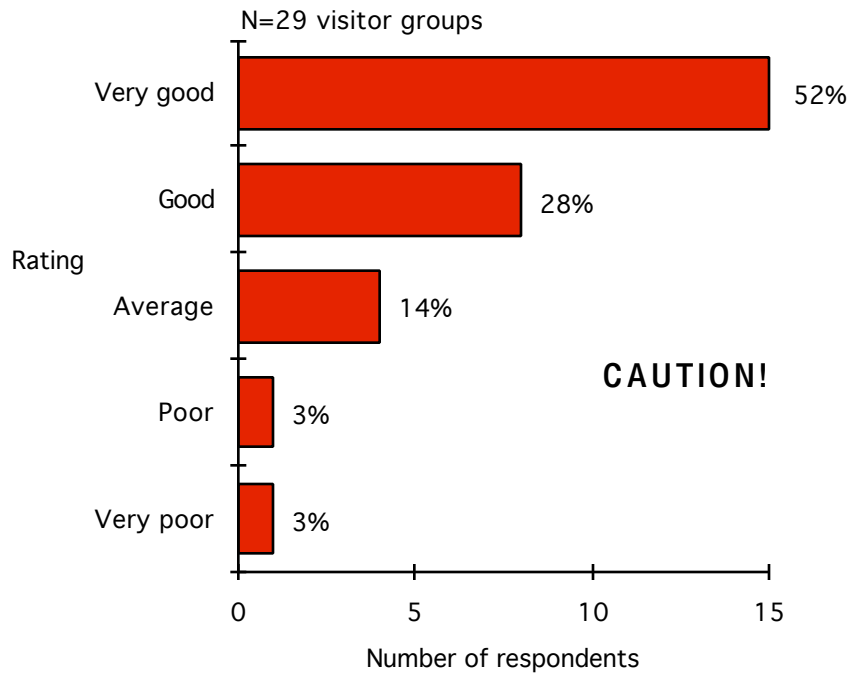


Figure 36: Quality of contact with park personnel



Figure 37: Quality of park radio information station

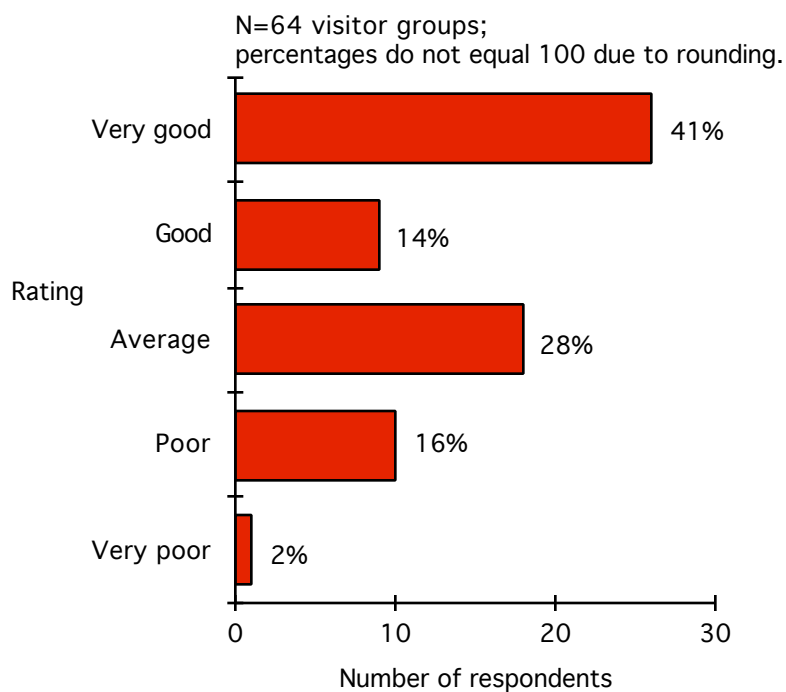


Figure 38: Quality of highway directional signs

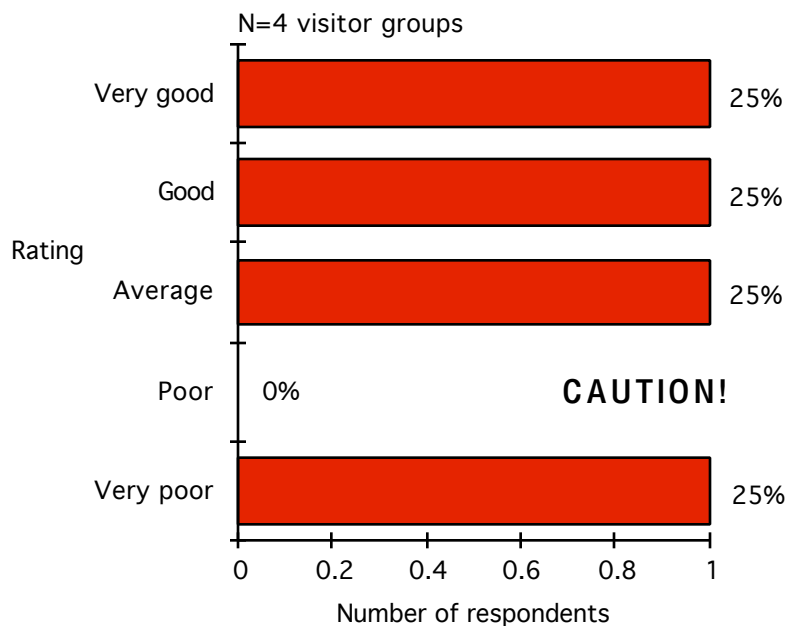


Figure 39: Quality of handicapped access

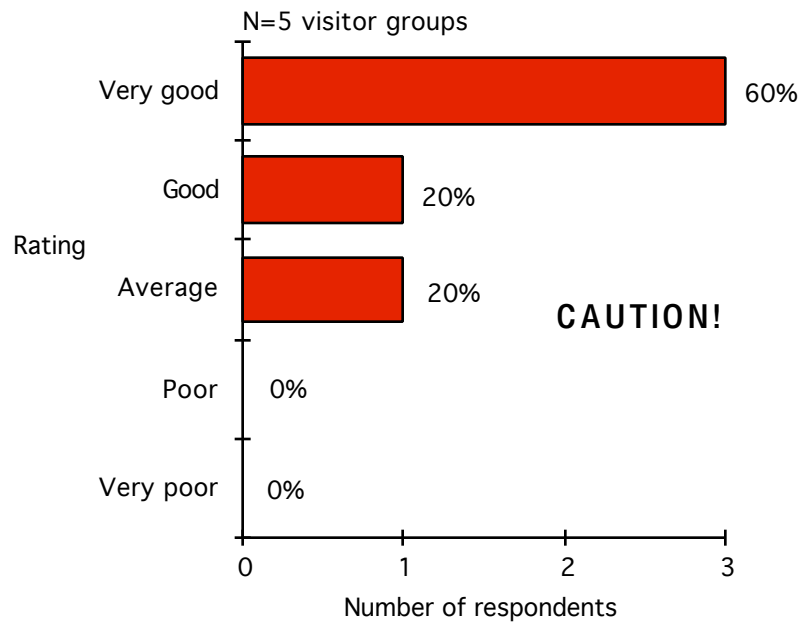


Figure 40: Quality of campgrounds

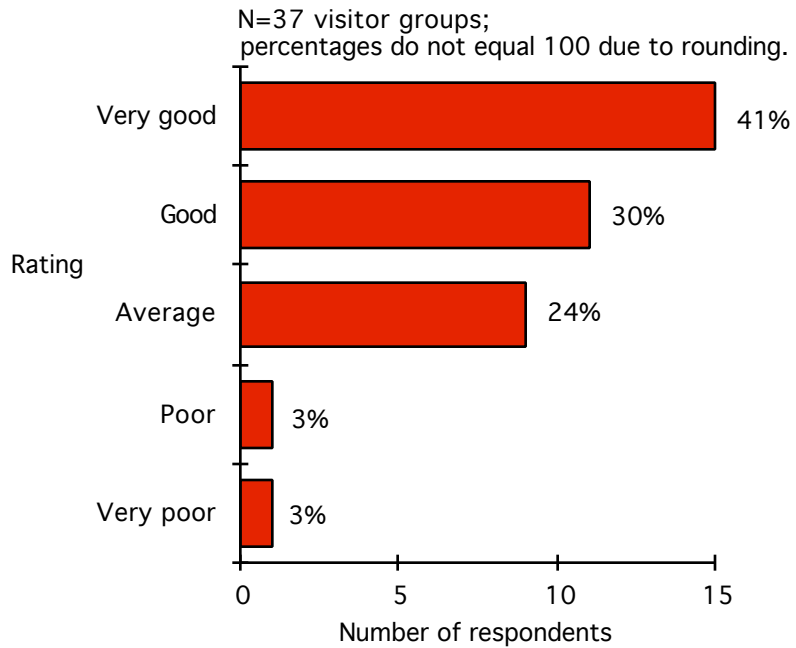


Figure 41: Quality of trails

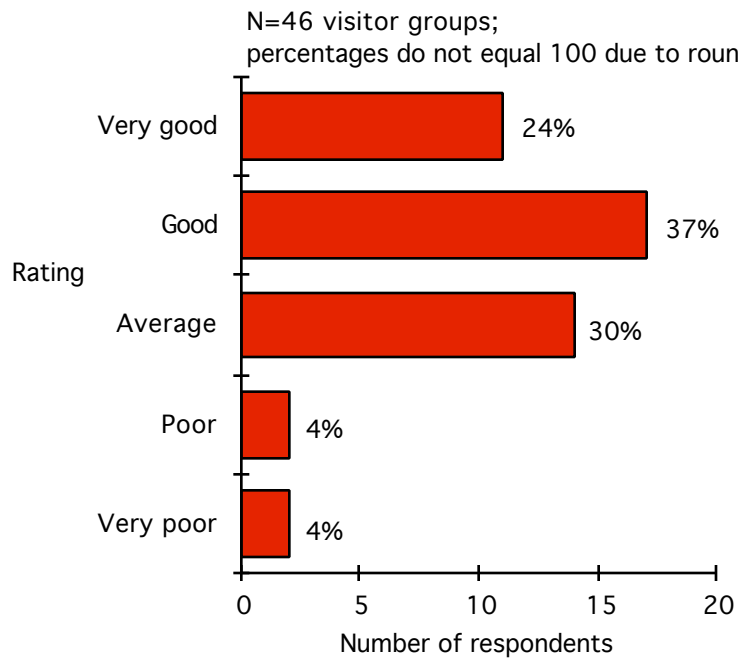


Figure 42: Quality of picnic areas

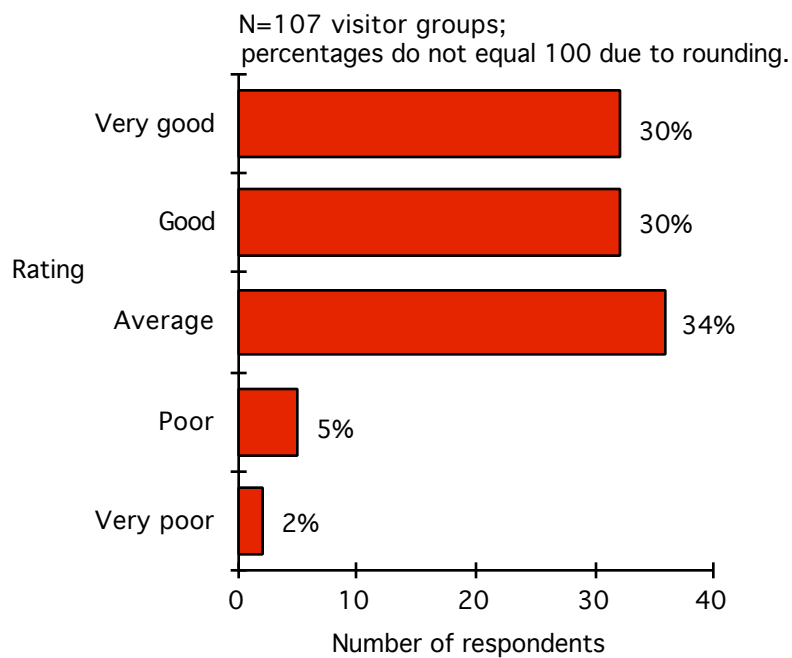


Figure 43: Quality of parking areas

Most banjo-fiddle contest visitors (98%) did not stay overnight at a motel, campground or other accommodation in the Santa Monica Mountains area (see Figure 44). Caution should be used in interpreting the results in Figure 45, since it shows data for only three visitor groups.

Overnight visits

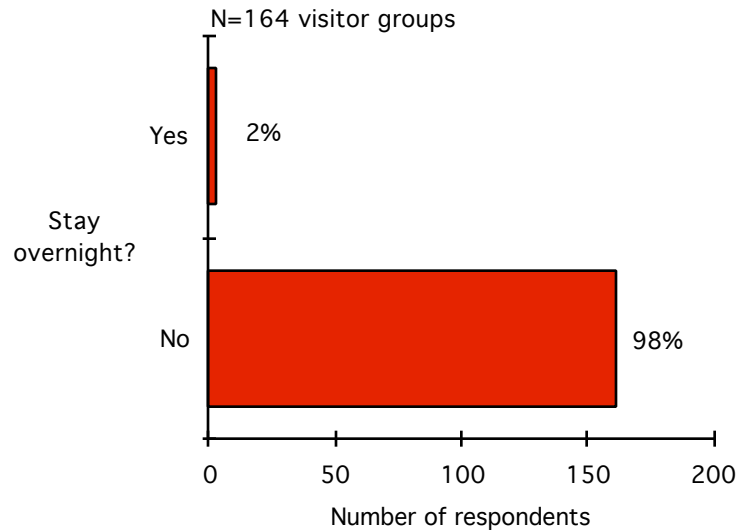


Figure 44: Visitors staying overnight in Santa Monica Mountains area

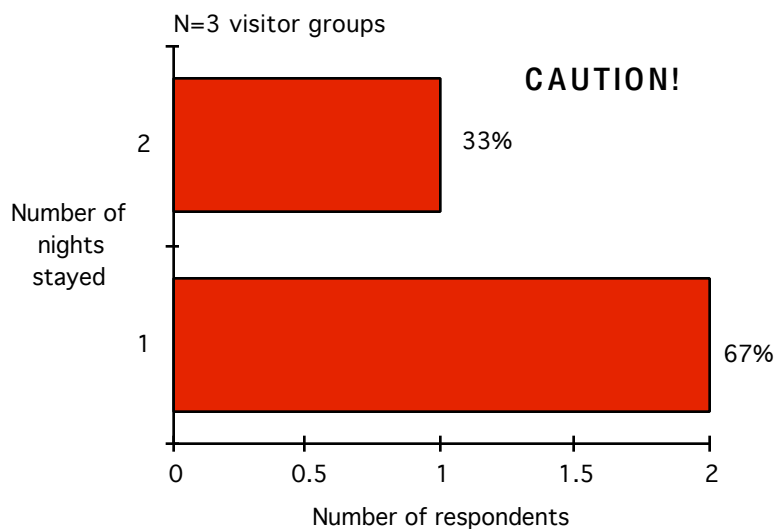


Figure 45: Number of nights stayed

Expenditures

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were asked to list their expenditures for overnight accommodations during their visit to Santa Monica Mountains. They were also asked to list the amount they spent for travel (gas, bus fare, etc.); food (restaurant, groceries, etc.) and "other" items (souvenirs, film, tours, etc.) on the day they received their questionnaire.

Seventy-five percent of visitors spent \$50 or less for travel, food and other items on the day they visited, as shown in Figure 46. The largest proportion of their money was spent on "other" items (43%), followed by food (40%), as shown in Figure 47.

During their visit to the Santa Monica Mountains area, three visitor groups reported lodging expenditures. Results are not shown because not enough groups answered the question to provide reliable information.

For travel, food, and "other" items, most visitors reported expenditures of \$25 or less (see Figures 48-50). Excluding lodging, the average visitor group expenditure on the day of their visit was \$31. Excluding lodging, the average per capita expenditure on the day of their visit was \$10.

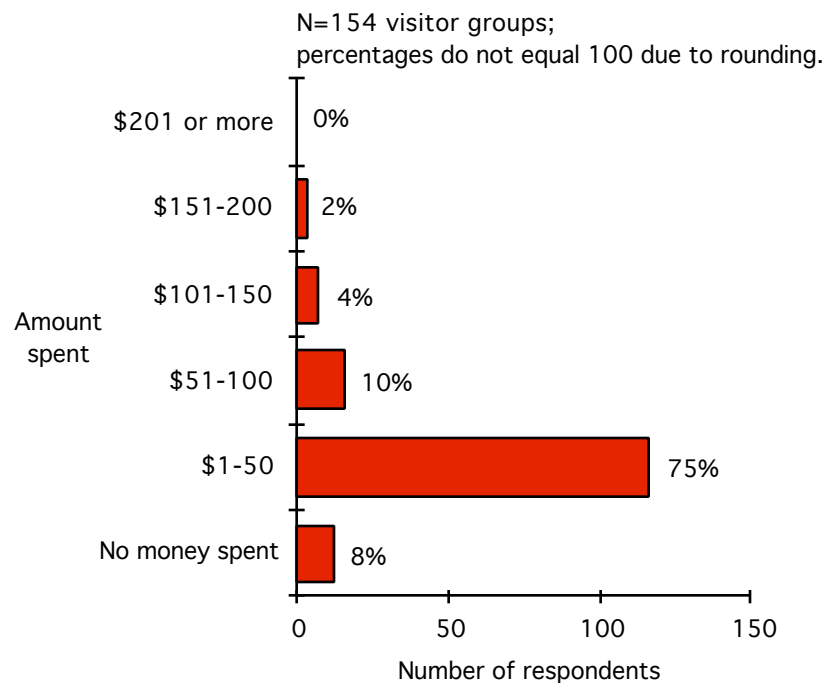


Figure 46: Total visitor expenditures, excluding lodging

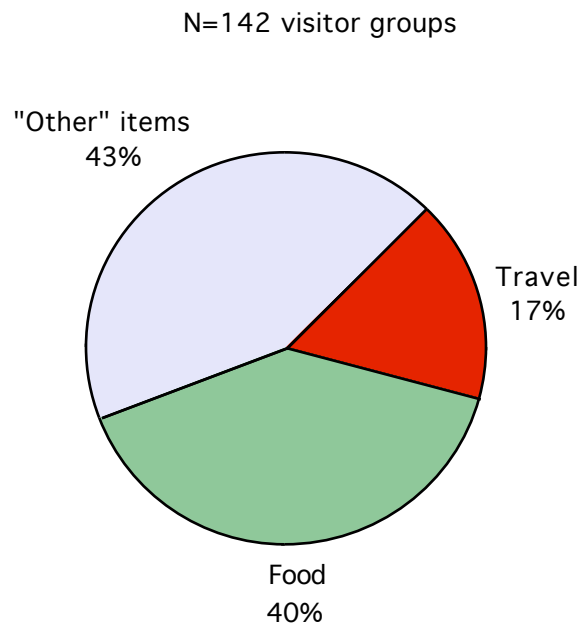


Figure 47: Proportion of visitor group expenditures by category, excluding lodging

