
Visitor Services Project

Yellowstone National Park

Visitor Study



Visitor Services Project Report 75
Cooperative Park Studies Unit



Visitor Services Project Yellowstone National Park Visitor Study

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Report 75

February 1996

Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Coordinator, National Park Service, based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Mark Patterson and the staff of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks for their assistance. 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 Yellowstone National Park Report Summary

- This report describes part of the results of a visitor study at conducted simultaneously at Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks during February 11-20, 1995. A total of 1,422 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 1,132 questionnaires for an 80% response rate.
- This report profiles Yellowstone visitors, including those who entered via Moran Junction in Grand Teton. A separate appendix has visitors' comments about their visit; this report and the appendix contain a comment summary. Grand Teton visitors are profiled in a separate report, which also includes the results from the Moran Junction visitors.
- Thirty-seven percent of the visitors were in family groups; 29% were in groups of friends. Thirty-three percent of Yellowstone visitors were in groups of six or more people.
- Among Yellowstone visitors, 3% were international visitors. Many of them (51%) were from Canada. United States visitors were from Montana (20%), Utah (10%), Wyoming (9%) and 45 other states.
- Many Yellowstone visitors (57%) stayed more than one day. Many Yellowstone visitors (55%) had visited the park previously during the winter. On this visit, the most common activities were viewing wildlife (91%), viewing scenery (90%), and snowmobiling (74%).
- Most visitors (62%) participated in winter recreation outside the parks in places such as the West Yellowstone area; Big Sky, Montana; and Jackson, Wyoming. Their activities included snowmobiling and skiing.
- In planning trips to national parks, most visitors (73%) talked to someone who had been there as their source of information about the park. Previous visits was the source of information which influenced most visitors (73%) in deciding to visit Grand Teton/Yellowstone.
- The most visited sites were Old Faithful (76%), Madison (62%), Canyon (48%) and Norris (48%).
- The most used information services were the park brochure/map (89%) and visitor center exhibits (50%). The park brochure/map and visitor center staff were the most important services. According to visitors, the best quality services were the visitor center staff and book sales.
- The most used visitor services were the restrooms, groomed snowmobile routes, warming huts and informational/directional signs. According to visitors, the most important services were the airport, ungroomed ski trails, restrooms, gas station and informational/directional signs. The best quality services were the visitor center, commercial guide service and the airport.
- The most important park qualities to Yellowstone visitors were scenery, wildlife and clean air. Visitors rated recreational activities as more important than educational opportunities.
- The average visitor group expenditure in and outside the parks during this visit was \$2,058. The average per capita expenditure was \$346. The median visitor group expenditure (i.e. 50% spent more and 50% spent less) was \$855.
- Many visitors (62%) prefer not to limit winter visitor use at Grand Teton/Yellowstone. Of those visitors who think winter use should be limited, many (71%) prefer a reservation system.
- Visitors made many additional comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact:
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INTRODUCTION

A study of winter visitors was conducted simultaneously at Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. At the request of the Yellowstone National Park (referred to as "Yellowstone") staff, this report contains the results from visitors who entered at the three Yellowstone entrances, plus those who entered at Moran Junction in Grand Teton and visited Yellowstone. A separate report contains the results of the Grand Teton study. This visitor study was conducted February 11-20, 1995 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. A 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 comment summaries and visitors' unedited comments.

Many of this report's graphs resemble the example below. The large numbers refer to explanations following the graph.

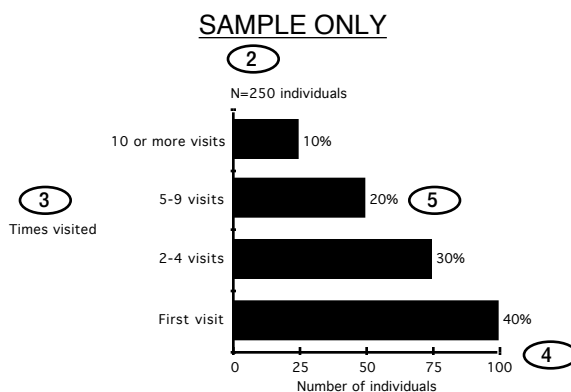


Figure 4: Number of visits

- 1: The figure title describes the graph's information.
- 2: Listed above the graph, the 'N' shows the number of visitors responding and a description of the chart's information. 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 winter visitors visiting Grand Teton and Yellowstone during February 11-20, 1995. Visitors completed the questionnaire during or after their visit 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.

At Yellowstone, visitors were sampled as they entered at the following locations: West Yellowstone entrance, North entrance, and East entrance. Yellowstone visitors were also sampled at Moran Junction in Grand Teton, but only if they visited at least one site in Yellowstone.

NOTE: the responses from visitor groups who entered at Moran Junction and visited both parks are included in both the Grand Teton and Yellowstone reports.

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 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. Eight weeks after the survey, second replacement questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of the visitors who had not returned their questionnaires.

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the information 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 811 groups, Figure 4 presents data for 3123 individuals. A note above each figure's graph specifies this information.

**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 817 questionnaires were returned by visitors, Figure 1 shows data for only 811 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 soon after they visit the park.

2. The data reflect visitor use patterns of visitors to the selected sites during the study period of February 11-20, 1995. The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year.

3. Use caution when interpreting 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.

During the study week, weather conditions in Yellowstone ranged from -27° to +36°, and from snowstorms to clear and sunny. In Grand Teton, temperatures were not as extreme although heavy snows fell on some days and other days were clear and sunny. Conditions at both parks may have affected what activities visitors did and the length of time they visited.

**Special
Conditions**

SPECIAL NOTE: Some visitor groups who entered at Moran Junction in Grand Teton visited both parks. Their responses are included in both this report and the Grand Teton report.

RESULTS

Visitors contacted

The results from visitors who entered at the three Yellowstone entrances and who entered at the Grand Teton Moran Junction entrance and visited sites in Yellowstone, are included in this report.

At Yellowstone entrances, 962 visitor groups were contacted; 93% accepted questionnaires. Seven hundred five visitor groups completed and returned their questionnaires, a 79% response rate. Also included are the results from 112 questionnaires of visitors who used Yellowstone, but received their questionnaires at Moran Junction in Grand Teton.

Table 1 compares information collected from the total sample of visitors contacted and the actual respondents who returned questionnaires. The non-response bias was not significant, although the respondents had a somewhat larger group size.

Table 1: Comparison of total sample and actual respondents

Variable	Total sample		Actual respondents	
	N	Avg.	N	Avg.
Age of respondent (years)	1150	41.7	805	43.3
Group size	1156	5.1	811	6.7

Demographics

Figure 1 shows group sizes, which varied from one person to 150 people. Twenty-nine percent of visitors came in groups of two; 33% came in groups of six or more. Thirty-seven percent of the groups were families; 29% were friends and 26% were family and friends (see Figure 2). Eleven percent of the visitors were with guided tour groups (see Figure 3). "Other" groups included ski groups, business associates, and tour groups.

The most common visitor ages were 26-50 (59%), as shown in Figure 4. Among Yellowstone visitors, many were first time winter visitors to Grand Teton (54%) and repeat winter visitors to Yellowstone (55%), as shown in Figures 5 and 6.

Visitors from foreign countries comprised 3% of the Yellowstone winter visitation. Many of the international visitors were from Canada (51%) and the United Kingdom (21%), as shown in Map 1 and Table 2.

United

States visitors were from Montana (20%), Utah (10%), Wyoming (9%), and 45 other states, as shown in Map 2 and Table 3.