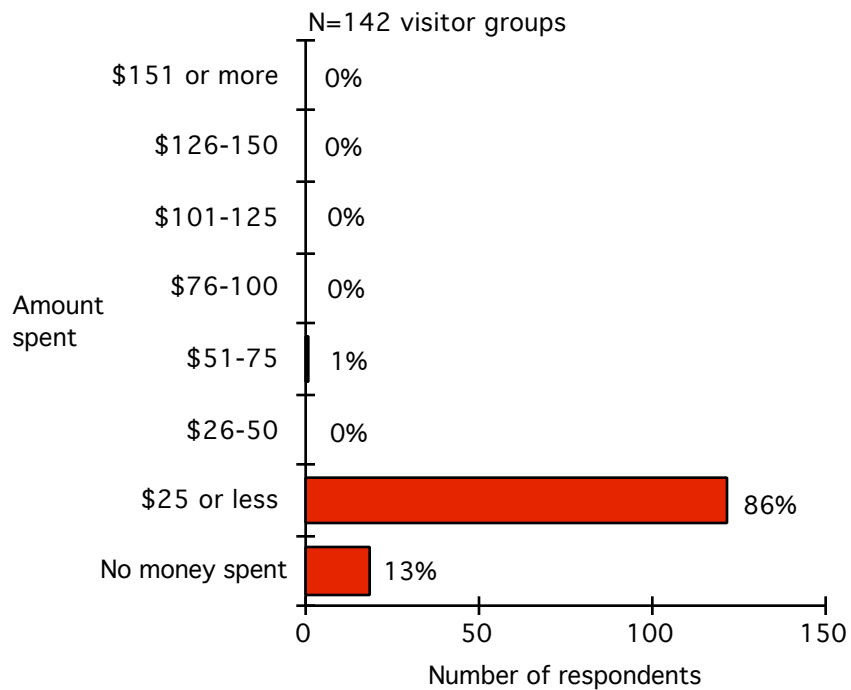


Figure 48: Visitor expenditures for travel

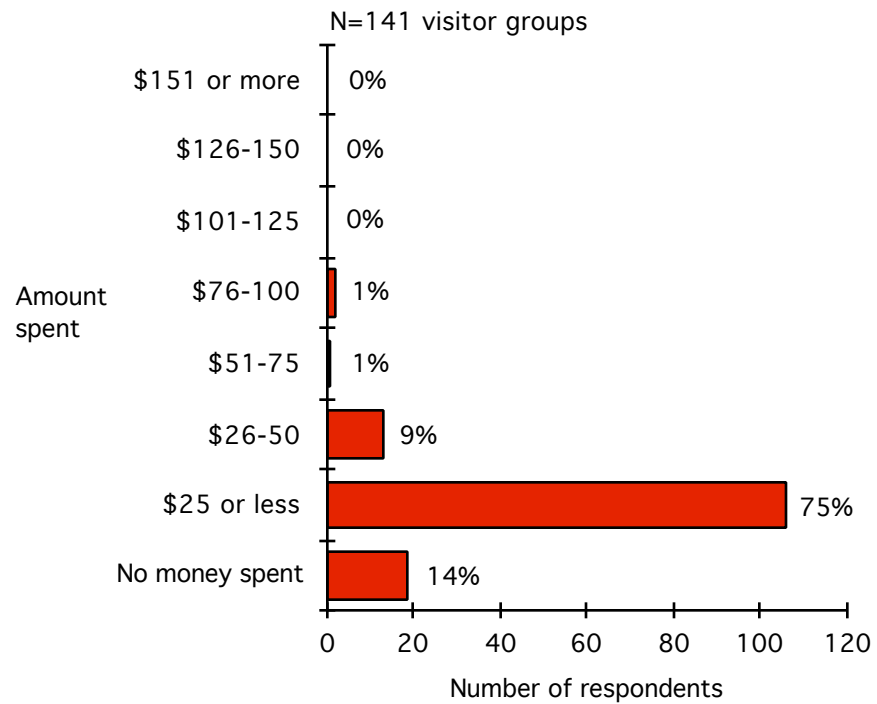


Figure 49: Visitor expenditures for food

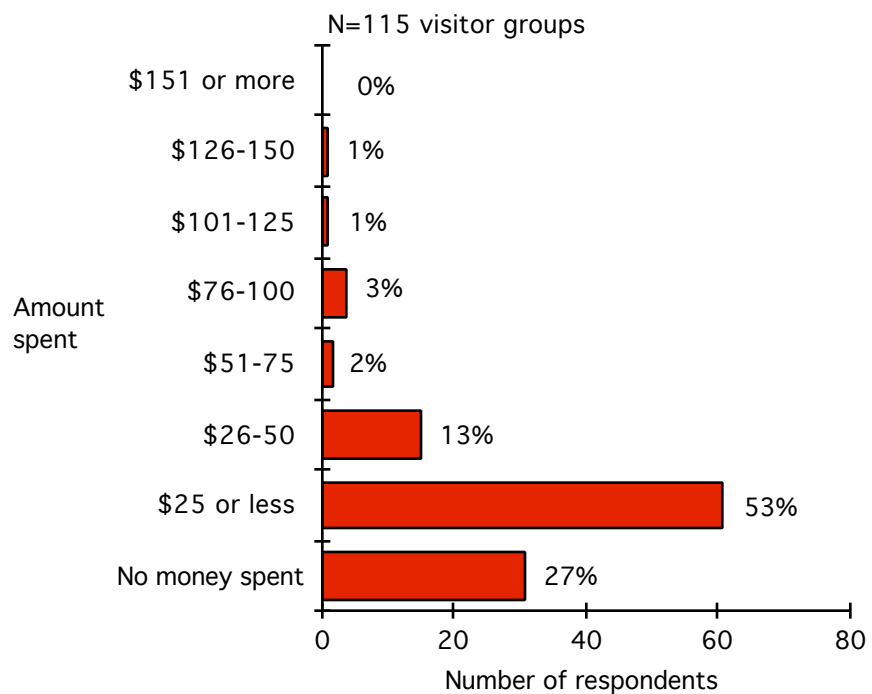


Figure 50: Visitor expenditures for "other" items

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were asked if they listened to the Travelers Information Radio station (1610 AM) on this visit and past visits. On this visit, 1% of visitors listened to the station (see Figure 51). On past visits, 6% of visitors listened to the station, as shown in Figure 52.

**Travelers
information
radio station
use**

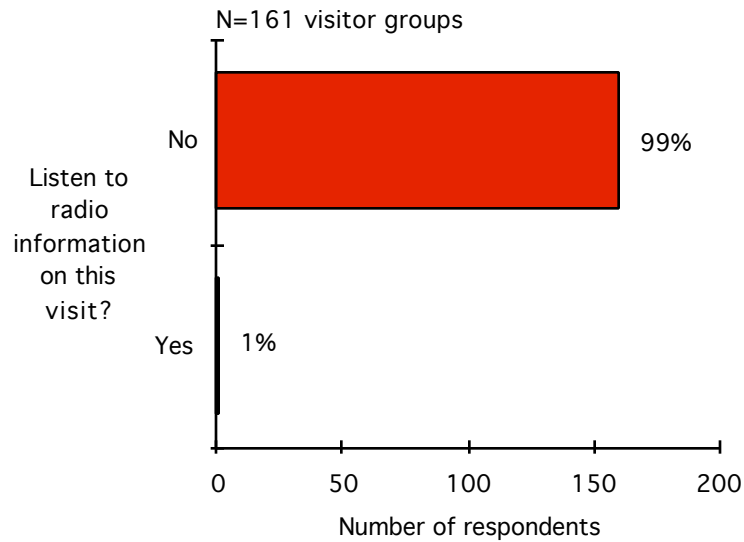


Figure 51: Listen to radio information station on this visit?

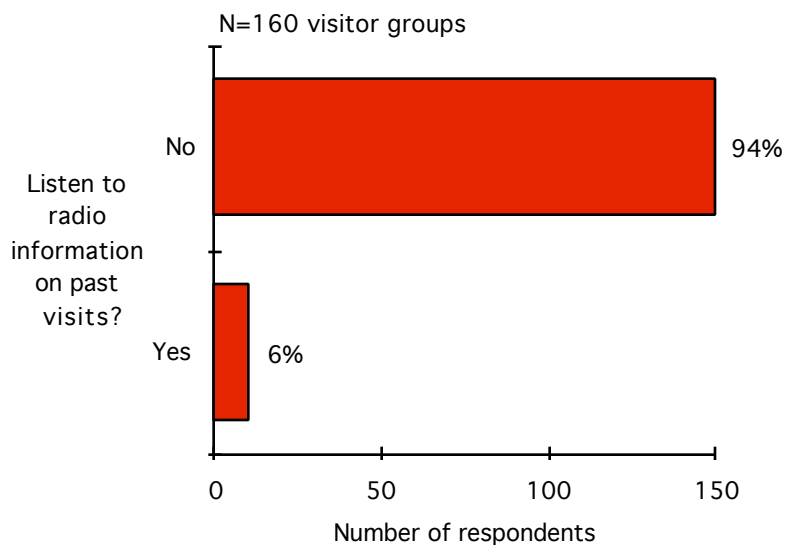


Figure 52: Listen to radio information station on past visits?

**Planning
for the
future**

Banjo-fiddle contest visitors were asked to make suggestions about what they would do if they were a manager planning for the future of Santa Monica Mountains. A summary of their comments is listed below and in the appendix.

Planning for the future

N=200 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Parking personnel should be more polite	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize park locations/recreation opportunities more	21
Continue allowing/offer more special events	7
Need general column in newspaper about park/trails/events	6
Provide trail/site maps	5
Publicize special events more	4
Publicize opportunities for volunteers	2
Rate trail difficulty	2
Provide safety information	2
Park radio information station not working	2
Other comment	1
Personal	
Offer more ranger/volunteer-guided activities	5
Other comment	1
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Build more trails	10
Need better marked trails	7
Maintain lack of graffiti/cleanliness	5
Improve/need more highway signs	4
Build more picnic areas	4
Build more campgrounds	4
Improve restroom quality/availability	4
Build handicapped walkways	3
Improve trails	3
Maintain current trails/campgrounds	3
Build additional nature/visitor centers	2
Improve transportation options to parks	2
Offer public cleanup days	2
Provide more trash cans	2
Other comments	5

POLICIES

Educate/enforce rules to preserve resources	9
Keep park available to public	7
Keep fees low/free	4
Out of control mountain bikers threaten hiker safety	3
Annual trail fee too high	3
Enforce mountain bike speeding and conduct rules	2
Enforce no dog policy	2
Improve road traffic safety	2
Keep park areas safe	2
Other comments	10

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keep park preserved/natural	11
Protect mountains from development	11
Continue to expand park	2
Do not allow track housing adjacent to park	2
Other comments	5

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Maintain current operations	2
Continue seeking visitor opinions	2
Other comment	1

Comment Summary Many banjo-fiddle contest visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments are summarized below and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions on how to improve the park; others describe what visitors enjoyed or did not enjoy.

Visitor Comment Summary

N=152 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Personnel helpful	5
Other comments	1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize more	7
Should have passed out park info at concert	4
Educate people about park locations/rules	2
Personal	
Offer more guided/educational activities	2
Use more volunteers	2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Well maintained	7
Need large tent for shade	2
Clean up litter	2
Other comments	6
POLICIES	
"Boom box" noise unpleasant	2
Other comments	5
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Protect rest of area from development	3
Other comment	1
VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT	
Comments	4

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Beautiful area/love the mountains	14
Good job/thanks	12
Enjoyed special event activities/well organized	12
Enjoyed visit	11
Plan/hope to return	11
Enjoyed escaping city	6
Only came for special event	5
Only worthwhile part of LA area	3
Use park generally	3
Relaxing	3
Enjoy bike trails	3
Enjoy hiking trails	3
Parking/security well handled	3
Glad it exists	3
Glad special event not too crowded	2
Other comments	3

GENERAL VISITOR RESULTS

Visitors contacted

A total of 1,327 general visitor groups were contacted; 91% accepted questionnaires. Eight hundred five visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, a 67% response rate.

Table 4 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. Non-response bias for age was slightly significant. The ages of visitors returning questionnaires was somewhat older than those of all visitors who received questionnaires.

Table 4: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	1208	36.2	790	39.6
Group size	1208	2.9	793	3.5

Demographics

Figure 53 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 75 people. Thirty-eight percent of visitors came in groups of two people, 18% came in groups of one. One third of visitors (35%) came in family groups and 30% came in friends groups (see Figure 54). "Other" groups included business visitors, classes, Girl and Boy Scouts, and Sierra Club. Four percent of visitors were in guided tour groups (see Figure 55).

Figure 56 shows varied age groups; the most common were visitors aged 26-40 (42%), 41-50 (17%) and 15 years or younger (16%; the younger age groups may be slightly under-represented). Most visitors (61%) were repeat visitors (see Figure 57). Most visitors (95%) were white, not of Hispanic origin; 8% were Hispanic, 7% were Asian/Pacific Islander (see Figure 58). Most of the visitors generally speak English at home (96%), while 6% speak Spanish, (see Figure 59). Twenty-eight other languages were listed.

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 7% of all visitation. Map 3 and Table 5 show that most international visitors came from Great Britain (24%), Germany (16%) and France (10%). Map 4 and Table 6 show that the majority of United States visitors came from California (93%), with smaller proportions from many other states.

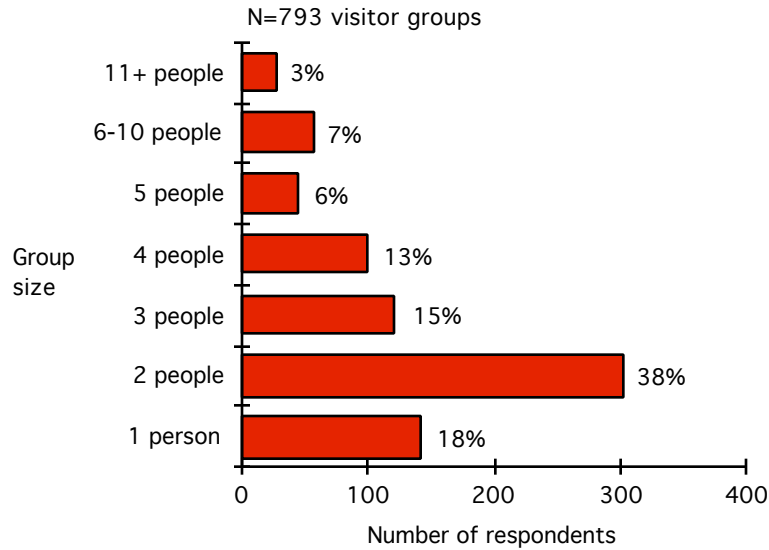


Figure 53: Visitor group sizes

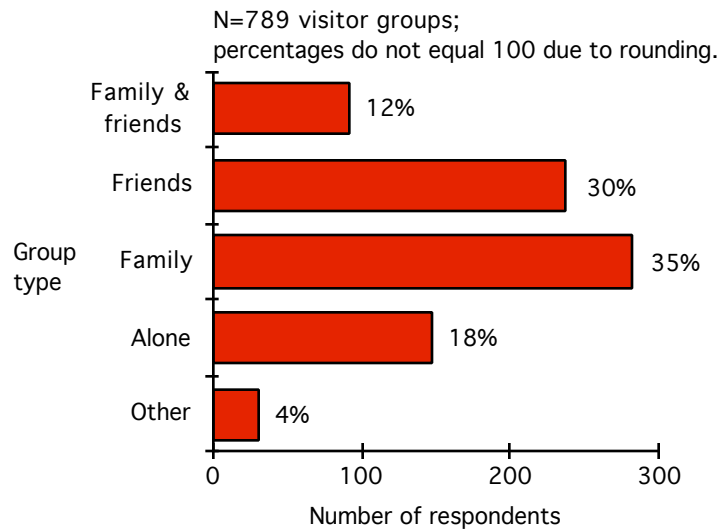


Figure 54: Visitor group types

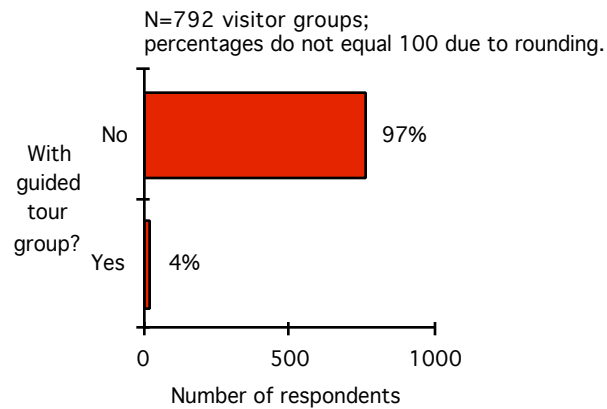


Figure 55: Visitors with guided tour groups

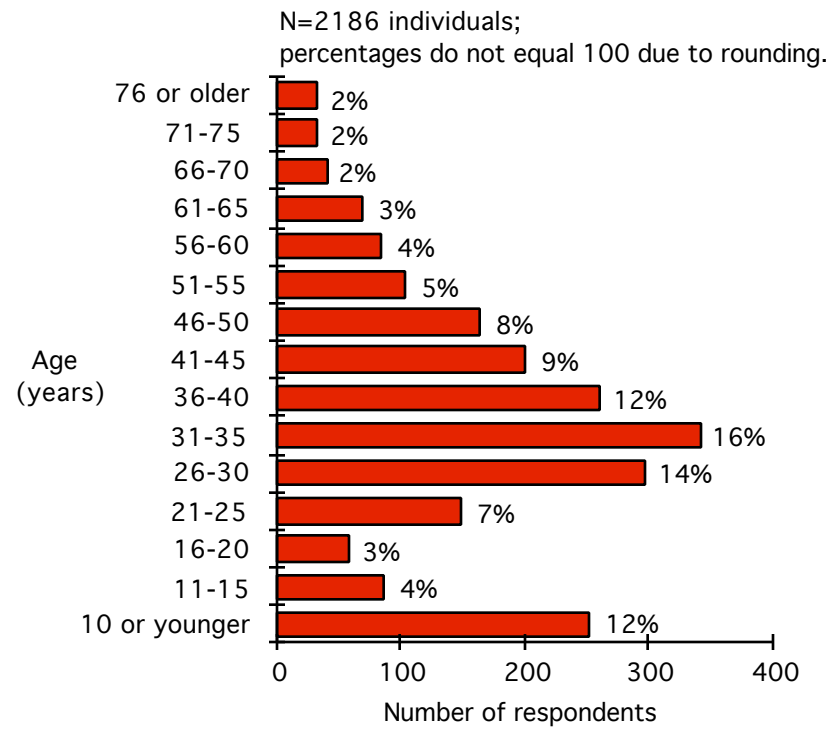


Figure 56: Visitor ages

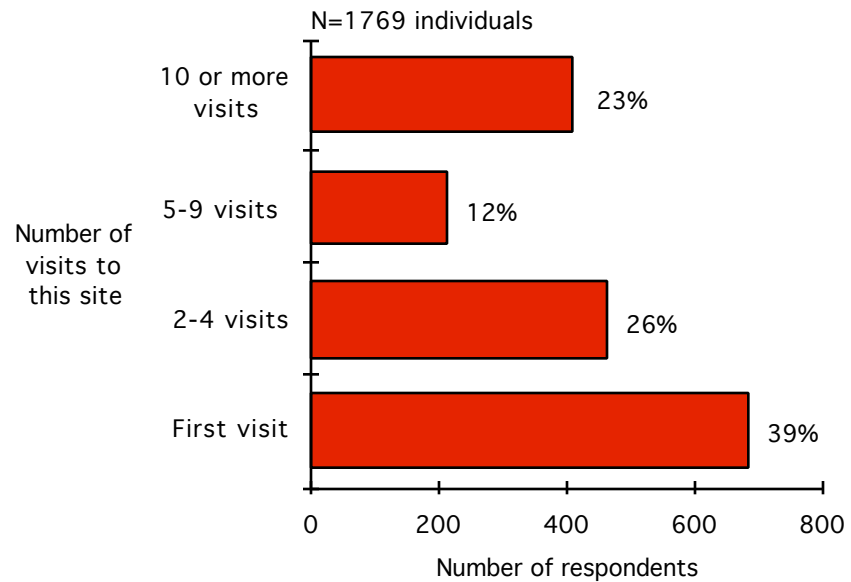


Figure 57: Number of visits

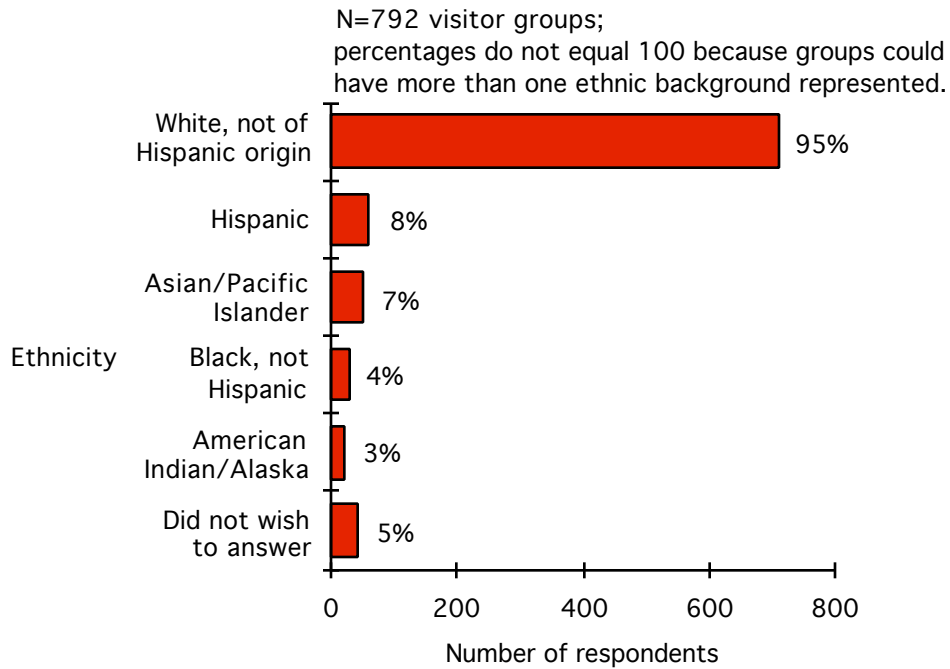


Figure 58: Ethnicity

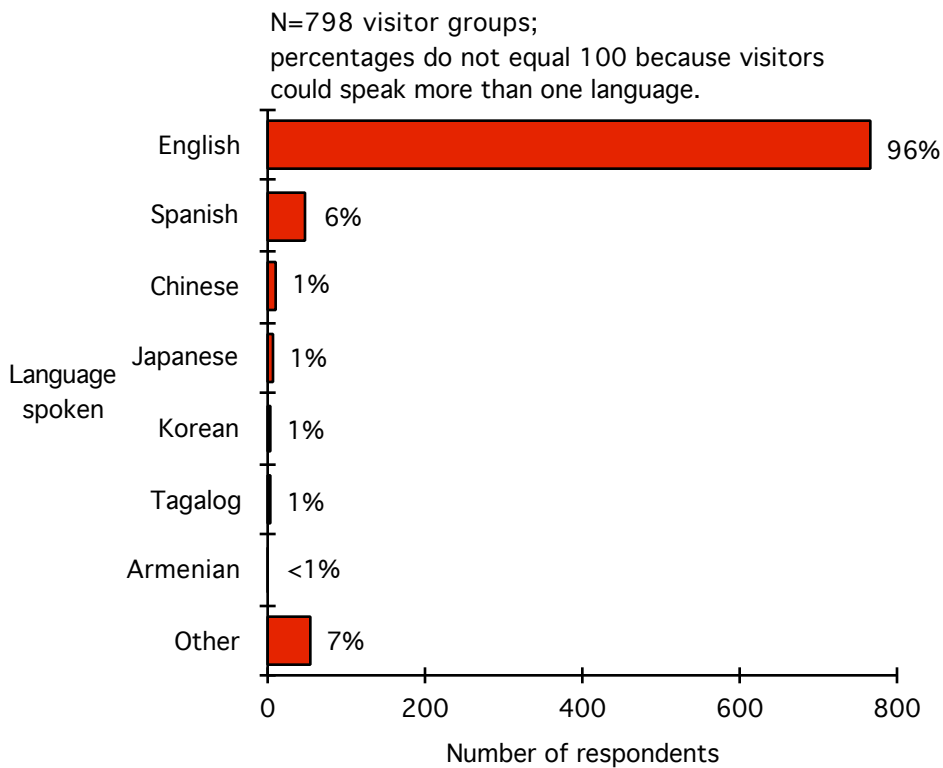


Figure 59: Languages spoken

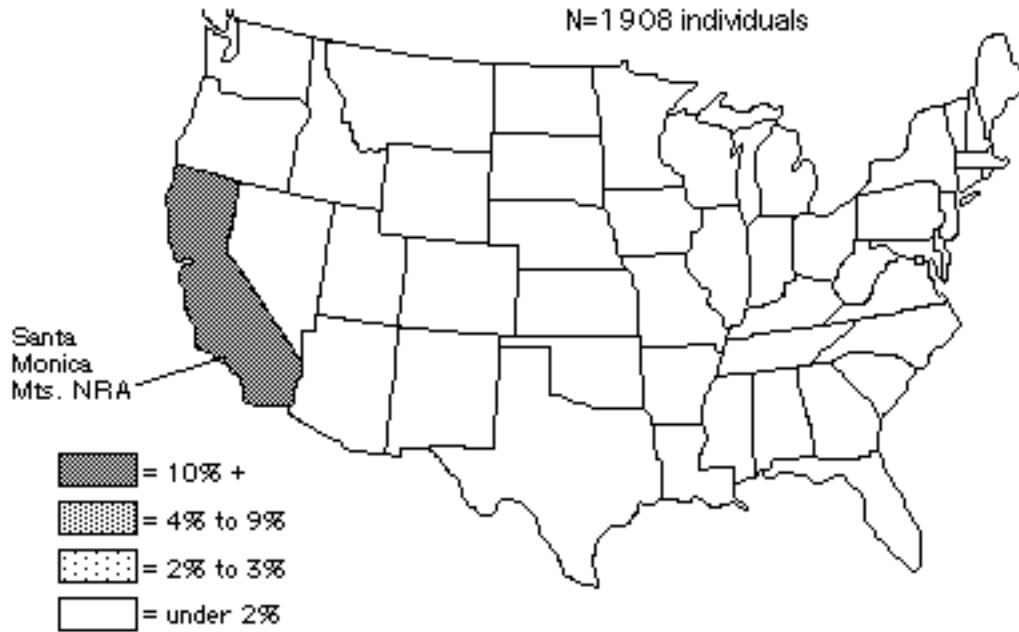


Map 3: Proportion of international visitors by country

Table 5: Visitors by country of residence

N=58 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Country	Number of individuals	international visitors
Great Britain	14	24
Germany	9	16
France	6	10
Japan	4	7
Australia	3	5
El Salvador	3	5
Italy	3	5
Switzerland	3	5
Canada	2	3
Holland	2	3
Mexico	2	3
Poland	2	3
Argentina	1	2
Austria	1	2
Guatemala	1	2
India	1	2
South Africa	1	2



Map 4: Proportion of visitors from each state

Table 6: Proportion of visitors from each state

N=1908 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	% of U.S. visitors
California	1782	93
New York	12	1
Connecticut	10	1
Colorado	7	<1
New Jersey	6	<1
Oregon	6	<1
Indiana	5	<1
Maryland	5	<1
Massachusetts	5	<1
Missouri	5	<1
Nevada	5	<1
Pennsylvania	5	<1
Georgia	4	<1
Illinois	4	<1
Texas	4	<1
Virginia	4	<1
Washington	4	<1
Other states (13) + D.C.	35	2

Frequency of visits

Thirty-one percent of the general visitors were visiting the site for the first time; 26% visit less than once a month (see Figure 60). Visitors often visit on weekends (46%), but 30% visit on both weekends and weekdays, as shown in Figure 61. More than half of the visitors (58%) do not usually visit the site at a particular time of day (see Figure 62). The usual arrival times which more visitors listed were between 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. (67%), as shown in Figure 63.

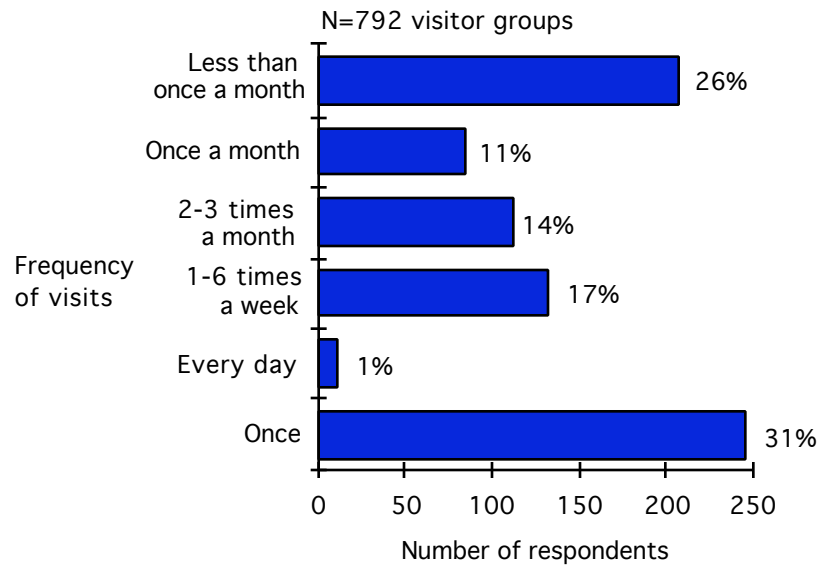


Figure 60: Frequency of visits

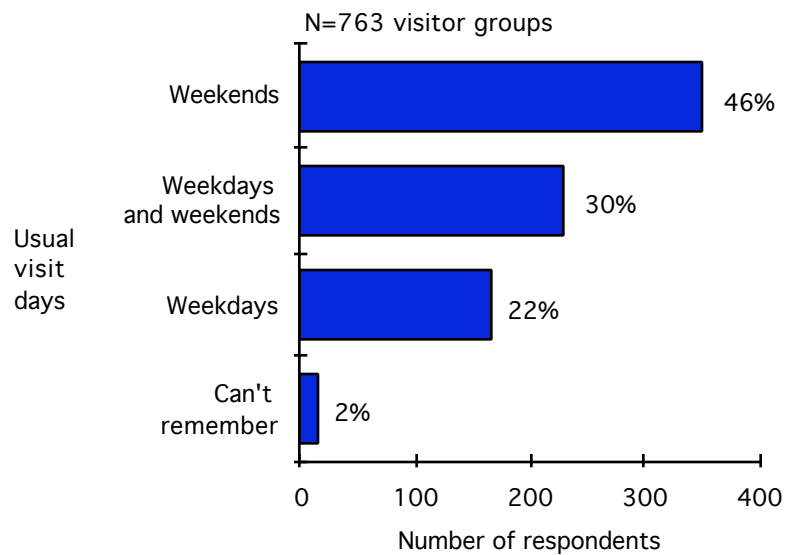


Figure 61: Usual days of visit

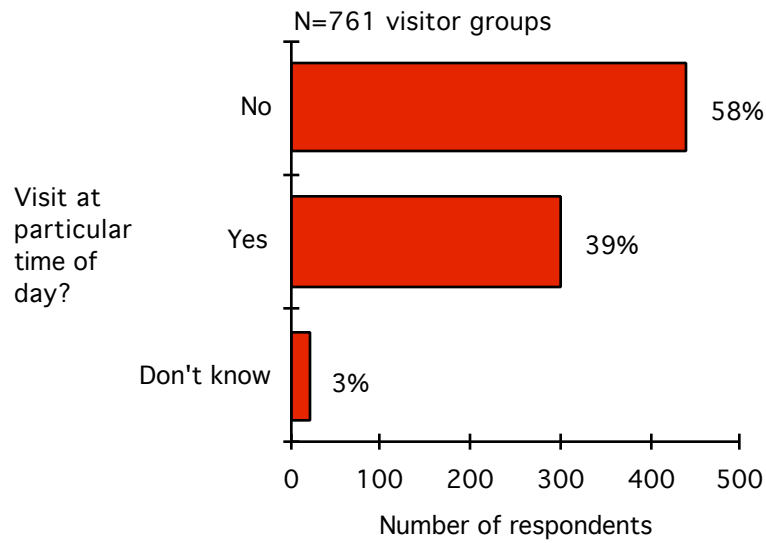


Figure 62: Visit at particular time of day

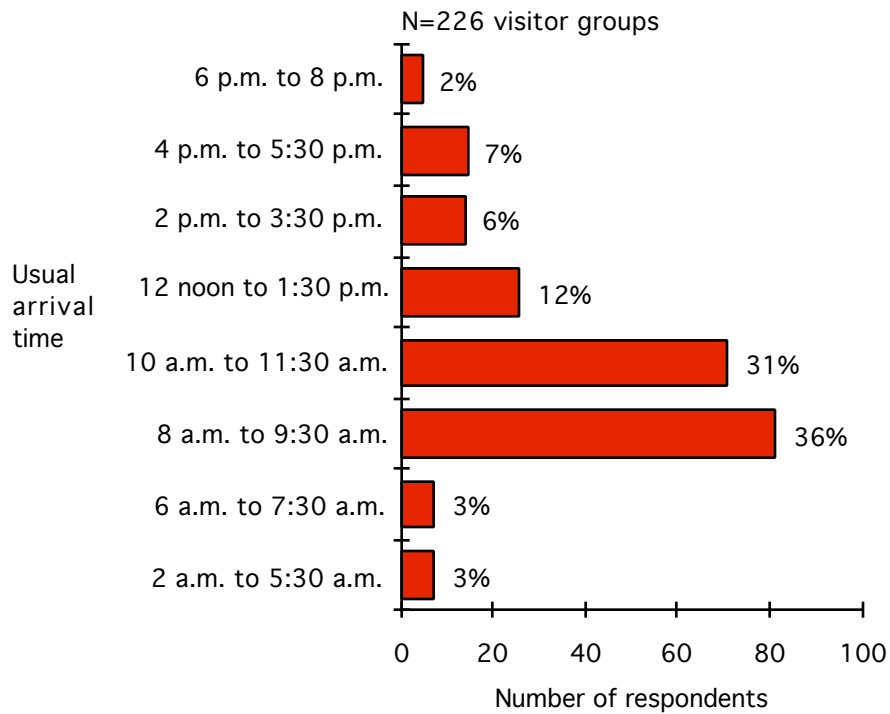


Figure 63: Usual arrival time

Length of stay

General visitors were asked how long they usually stay at the site where they received the questionnaire. Fifty-two percent of the visitors stayed two to three hours; 23% stayed four to five hours (see Figure 64).

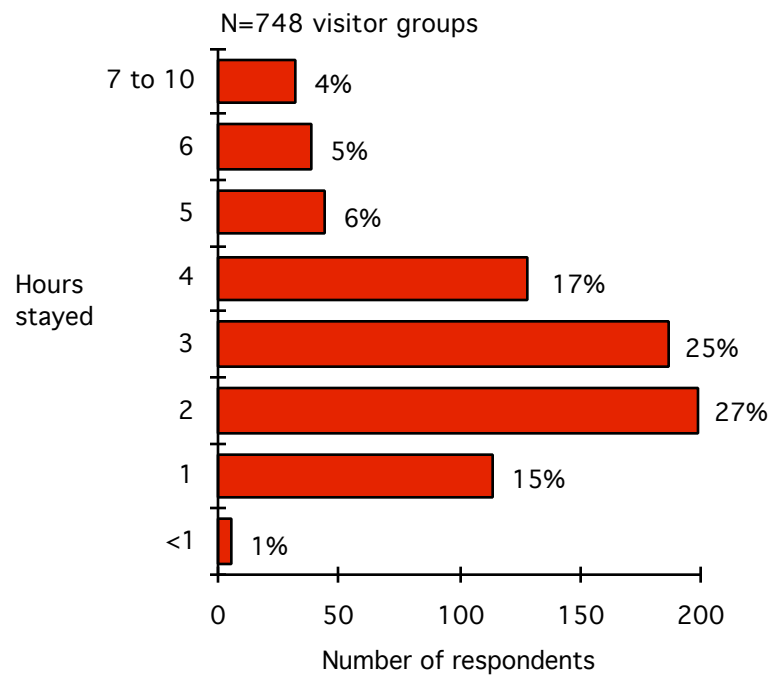


Figure 64: Number of hours spent at site

Figure 65 shows the proportion of general visitor groups who participated in various activities during their visit. Common activities were sightseeing (71%), hiking (61%), and picnicking (30%). Eleven percent of the visitors described "other" activities they pursued, including relaxing, rock climbing, playing/swimming in the water, enjoying nature, visiting Will Rogers home, and seeing movie sets.

Activities

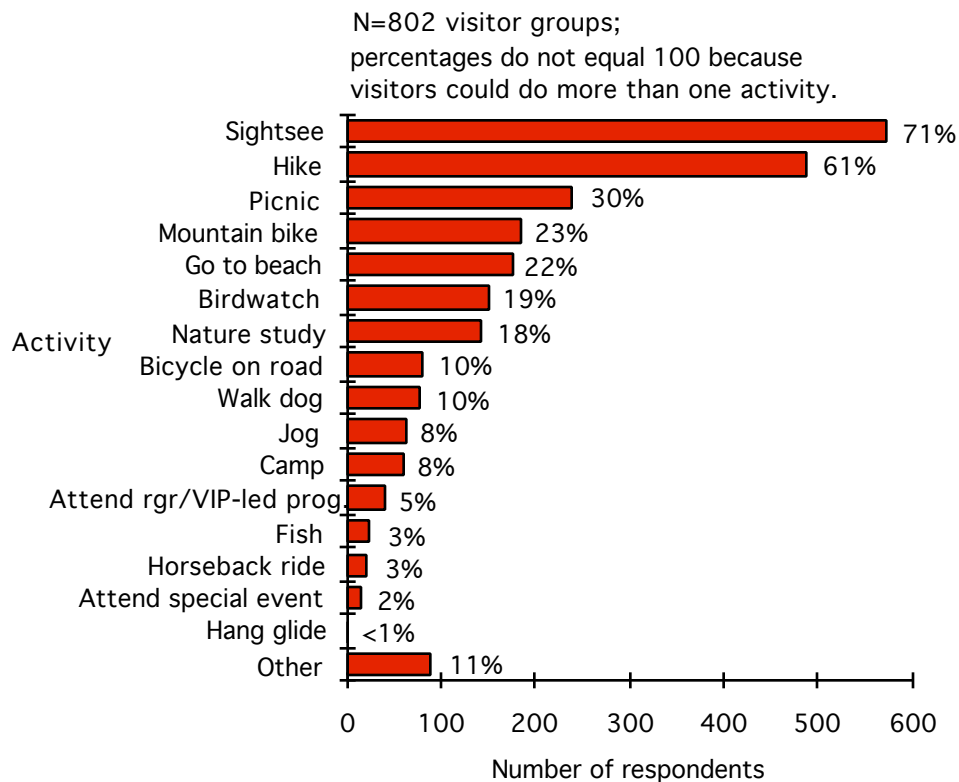


Figure 65: Visitor activities

**Knowledge
about park**

Most general visitors (86%) were aware of the park's existence prior to their visit (see Figure 66). Three-fourths of the visitors (76%) said they were somewhat to not knowledgeable about the park (including sites, locations, park rules, etc.), as shown in Figure 67.

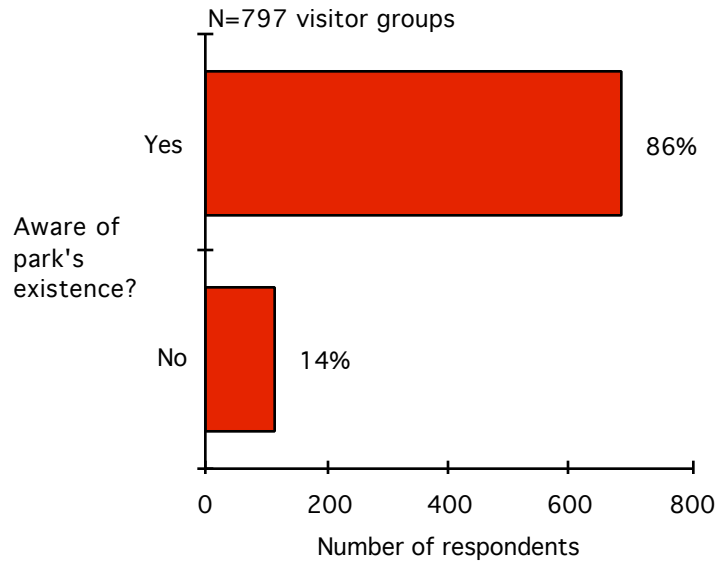


Figure 66: Awareness of park's existence

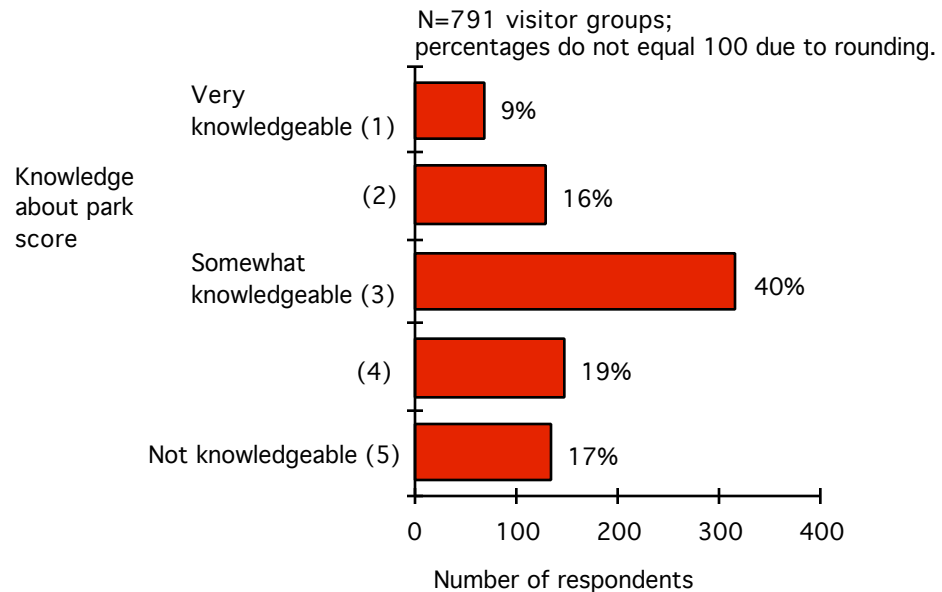


Figure 67: Knowledge about park

General visitors often used the following sources of information to learn about the park: previous visits (56%), friends and relatives (43%), and maps/brochures (28%), as shown in Figure 68. "Other" sources included living in the area, visiting an information/visitor center, reading books, Sierra Club, driving by, from friends, and knowing a ranger.

Sources of park information

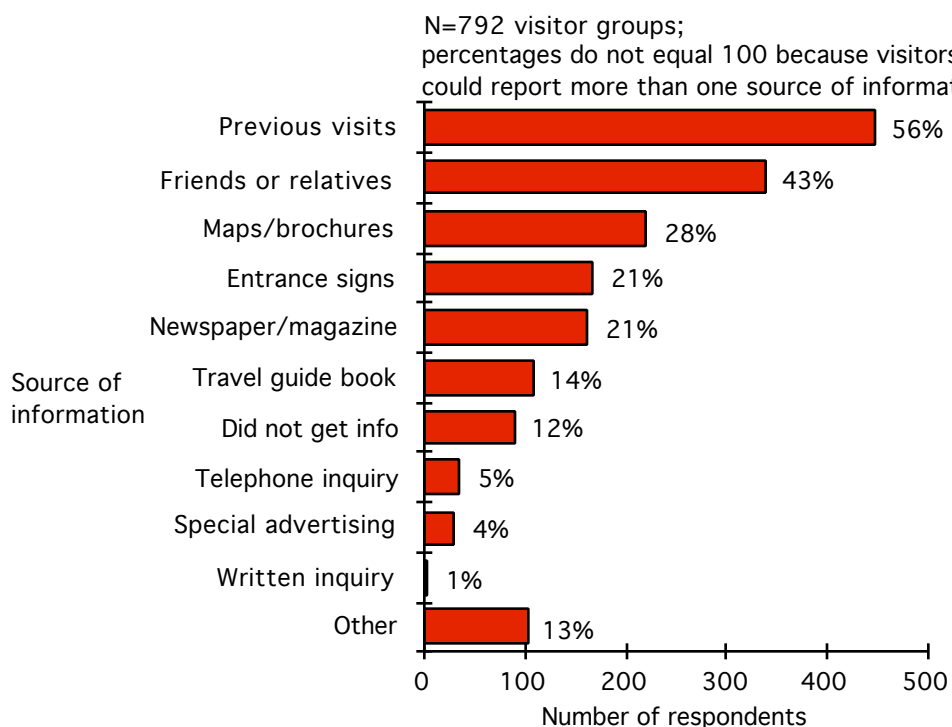


Figure 68: Sources of park information

Sites visited

General visitors were asked to identify the sites they visited at Santa Monica Mountains during the past 12 months. The most visited sites were Malibu Creek State Park (48%), Point Mugu State Park (36%), Topanga State Park (36%), and Will Rogers State Historic Park (34%), as shown in Figure 69. Some visitors listed other sites (not on the map) which they had visited - Sycamore Canyon, La Jolla Valley, Temescal Canyon, Charmlee Park, Coldwater Canyon, Red Rock Canyon, Malibu Lagoon, Cold Creek Preserve, Stunt Ranch, Rocky Peak, and Point Duane.

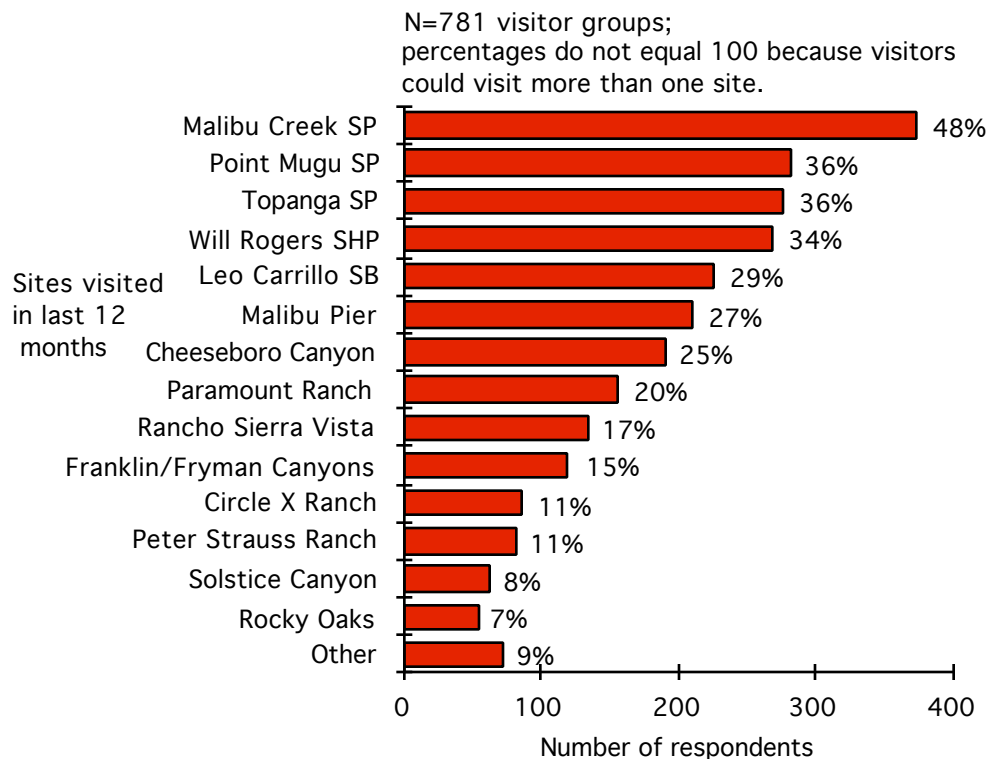


Figure 69: Sites visited in last 12 months

General visitors were asked what forms of transportation they used to get to Santa Monica Mountains on this visit. Visitors most often used a car to get to the park on this visit (91%), as shown in Figure 70. Twelve percent used bicycles and 10% walked. Other forms of transportation were recreation vehicles, buses, motorcycles, and truck and horse trailers.

Forms of transportation

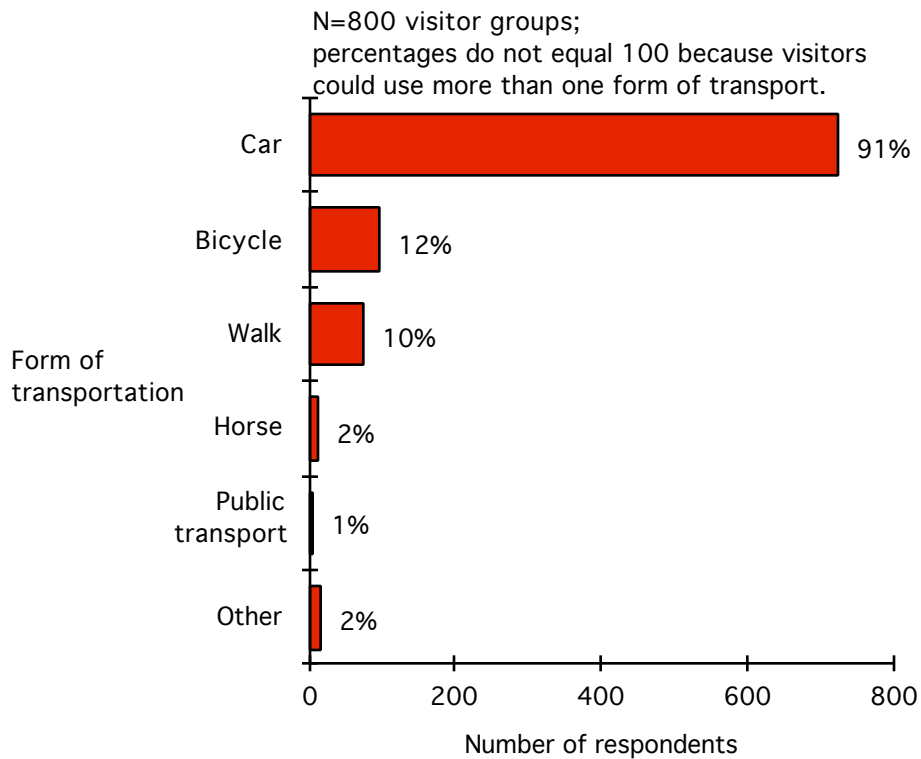


Figure 70: Forms of transportation

Reasons for visit

General visitors identified their reasons for visiting Santa Monica Mountains. These included to enjoy scenic views (80%), for recreational activities (66%), and to escape from the city (53%), as shown in Figure 71. "Other" reasons visitors listed included to recreate, mountain bike, enjoy nature, relax, picnic, get exercise, see wildflowers, see Will Rogers home, walk dogs, camp, see movie set, and fish.

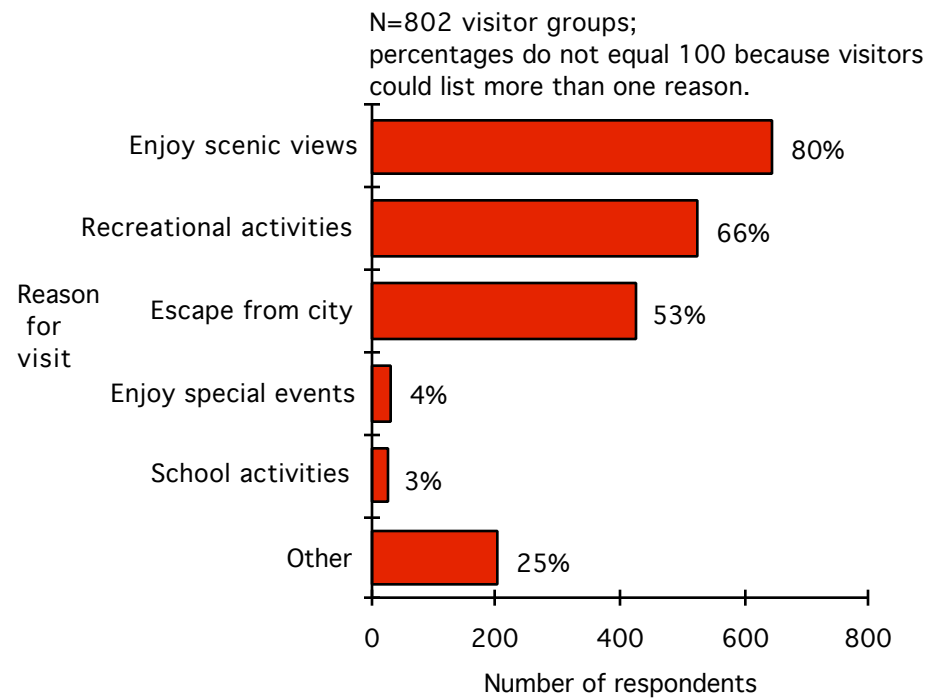


Figure 71: Reasons for visit

Among general visitors, the most commonly used visitor services were trails (61%), parking areas (56%), park brochure/maps (38%), and bulletin boards (34%), as shown in Figure 72.

**Visitor
services: use,
importance
and quality**

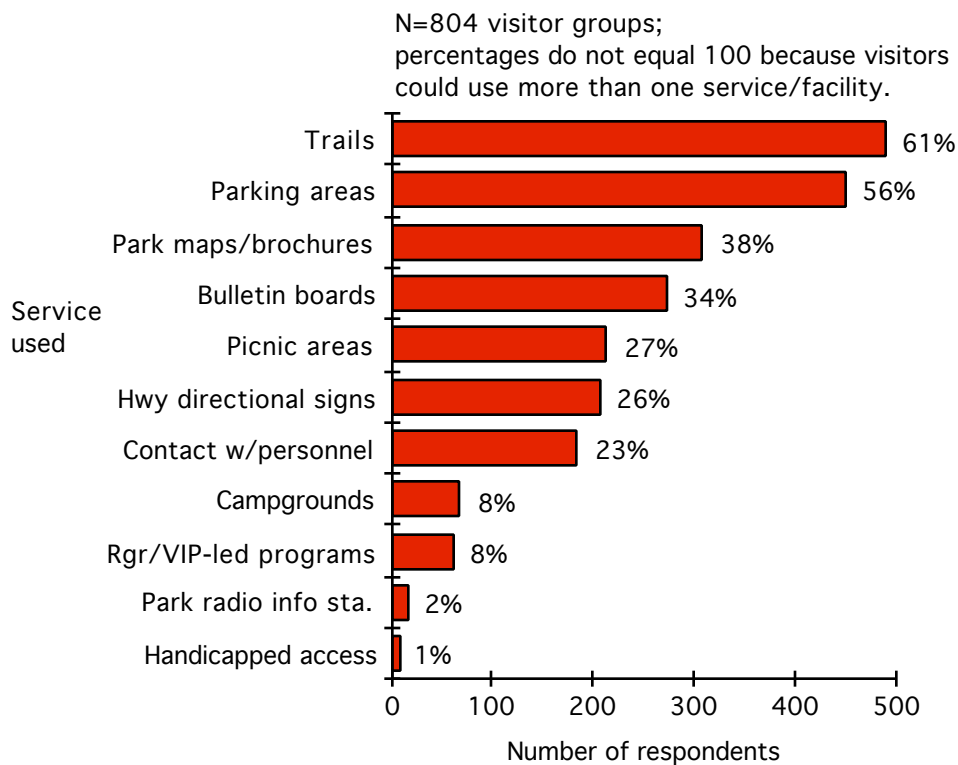


Figure 72: Services used

General visitors rated the importance and quality of visitor services they used. They used a five point scale (see boxes below).

IMPORTANCE 1=extremely important 2=very important 3=moderately important 4=somewhat important 5=not important	QUALITY 1=very good 2=good 3=average 4=poor 5=very poor
--	--

Figure 73 shows the average importance and quality ratings for each service. An average score was determined for each service based on ratings by visitors who used that service. This was done for both importance and quality. The results were plotted on the grid shown in Figure 73. Services were all rated above average in importance and quality.

Figures 74-84 show that several services received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: trails (91%), campgrounds (81%), and picnic areas (78%). The highest "somewhat important" to "not important" ratings were for bulletin boards (17%) and contact with park personnel (14%).

Figures 85-95 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" ratings: park personnel (83%), ranger/volunteer-led programs (81%), and trails (77%). The services receiving the highest "poor" to "very poor" ratings were highway directional signs (19%) and picnic areas (16%).

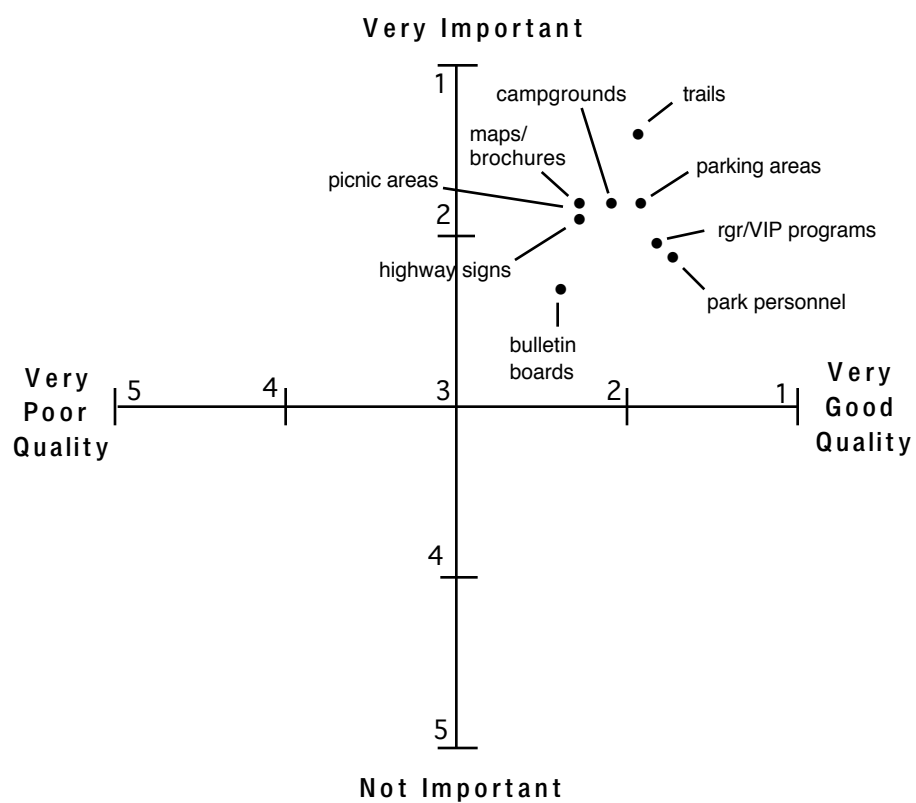


Figure 73: Average ratings of visitor services' importance and quality

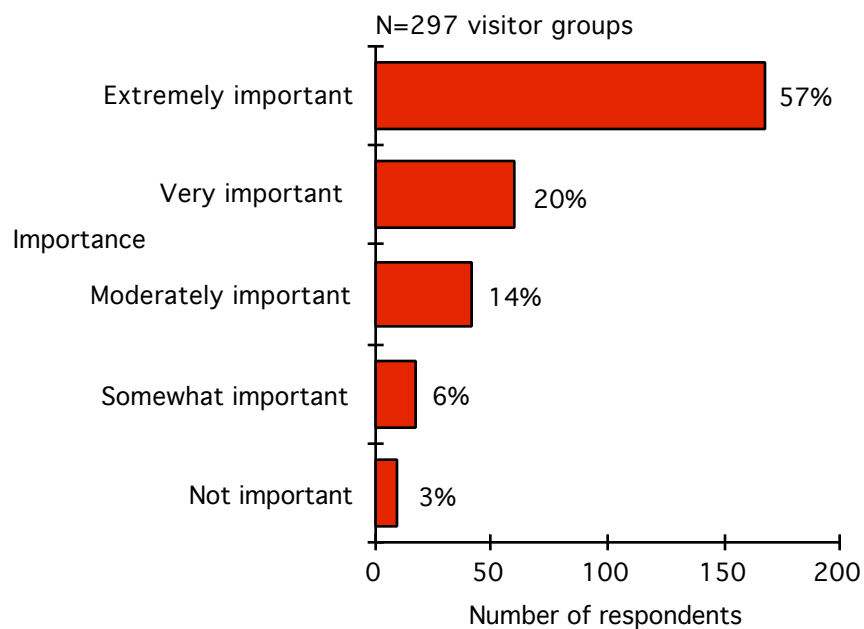


Figure 74: Importance of park maps/brochures

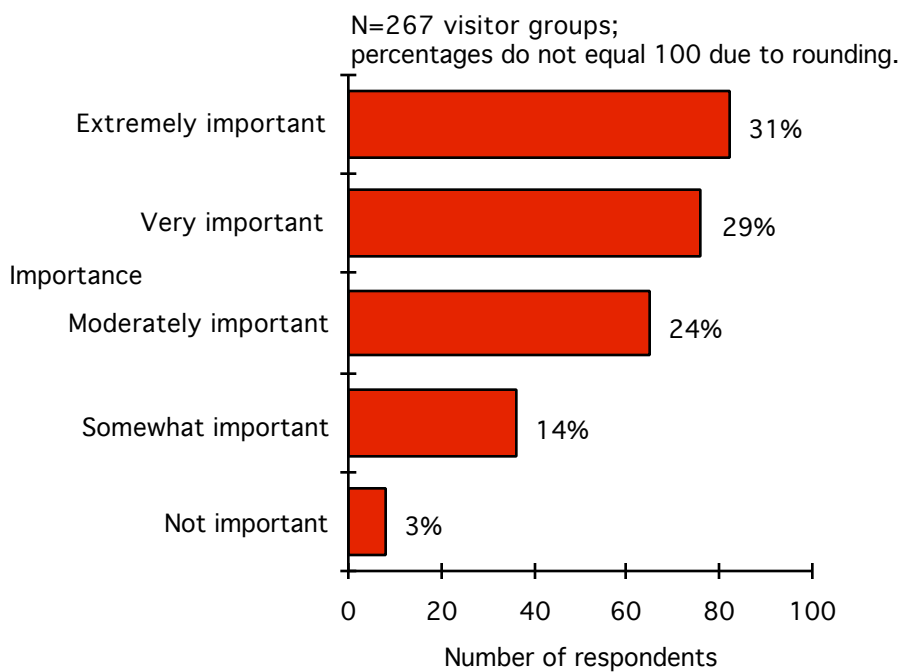


Figure 75: Importance of bulletin boards

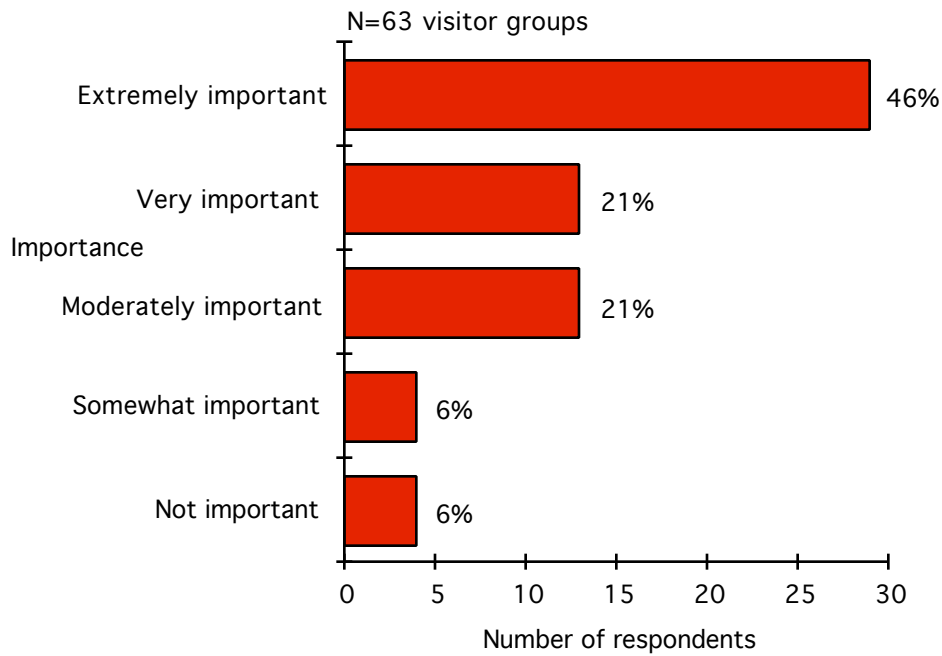


Figure 76: Importance of ranger/volunteer-led programs

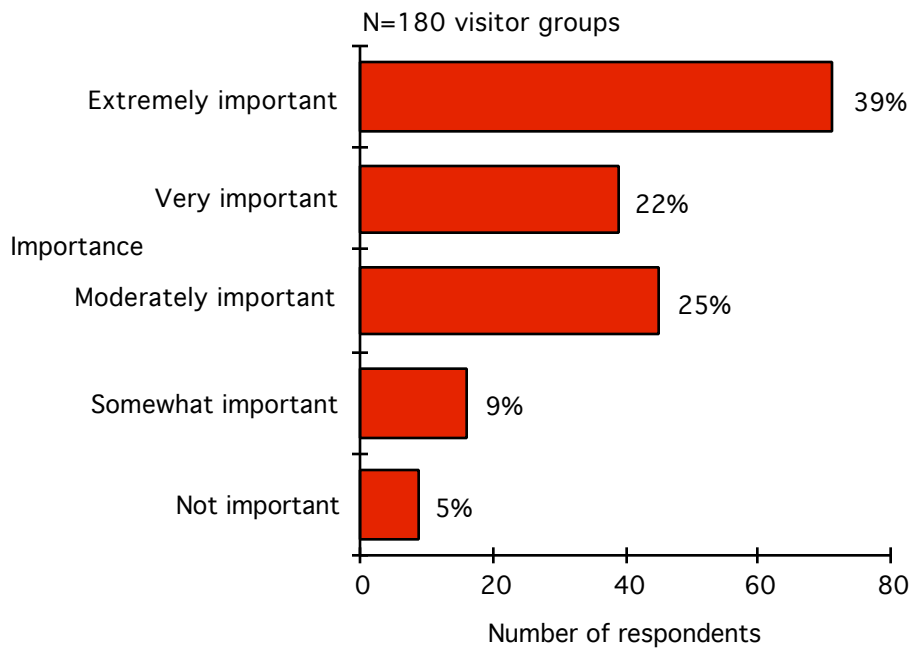


Figure 77: Importance of contact with park personnel

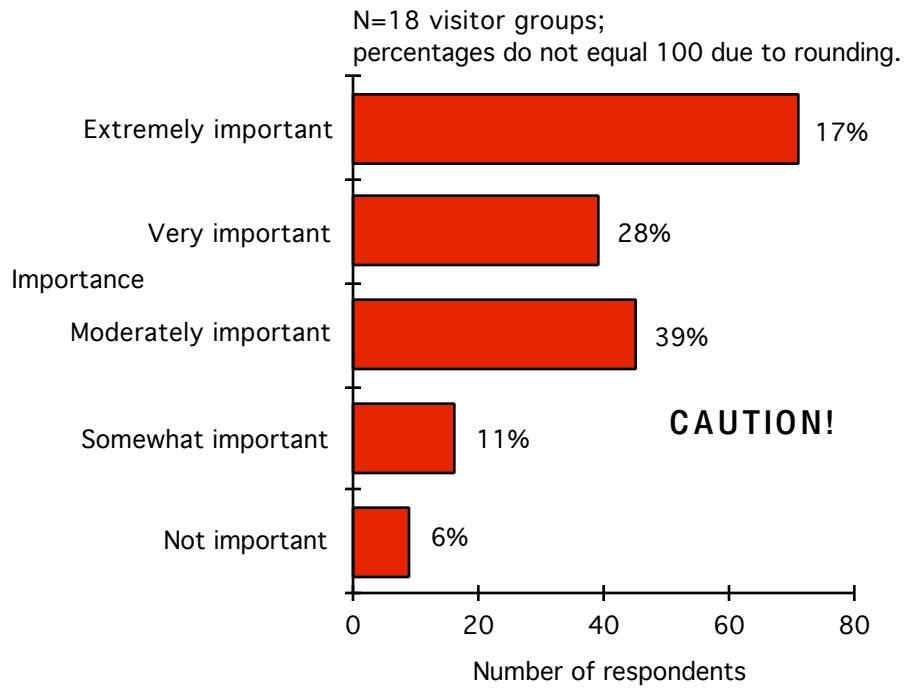


Figure 78: Importance of park radio information station

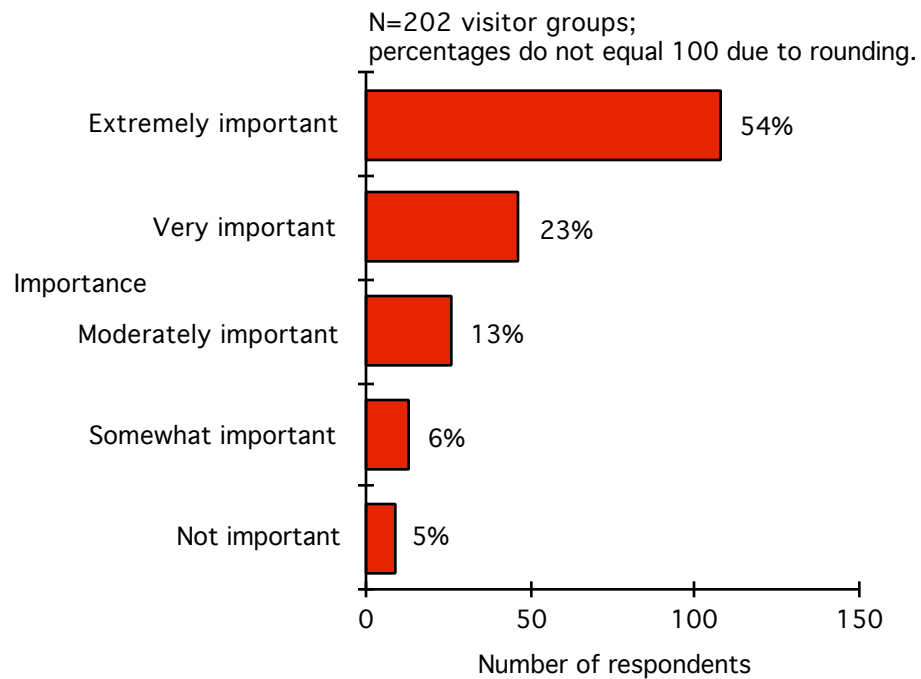


Figure 79: Importance of highway directional signs

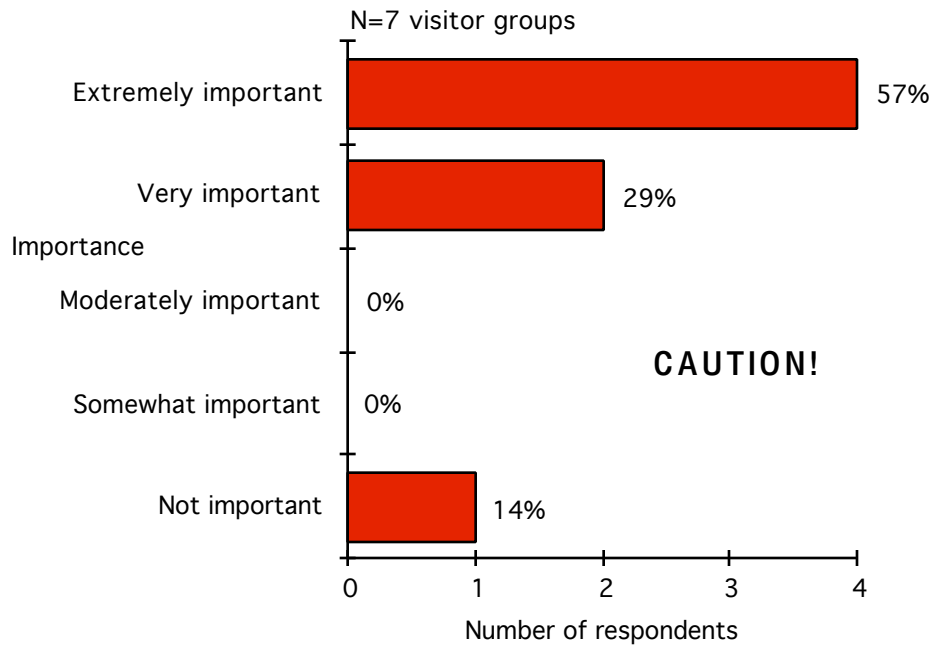


Figure 80: Importance of handicapped access

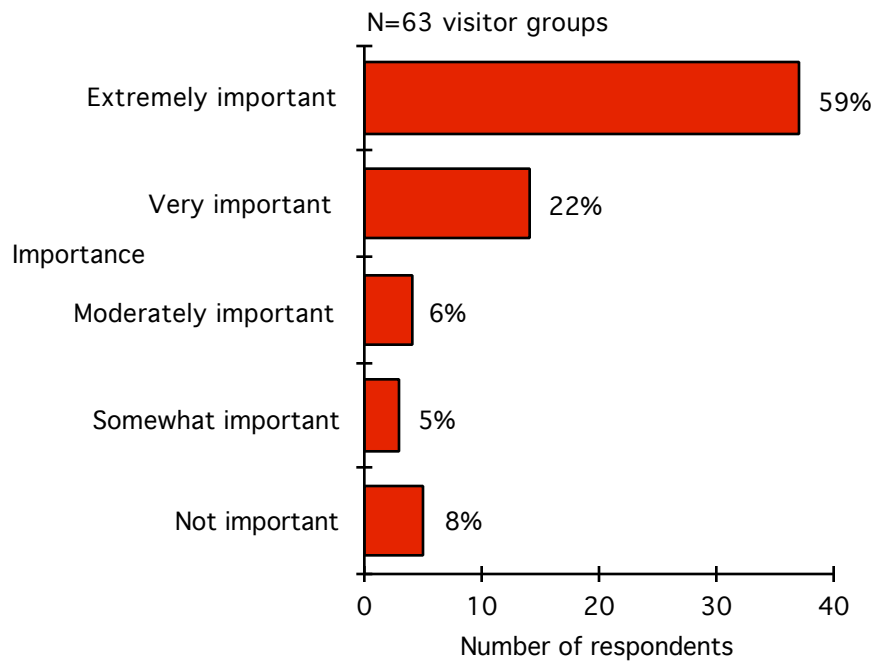


Figure 81: Importance of campgrounds

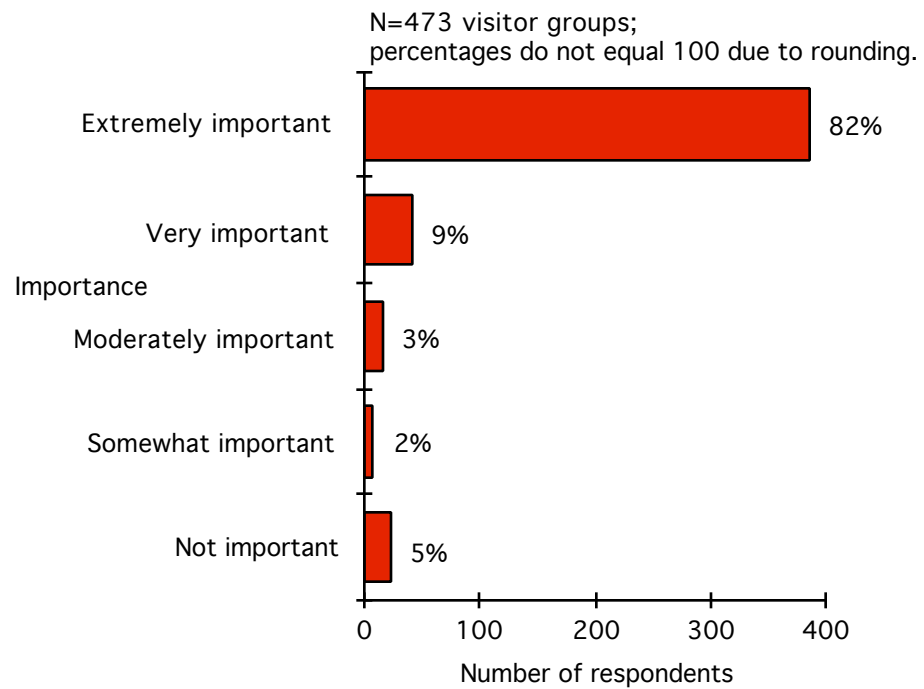


Figure 82: Importance of trails

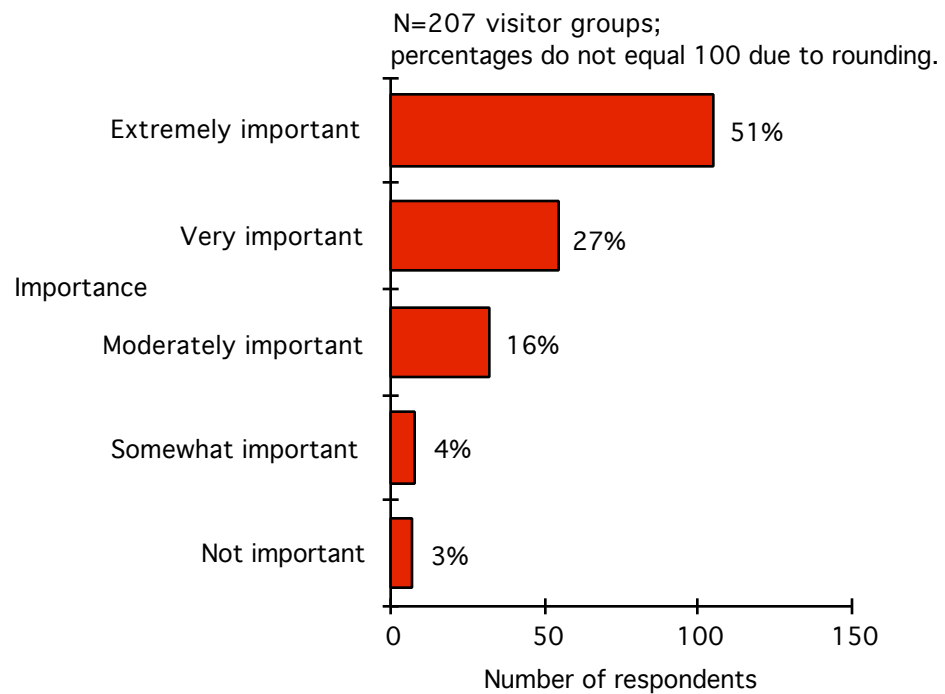


Figure 83: Importance of picnic areas

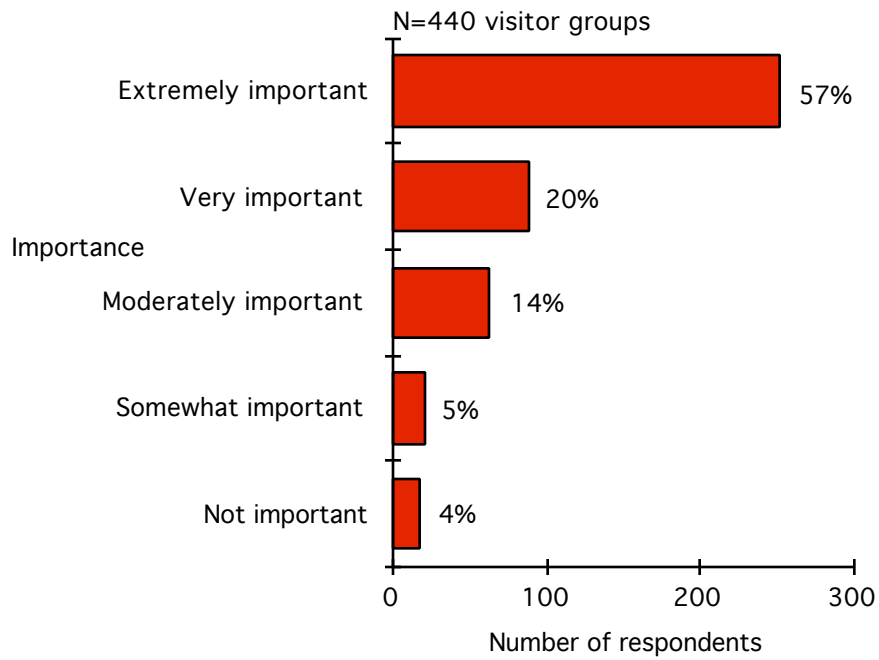


Figure 84: Importance of parking areas

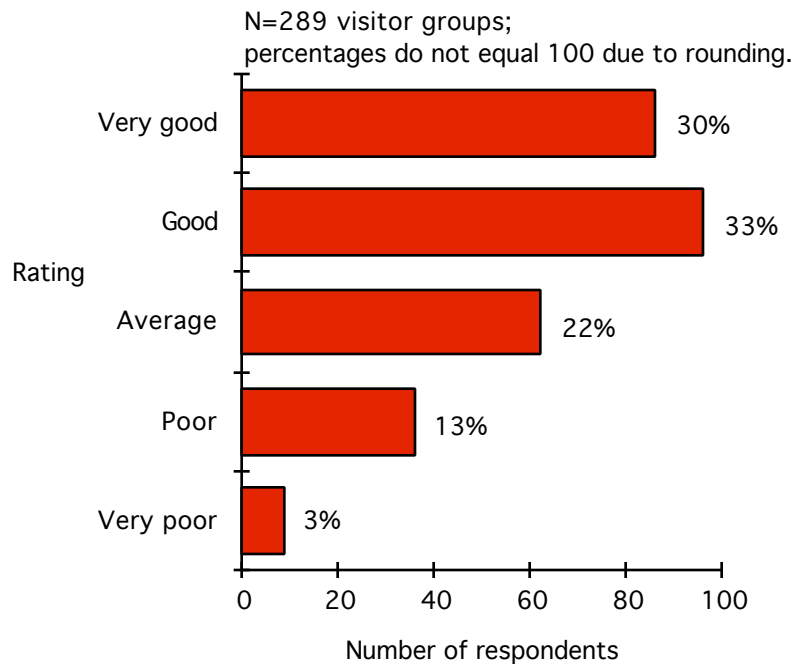


Figure 85: Quality of park maps/brochures

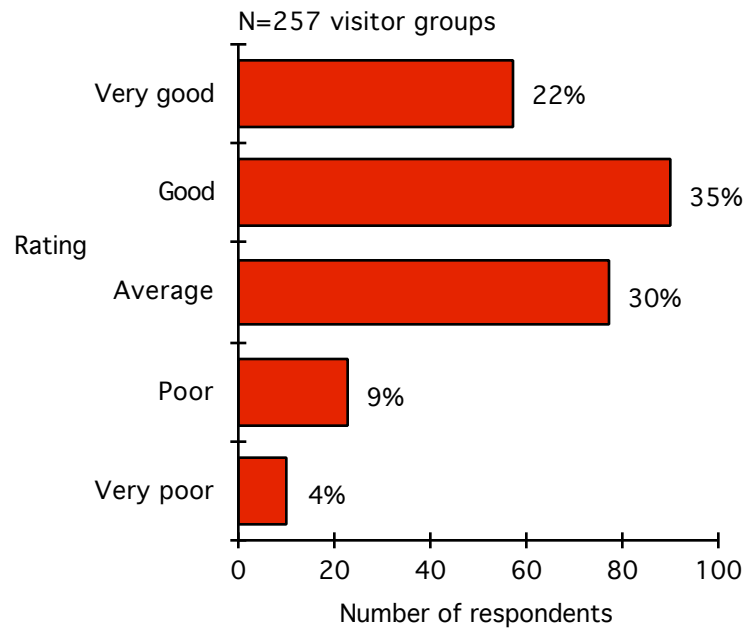


Figure 86: Quality of bulletin boards

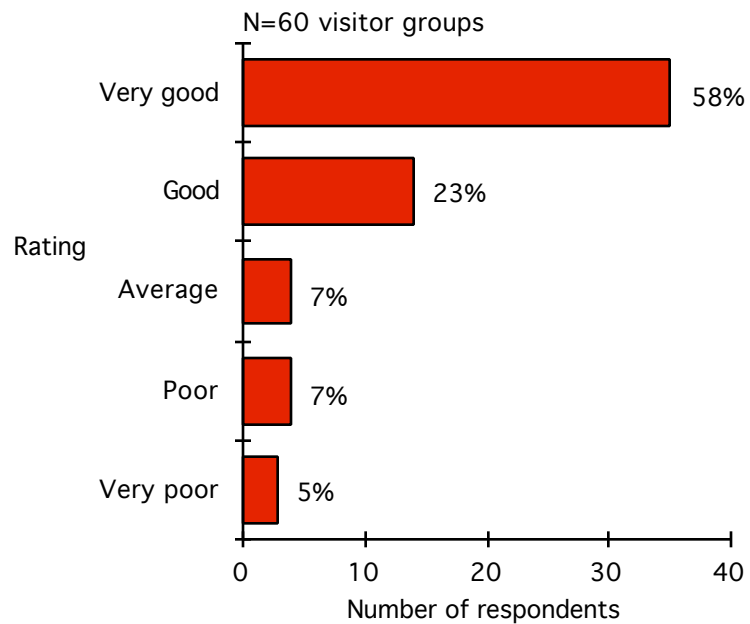


Figure 87: Quality of ranger/volunteer-led programs

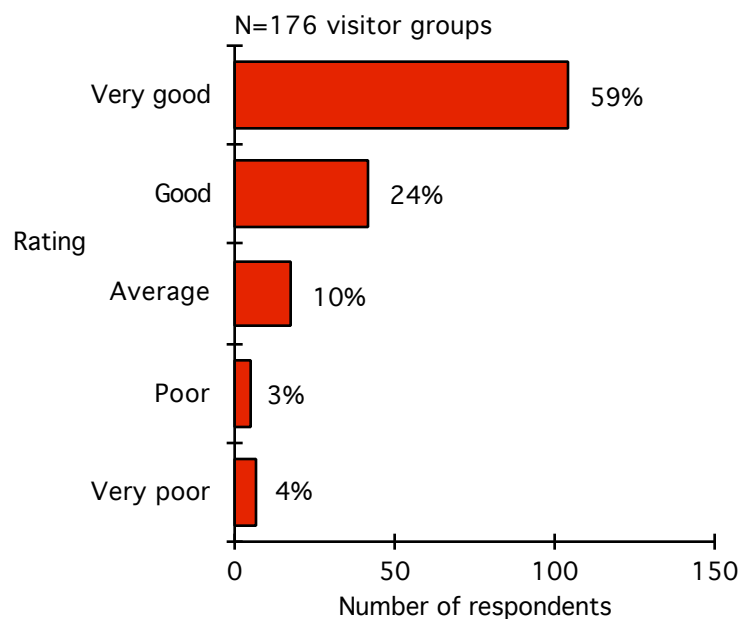


Figure 88: Quality of contact with park personnel



Figure 89: Quality of park radio information station

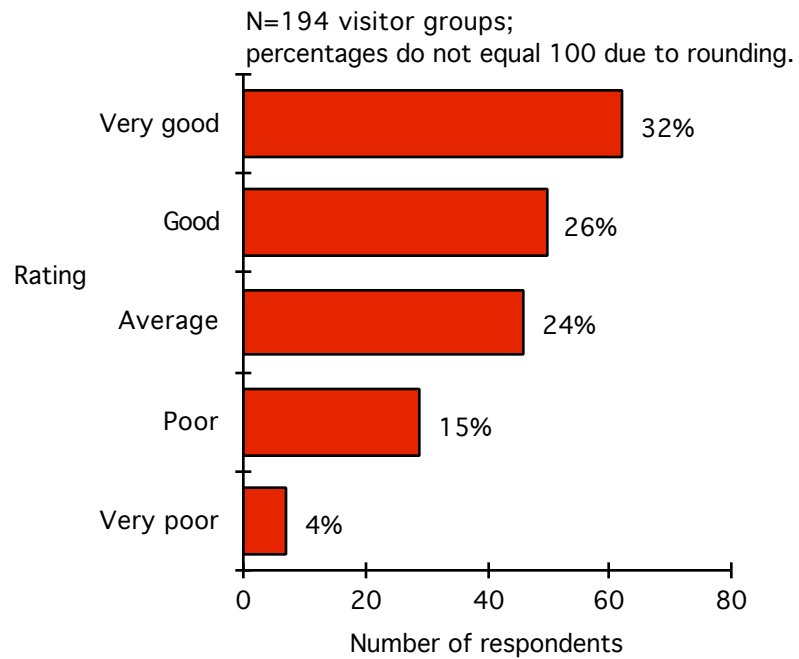


Figure 90: Quality of highway directional signs

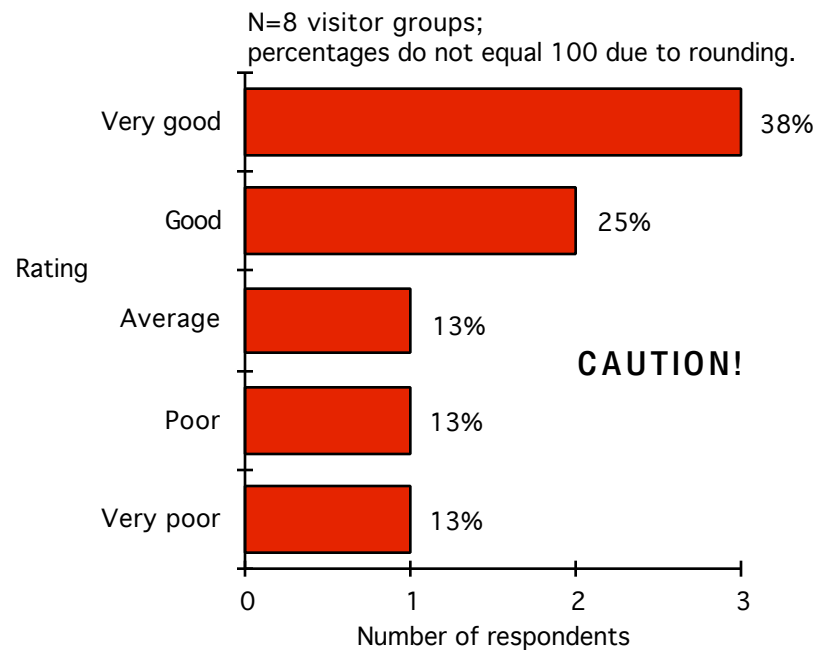


Figure 91: Quality of handicapped access

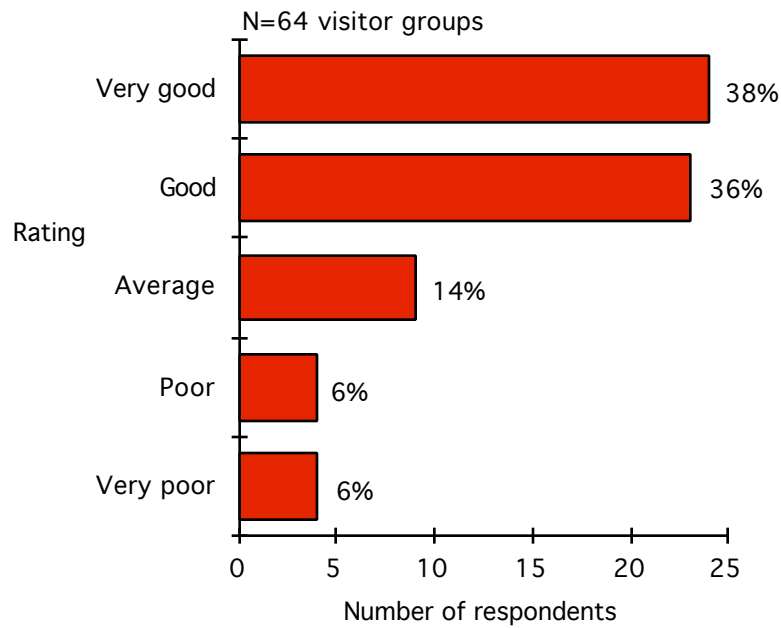


Figure 92: Quality of campgrounds

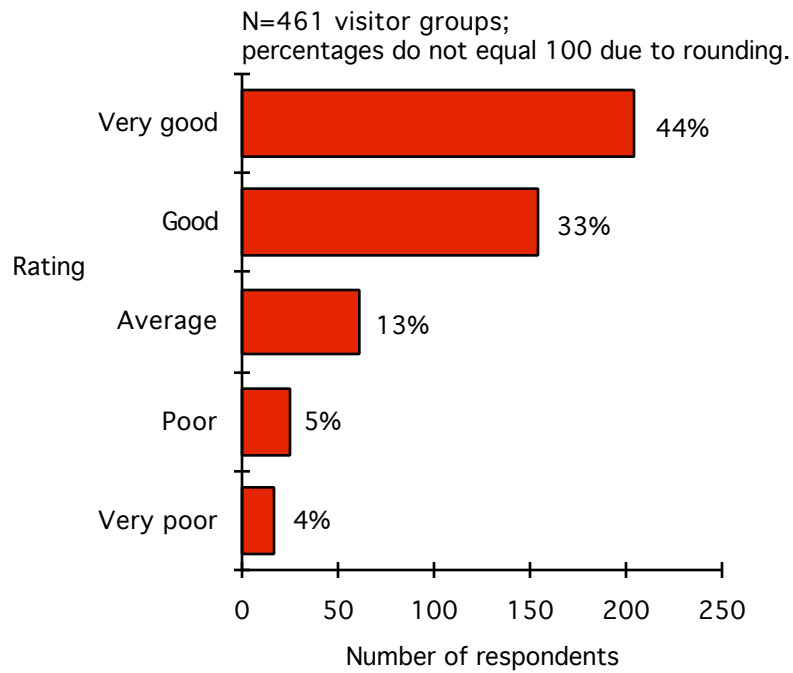


Figure 93: Quality of trails

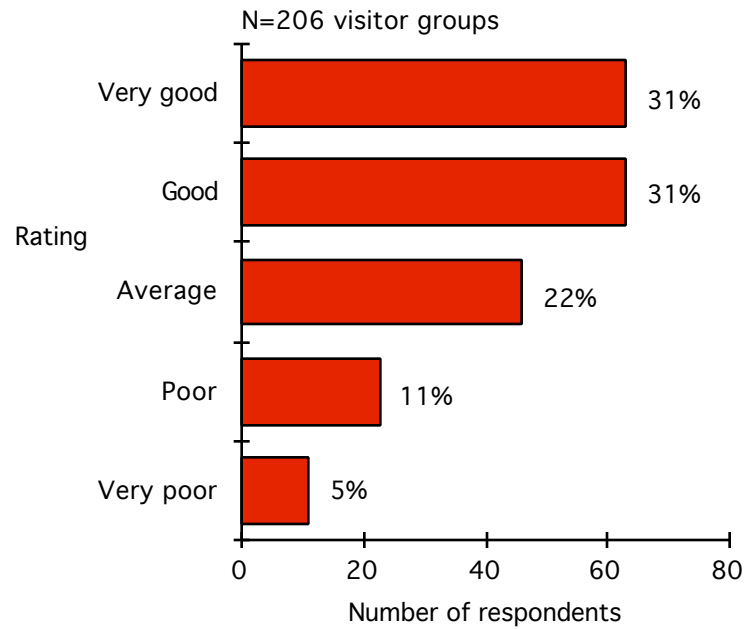


Figure 94: Quality of picnic areas

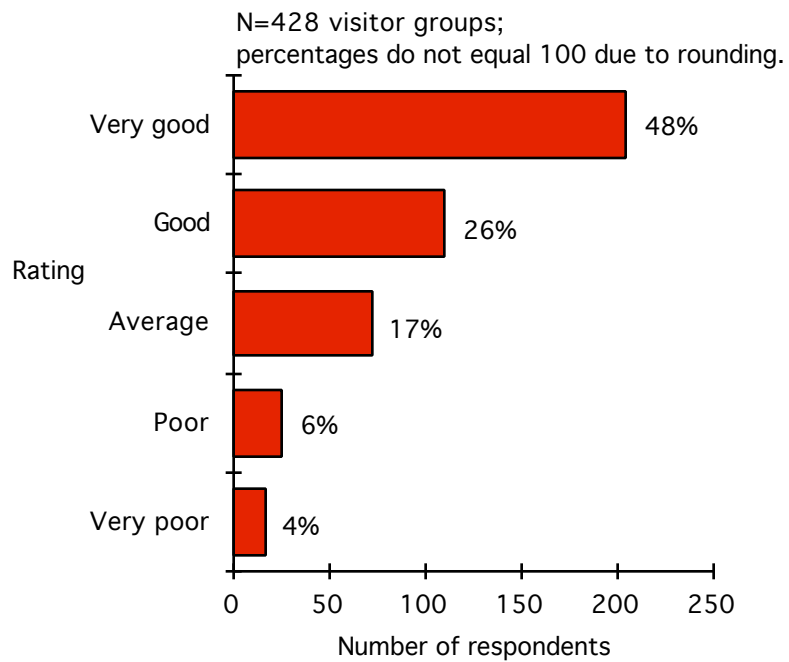


Figure 95: Quality of parking areas

Most general visitors (95%) did not stay overnight at a motel, campground or other accommodation in the Santa Monica Mountains area (see Figure 96). Eighty-eight percent of those groups staying overnight spent one or two nights (see Figure 97).

Overnight visits

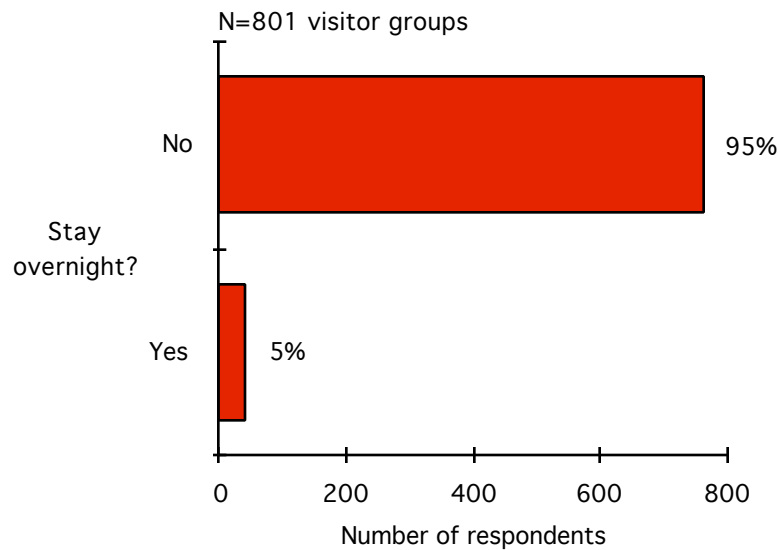


Figure 96: Overnight stays in the Santa Monica Mountains area

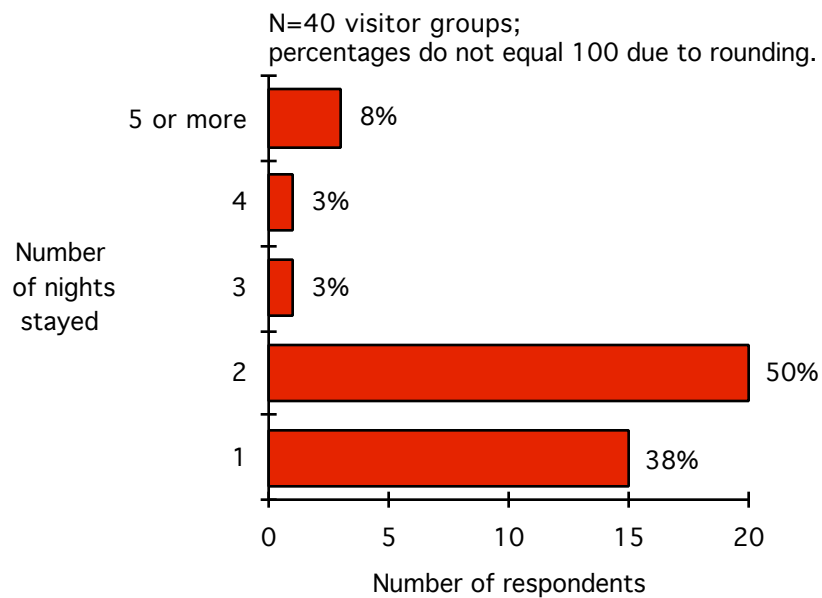


Figure 97: Number of nights stayed

Expenditures

General visitors were asked to list their expenditures for overnight accommodations during their visit to Santa Monica Mountains. They were also asked to list the amount they spent for travel (gas, bus fare, etc.); food (restaurant, groceries, etc.) and "other" items (souvenirs, film, tours, etc.) on the day they receive their questionnaire.

Fifty-nine percent of general visitors spent \$50 or less for lodging, travel, food and other items on the day they visited, as shown in Figure 98. The largest proportion of their money was spent on food (56%), followed by travel (27%), as shown in Figure 99.

During their visit to the Santa Monica Mountains area, general visitor groups were asked to report lodging expenditures. Of those reporting expenditures, 55% spent \$50 or less for lodging during their visit (see Figure 100).

For travel, most general visitors (61%) reported expenditures of \$25 or less (see Figure 101). For food and "other" items, visitors often spent no money (see Figures 102-103).

Including lodging, the average general visitor group expenditure on the day of their visit was \$24. Including lodging, the average per capita visitor expenditure on the day of their visit was \$9.

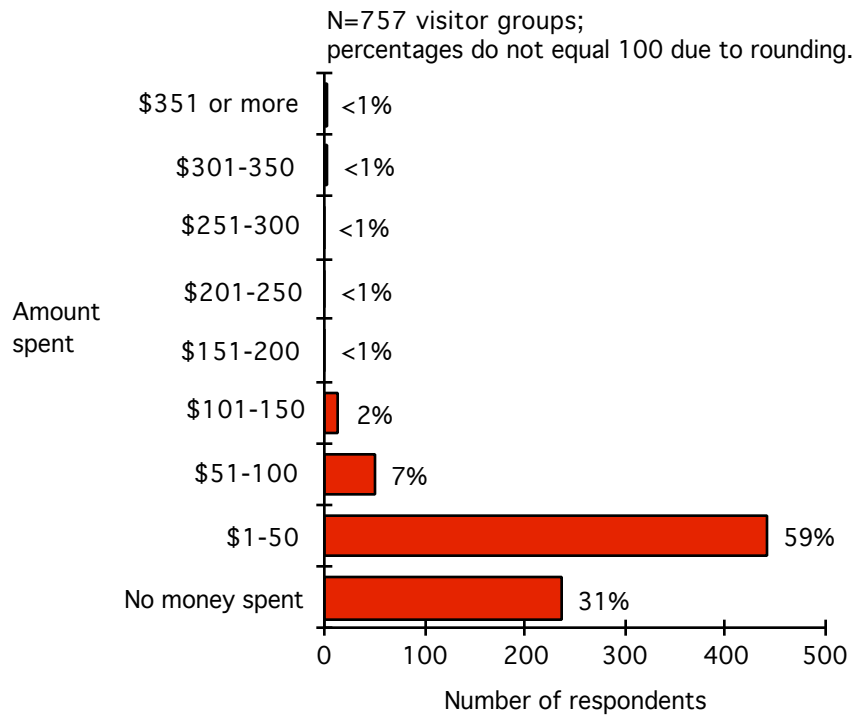


Figure 98: Total expenditures

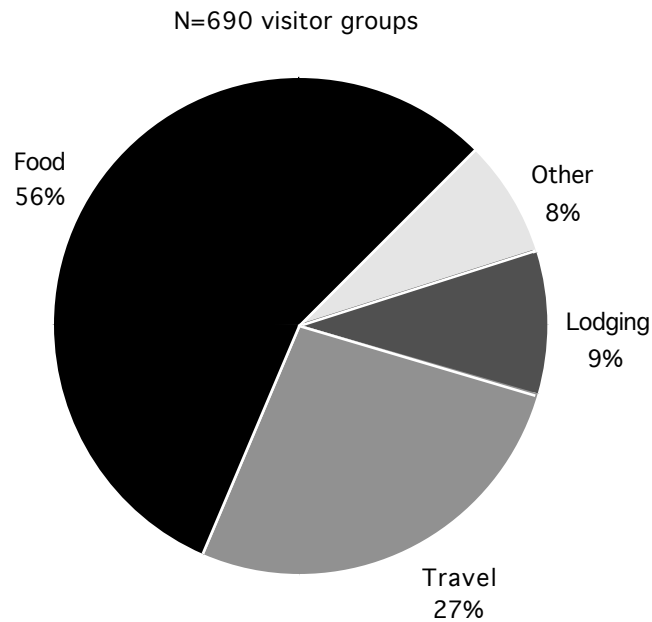


Figure 99: Proportion of visitor group expenditures by category

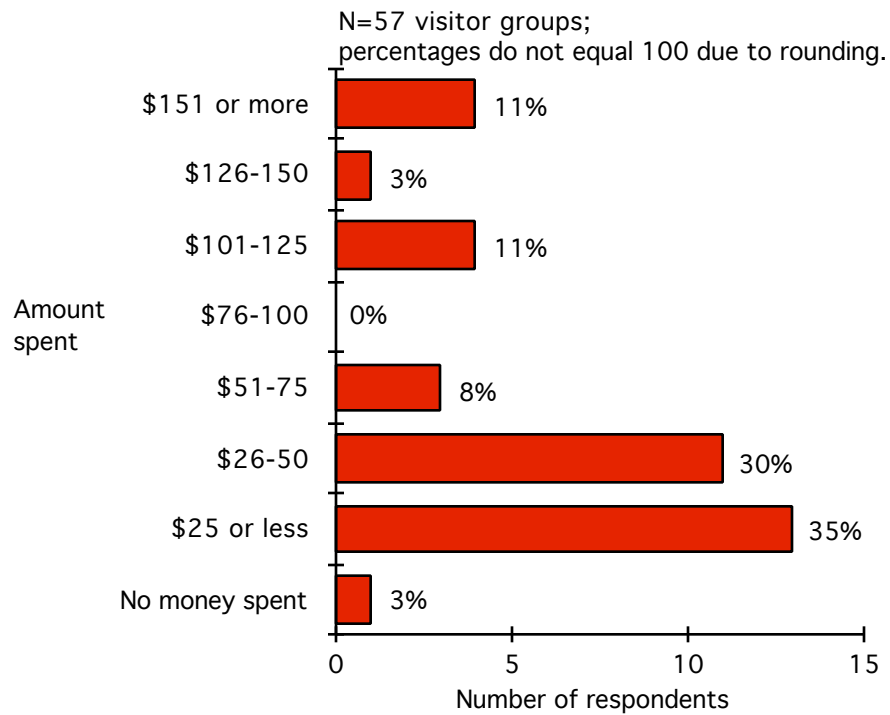


Figure 100: Visitor expenditures for lodging

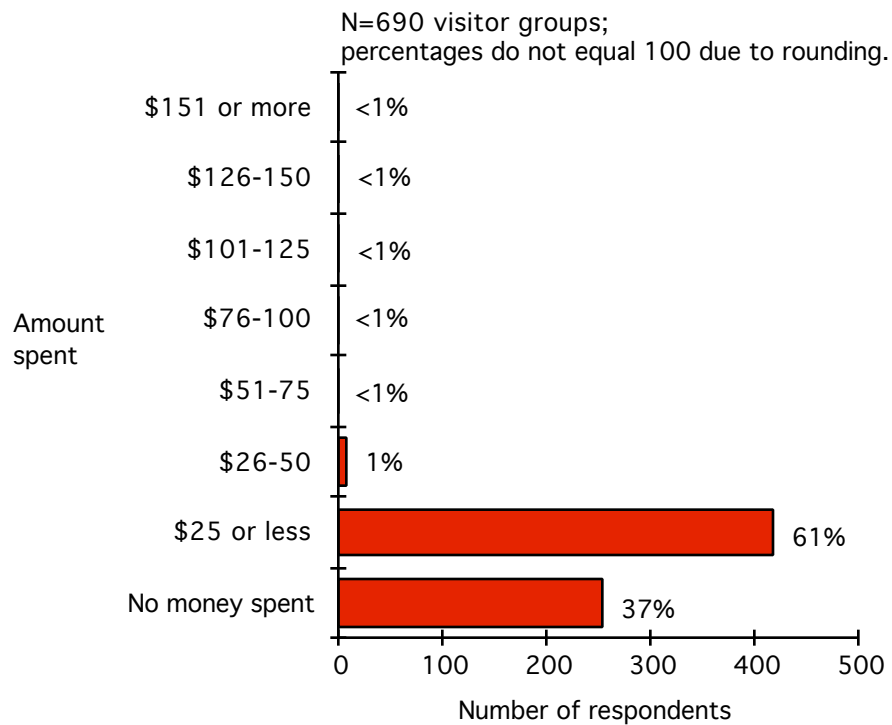


Figure 101: Visitor expenditures for travel

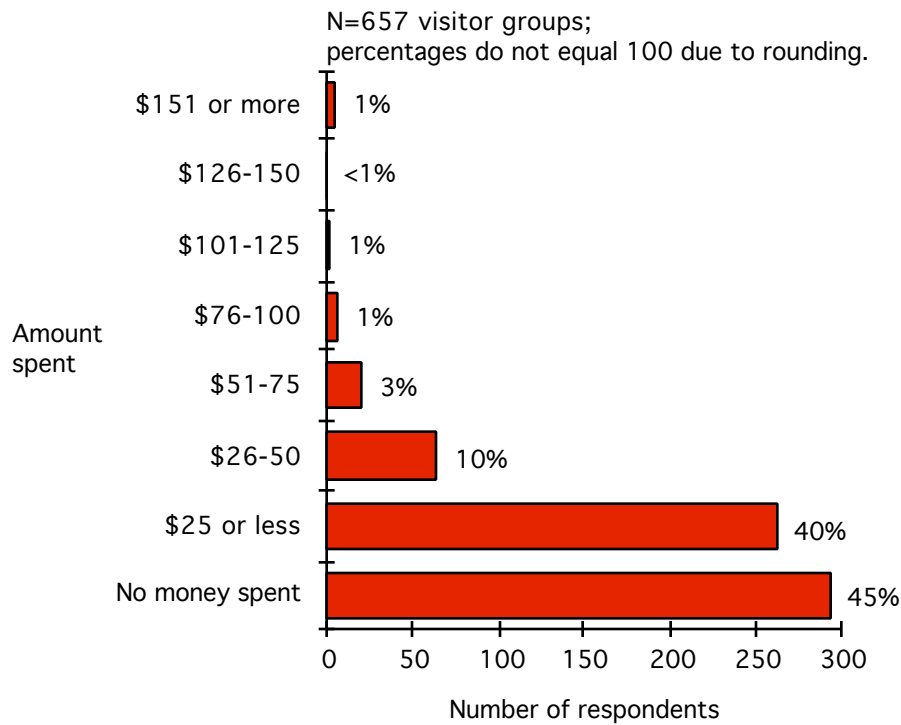


Figure 102: Visitor expenditures for food

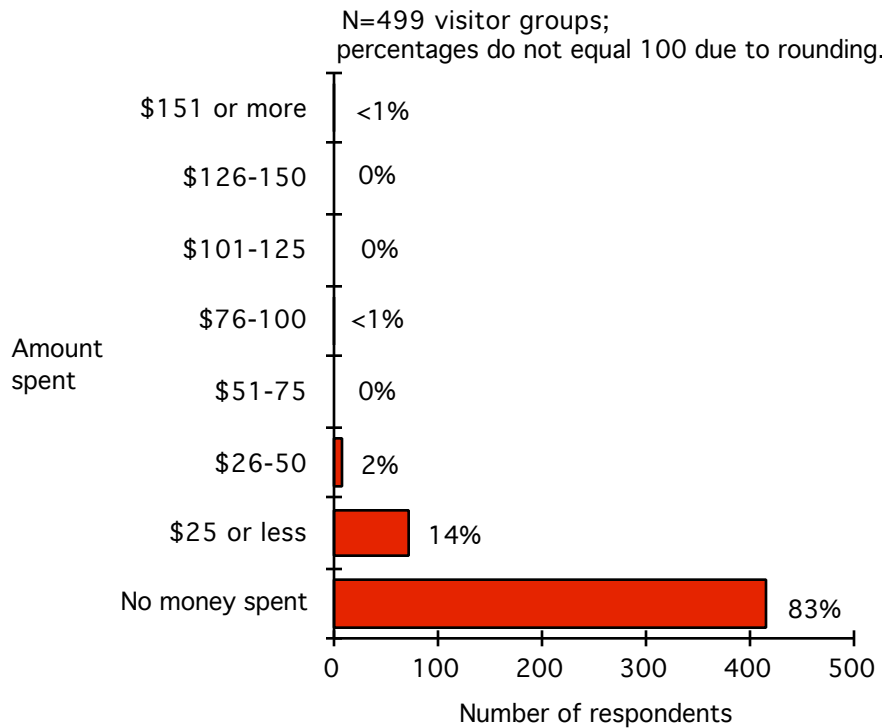


Figure 103: Visitor expenditures for "other" items

**Travelers
information
radio station
use**

General visitors were asked if they listened to the Travelers Information Radio station (1610 AM) on this visit and past visits. On this visit, 2% of visitors listened to the station (see Figure 104). On past visits, 6% of visitors listened to the station, as shown in Figure 105.

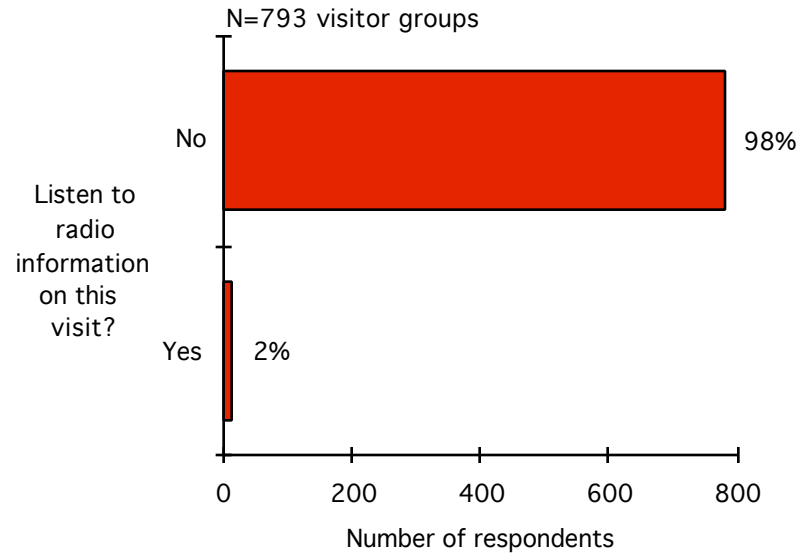


Figure 104: Listen to radio information station on this visit?

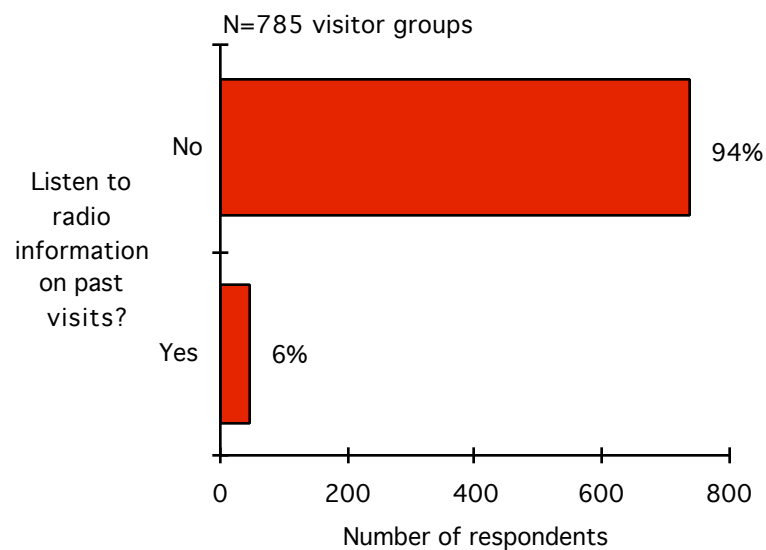


Figure 105: Listen to radio information station on past visits?

General visitors were asked what they would propose if they were a manager planning for the future of Santa Monica Mountains. A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

Planning for the future

Planning for the future

N=1088 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
---------	---------------------------

PERSONNEL

Need ranger patrol/enforcement	24
Need more rangers/volunteers	13
Other comments	3

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Nonpersonal

Provide trail map brochures	42
Provide more park information	26
More school field trips, especially for inner city children	23
Educate visitors about trail etiquette, safety, respect of resources	22
Post trail information/maps at each trailhead	17
Advertise park more, including special events	17
Provide interpretive information about plants, animals, geology, etc.	15
Provide park maps	11
Teach proper park use at schools	10
Identify plants along trails	5
Provide more information booths/centers	5
Don't advertise park	4
Provide wildlife information	3
Establish mailing list for park activities/events	3
Offer more special events	3
Emphasize native American culture	2
Provide safety warnings	2
Involve other experts in park operation	2
Improve Travelers Information Radio	2
Other comments	5

Personal

Offer more guided activities, including mountain bike	20
Provide children's activities, e.g. youth camps	2
Other comments	1

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

General

Need better highway signing	38
Add more picnic areas	22
Improve toilets/cleanliness	21
Provide drinking water	21

Add campgrounds	17
Improve/enlarge parking lots	13
Add emergency phones/aid stations	8
Add backcountry campsites	7
Provide snack machines/refreshment/concession stand	7
Improve litter cleanup	7
Provide shaded picnic tables nearby	6
Add more trash cans	5
Improve road conditions	5
Establish off road vehicle area	2
Keep park rustic	2
Establish or improve ponds	2
Keep park/facilities as well maintained as they are	2
Provide grills at picnic areas	2
Other comments	13

Trails

Improve trail maintenance	61
Trails poorly marked - add directional, distance, mode of transport info	38
Add more mountain bike trails	37
Use volunteers to do trail maintenance/construction	24
Provide multi-use roads/trails	12
Complete Backbone Trail	11
Need more restrooms at trailheads	8
Add water crossings/bridges	7
Provide separate trails for separate users	6
Use adopt-a-trail program	5
Provide benches in shade for older hikers	4
Add trails	4
Find more money for trail maintenance	3
Create loop trails	3
Make most activities handicapped accessible	3
Connect trails between park units	3
Provide nature trails for children	2
Other comments	2

POLICIES

Parking/camping fees too expensive	25
Add emergency phones/aid stations	10
Make single track biking legal	8
Prohibit off road vehicles	8
Want no cost for park use	7
Allow dogs in some areas	7
Fine for littering/graffiti/vandalism	6
Prohibit blaring radios/noise pollution	6
Establish clearer rules on trail uses allowed	5
Discourage mountain biking	5
Continue to allow mountain biking	5
Open parking lots earlier	4
Keep some areas for hikers only	4
Concerned about safety - keep gangs out	3
Charge entrance/use fee	3
Allow night fishing	3
Enforce dog leash rules	2
Do not charge trail fee	2
Require helmets for bikers	2

Current trail uses unsafe	2
Enforce road speed limits	2
Require hiking/biking permits	2
Limit/restrict traffic near parks	2
Other comments	7

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keep parks preserved/natural	86
Expand park areas as much as possible	42
Limit/stop development in Santa Monica Mts.	30
Keep it as it is	15
Plant trees	10
Maintain/expand wildlife habitat	10
Keep park open & available	8
Limit convenience facilities in park	8
Restore native vegetation	4
Rotate use of heavily used sites - allow recovery time	3
Allow mountain bikes on bike-designated trails only	3
Concerned about mountain bike/horse damage to resources	3
Require easements around developments	2
Other comments	11

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Good escape from city	2
Need public transportation to park	2
Other comments	4

**Comment
Summary**

Many general visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments are summarized below and in the appendix. Some comments offer specific suggestions on how to improve the park; others describe what visitors enjoyed or did not enjoy.

Visitor Comment Summary

N=567 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
---------	------------------------------

PERSONNEL

Staff friendly, helpful, knowledgeable	34
Need more rangers patrolling	6

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Need more detailed maps/information about park	14
Didn't know about radio information station	5
Provide map/brochures at trailhead parking lots	3
Teach value of nature	2
Sponsor community events	2
Provide more information on wildlife/plants	2
Other comments	2
Maps well done	2
Other comments	4

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE
General

Well maintained	30
Trails poorly maintained	19
Trails poorly marked	11
Add mountain bike trails	6
Add more drinking fountains	6
Improve maintenance - bathrooms/campgrounds	5
Trails well maintained	3
Trails clean	3
Use volunteers to help with maintenance	3
Appreciated clean restroom	2
Improve highway signs	2
Add more trash cans	2
Provide more campgrounds	2
Other comments	13

POLICIES

Patrol generally	6
Parking too expensive	4
Enforce rules on trails	3
Safety warnings should be posted	3
All trails should be multi-use	2
Discourage mountain biking	2
Rules should be posted	2
Confused about hiking fee	2
Need way to warn hikers of approaching bikes (for safety)	2
Other comments	10

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keep it preserved/natural	42
No more development	16
Acquire more land	13
Glad of park availability	11
Keep it as it is	5
Plant more trees	3
Concerned about declining resources	3
Concerned about increased use	2
Glad sites are little-used	2
Other comments	5

VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT

Thanks for great postcard	3
Sorry questionnaire is late	2
Thanks for replacement questionnaire	2
Other comments	3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Enjoyed visit	73
Good job/thanks	37
Beautiful/fantastic	35
Needed escape from city/makes life in LA possible	24
Enjoyed mountain biking	10
Plan/hope to return	8
Enjoyed hiking	7
Peaceful	6
Glad it exists	6
Visit parks quite often	5
Find way to tax, fund raise, accept donations to help park	4
Enjoyed camping	3
Involve local communities more	3
Enjoyed wildlife	2
Everyone in park seemed happy	2
Find more money to help this park	2
Mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians can get along	2
Other comments	7

MENU FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

Park personnel who wish to see other tables, graphs, and maps 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. For example, to learn about the sites visited by visitor of different ages, request a comparison of sites visited by age group; to help learn about the visitor group types who use picnic areas, request a comparison of visitor group types by picnic area use.

2) Three-way comparisons compare a two-way comparison to a third characteristic. For example, to learn about first time visitors' reasons for visiting and the sites they visited, request a comparison of (reasons for visiting by first time visitors) by sites visited; to learn about ages of mountain bike users at Sycamore Canyon, request a comparison of (age group by activity) by site visited.

Consult the list of characteristics for Santa Monica Mountains visitors; then complete the appropriate blanks on the order form. Make a copy of the order form which follows the example below.

SAMPLE

Visitor Services Project Analysis Order Form Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Report 55

Date of request: ____/____/____

Person requesting analysis: _____

Phone number (commercial): _____

The following list has the variables available for comparison from your park's visitor survey. Use this list to find the characteristics for which you want to request additional two-way and three-way comparisons. Be as specific as possible—you may select a single program/service/facility instead of all those listed in the questionnaire.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Awareness of park | • Sites visited (last 12 months) | • Visitor service use |
| • Knowledgeability about park | • Group size | • Visitor service importance |
| • Information sources | • Group type | • Visitor service quality |
| Forms of transportation used | • Guided tour | • Number of nights during visit |
| • Reasons for visit | • Age | • Lodging expenditures (visit) |
| • Activities | • State residence | • Travel expenditures (day) |
| • Frequency of visit | • Country residence | • Food expenditures (day) |
| • Weekday/weekend | • Number times visited | • Other expenditures (day) |
| • Time of day for visit | • Languages spoken | • Information radio this visit |
| • Length of stay | • Ethnicity | • Information radio past visits |

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

Sites visited by reasons for visit
by _____
by _____

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

frequency of visit by reasons for visit by sites visited
by _____ by _____
by _____ by _____

Special instructions Tell us the reason you need
the information, what you are
trying to find out, etc.

Mail to:

Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133

Visitor Services Project Analysis Order Form
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
Report 55

Date of request: ____/____/____

Person requesting analysis: _____

Phone number (commercial): _____

The following list has the variables available for comparison from your park's visitor survey. Use this list to find the characteristics for which you want to request additional two-way and three-way comparisons. Be as specific as possible--you may select a single program/service/facility instead of all those listed in the questionnaire.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Awareness of park | • Sites visited (last 12 months) | • Visitor service use |
| • Knowledgeability about park | • Group size | • Visitor service importance |
| • Information sources | • Group type | • Visitor service quality |
| Forms of transportation used | • Guided tour | • Number of nights during visit |
| • Reasons for visit | • Age | • Lodging expenditures (visit) |
| • Activities | • State residence | • Travel expenditures (day) |
| • Frequency of visit | • Country residence | • Food expenditures (day) |
| • Weekday/weekend | • Number times visited | • Other expenditures (day) |
| • Time of day for visit | • Languages spoken | • Information radio this visit |
| • Length of stay | • Ethnicity | • Information radio past visits |

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

_____ by _____
_____ by _____
_____ by _____

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

_____ by _____ by _____
_____ by _____ by _____
_____ by _____ by _____

Special instructions _____

Mail to:

Visitor Services Project, CPSU
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133

QUESTIONNAIRE

Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-4 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All VSP reports listed below are available from the parks where the studies were conducted.

1985

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex

1986

6. Crater Lake National Park

1987

7. Gettysburg National Military Park
8. Independence National Historical Park
9. Valley Forge National Historical Park
10. Colonial National Historical Park
11. Grand Teton National Park
12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
13. Mesa Verde National Park
14. Shenandoah National Park
15. Yellowstone National Park
16. Independence National Historical Park:
Four Seasons Study

1988

17. Glen Canyon National Recreational Area
18. Denali National Park and Preserve
19. Bryce Canyon National Park
20. Craters of the Moon National Monument

1989

21. Everglades National Park
22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
23. The White House Tours, President's Park (summer)
24. Lincoln Home National Historical Site
25. Yellowstone National Park
26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

28. Canyonlands National Park
29. White Sands National Monument
30. National Monuments
31. Kenai Fjords National Park
32. Gateway National Recreation Area
33. Petersburg National Battlefield
34. Death Valley National Monument
35. Glacier National Park
36. Scott's Bluff National Monument
37. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

1991

38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
39. Joshua Tree National Monument
40. The White House Tours, President's Park (spring)
41. Natchez Trace Parkway

1991 (continued)

42. Stehekin-North Cascades NP/ Lake Chelan NRA
43. City of Rocks National Reserve
44. The White House Tours, President's Park (fall)

1992

45. Big Bend National Park
46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
47. Glen Echo Park
48. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
49. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
50. Zion National Park
51. New River Gorge National River
52. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
53. Arlington House-The Robert E. Lee Memorial

1993

54. Belle Haven Park/Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
55. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

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 83844-1133 or call (208) 885-7129.

Visitor Services Project Publications

Reports 1-4 (pilot studies) are available from the University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit. All VSP reports listed below are available from the parks where the studies were conducted.

1985

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex

1986

6. Crater Lake National Park

1987

7. Gettysburg National Military Park
8. Independence National Historical Park
9. Valley Forge National Historical Park
10. Colonial National Historical Park
11. Grand Teton National Park
12. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
13. Mesa Verde National Park
14. Shenandoah National Park
15. Yellowstone National Park
16. Independence National Historical Park: Four Seasons Study

1988

17. Glen Canyon National Recreational Area
18. Denali National Park and Preserve
19. Bryce Canyon National Park
20. Craters of the Moon National Monument

1989

21. Everglades National Park
22. Statue of Liberty National Monument
23. The White House Tours, President's Park
24. Lincoln Home National Historical Site
25. Yellowstone National Park
26. Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
27. Muir Woods National Monument

1990

28. Canyonlands National Park
29. White Sands National Monument
30. National Monuments
31. Kenai Fjords National Park

1990 (continued)

32. Gateway National Recreation Area
33. Petersburg National Battlefield
34. Death Valley National Monument
35. Glacier National Park
36. Scott's Bluff National Monument
37. John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

1991

38. Jean Lafitte National Historical Park
39. Joshua Tree National Monument
40. The White House Tours, President's Park
41. Natchez Trace Parkway
42. Stehekin-North Cascades National Park/Lake Chelan National Rec. Area
43. City of Rocks National Reserve
44. The White House Tours, President's Park

1992

45. Big Bend National Park
46. Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
47. Glen Echo Park
48. Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
49. Jefferson National Expansion Memorial
50. Zion National Park
51. New River Gorge National River
52. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
53. Arlington House-The Robert E. Lee Memorial

1993

54. Belle Haven Park/Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve
55. Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

<p>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,</p>
--

Moscow, Idaho 83844-1133 or call (208) 885-7129.

Visitor Services Project Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Appendix

Visitor Services Project Report 55
Cooperative Park Studies Unit



Visitor Services Project

Santa Monica Mountains

National Recreation Area

Appendix

Margaret Littlejohn

Report 55

December 1993

This volume contains a summary of visitors' comments for Questions 22 and 23.
The summary is followed by their unedited comments.

Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Western Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Professor Freddie McClain and the sociology students at LA Pierce College, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the staff at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area for their assistance with this study. Impact Photo Graphics donated the wildlife postcards used for survey follow-ups. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.

Planning for the future

N=200 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Parking personnel should be more polite	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize park locations/recreation opportunities more	21
Continue allowing/offer more special events	7
Need general column in newspaper about park/trails/events	6
Provide trail/site maps	5
Publicize special events more	4
Publicize opportunities for volunteers	2
Rate trail difficulty	2
Provide safety information	2
Park radio information station not working	2
Other comment	1
Personal	
Offer more ranger/volunteer-guided activities	5
Other comment	1
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Build more trails	10
Need better marked trails	7
Maintain lack of graffiti/cleanliness	5
Improve/need more highway signs	4
Build more picnic areas	4
Build more campgrounds	4
Improve restroom quality/availability	4
Build handicapped walkways	3
Improve trails	3
Maintain current trails/campgrounds	3
Build additional nature/visitor centers	2
Improve transportation options to parks	2
Offer public cleanup days	2
Provide more trash cans	2
Other comments	5
POLICIES	
Educate/enforce rules to preserve resources	9
Keep park available to public	7
Keep fees low/free	4

Out of control mountain bikers threaten hiker safety	3
Annual trail fee too high	3
Enforce mountain bike speeding and conduct rules	2
Enforce no dog policy	2
Improve road traffic safety	2
Keep park areas safe	2
Other comments	10

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keep park preserved/natural	11
Protect mountains from development	11
Continue to expand park	2
Do not allow track housing adjacent to park	2
Other comments	5

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Maintain current operations	2
Continue seeking visitor opinions	2
Other comment	1

Visitor Comment Summary

N=152 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Personnel helpful	5
Other comments	1
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Nonpersonal	
Publicize more	7
Should have passed out park info at concert	4
Educate people about park locations/rules	2
Personal	
Offer more guided/educational activities	2
Use more volunteers	2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
General	
Well maintained	7
Need large tent for shade	2
Clean up litter	2
Other comments	6
POLICIES	
"Boom box" noise unpleasant	2
Other comments	5
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Protect rest of area from development	3
Other comment	1
VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT	
Comments	4
GENERAL IMPRESSIONS	
Beautiful area/love the mountains	14
Good job/thanks	12
Enjoyed special event activities/well organized	12
Enjoyed visit	11
Plan/hope to return	11

Enjoyed escaping city	6
Only came for special event	5
Only worthwhile part of LA area	3
Use park generally	3
Relaxing	3
Enjoy bike trails	3
Enjoy hiking trails	3
Parking/security well handled	3
Glad it exists	3
Glad special event not too crowded	2
Other comments	3

Planning for the future

N=1088 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
---------	------------------------------

PERSONNEL

Need ranger patrol/enforcement	24
Need more rangers/volunteers	13
Other comments	3

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Nonpersonal

Provide trail map brochures	42
Provide more park information	26
More school field trips, especially for inner city children	23
Educate visitors about trail etiquette, safety, respect of resources	22
Post trail information/maps at each trailhead	17
Advertise park more, including special events	17
Provide interpretive information about plants, animals, geology, etc.	15
Provide park maps	11
Teach proper park use at schools	10
Identify plants along trails	5
Provide more information booths/centers	5
Don't advertise park	4
Provide wildlife information	3
Establish mailing list for park activities/events	3
Offer more special events	3
Emphasize native American culture	2
Provide safety warnings	2
Involve other experts in park operation	2
Improve Travelers Information Radio	2
Other comments	5

Personal

Offer more guided activities, including mountain bike	20
Provide children's activities, e.g. youth camps	2
Other comments	1

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

General

Need better highway signing	38
Add more picnic areas	22
Improve toilets/cleanliness	21
Provide drinking water	21
Add campgrounds	17
Improve/enlarge parking lots	13
Add emergency phones/aid stations	8
Add backcountry campsites	7
Provide snack machines/refreshment/concession stand	7

Improve litter cleanup	7
Provide shaded picnic tables nearby	6
Add more trash cans	5
Improve road conditions	5
Establish off road vehicle area	2
Keep park rustic	2
Establish or improve ponds	2
Keep park/facilities as well maintained as they are	2
Provide grills at picnic areas	2
Other comments	13

Trails

Improve trail maintenance	61
Trails poorly marked - add directional, distance, mode of transport info	38
Add more mountain bike trails	37
Use volunteers to do trail maintenance/construction	24
Provide multi-use roads/trails	12
Complete Backbone Trail	11
Need more restrooms at trailheads	8
Add water crossings/bridges	7
Provide separate trails for separate users	6
Use adopt-a-trail program	5
Provide benches in shade for older hikers	4
Add trails	4
Find more money for trail maintenance	3
Create loop trails	3
Make most activities handicapped accessible	3
Connect trails between park units	3
Provide nature trails for children	2
Other comments	2

POLICIES

Parking/camping fees too expensive	25
Add emergency phones/aid stations	10
Make single track biking legal	8
Prohibit off road vehicles	8
Want no cost for park use	7
Allow dogs in some areas	7
Fine for littering/graffiti/vandalism	6
Prohibit blaring radios/noise pollution	6
Establish clearer rules on trail uses allowed	5
Discourage mountain biking	5
Continue to allow mountain biking	5
Open parking lots earlier	4
Keep some areas for hikers only	4
Concerned about safety - keep gangs out	3
Charge entrance/use fee	3
Allow night fishing	3
Enforce dog leash rules	2
Do not charge trail fee	2
Require helmets for bikers	2
Current trail uses unsafe	2
Enforce road speed limits	2
Require hiking/biking permits	2
Limit/restrict traffic near parks	2
Other comments	7

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keep parks preserved/natural	86
Expand park areas as much as possible	42
Limit/stop development in Santa Monica Mts.	30
Keep it as it is	15
Plant trees	10
Maintain/expand wildlife habitat	10
Keep park open & available	8
Limit convenience facilities in park	8
Restore native vegetation	4
Rotate use of heavily used sites - allow recovery time	3
Allow mountain bikes on bike-designated trails only	3
Concerned about mountain bike/horse damage to resources	3
Require easements around developments	2
Other comments	11

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Good escape from city	2
Need public transportation to park	2
Other comments	4

Visitor Comment Summary

N=567 comments; many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
---------	------------------------------

PERSONNEL

Staff friendly, helpful, knowledgeable	34
Need more rangers patrolling	6

INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Need more detailed maps/information about park	14
Didn't know about radio information station	5
Provide map/brochures at trailhead parking lots	3
Teach value of nature	2
Sponsor community events	2
Provide more information on wildlife/plants	2
Other comments	2
Maps well done	2
Other comments	4

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

General

Well maintained	30
Trails poorly maintained	19
Trails poorly marked	11
Add mountain bike trails	6
Add more drinking fountains	6
Improve maintenance - bathrooms/campgrounds	5
Trails well maintained	3
Trails clean	3
Use volunteers to help with maintenance	3
Appreciated clean restroom	2
Improve highway signs	2
Add more trash cans	2
Provide more campgrounds	2
Other comments	13

POLICIES

Patrol generally	6
Parking too expensive	4
Enforce rules on trails	3
Safety warnings should be posted	3
All trails should be multi-use	2
Discourage mountain biking	2
Rules should be posted	2
Confused about hiking fee	2
Need way to warn hikers of approaching bikes (for safety)	2
Other comments	10

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keep it preserved/natural	42
No more development	16
Acquire more land	13
Glad of park availability	11
Keep it as it is	5
Plant more trees	3
Concerned about declining resources	3
Concerned about increased use	2
Glad sites are little-used	2
Other comments	5

VISITOR SERVICES PROJECT

Thanks for great postcard	3
Sorry questionnaire is late	2
Thanks for extra questionnaire	2
Other comments	3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Enjoyed visit	73
Good job/thanks	37
Beautiful/fantastic	35
Needed escape from city/makes life in LA possible	24
Enjoyed mountain biking	10
Plan/hope to return	8
Enjoyed hiking	7
Peaceful	6
Glad it exists	6
Visit parks quite often	5
Find way to tax, fund raise, accept donations to help park	4
Enjoyed camping	3
Involve local communities more	3
Enjoyed wildlife	2
Everyone in park seemed happy	2
Find more money to help this park	2
Mountain bikers, hikers and equestrians can get along	2
Other comments	7

Banjo-Fiddle Contest Visitors' Comments

General Visitors' Comments
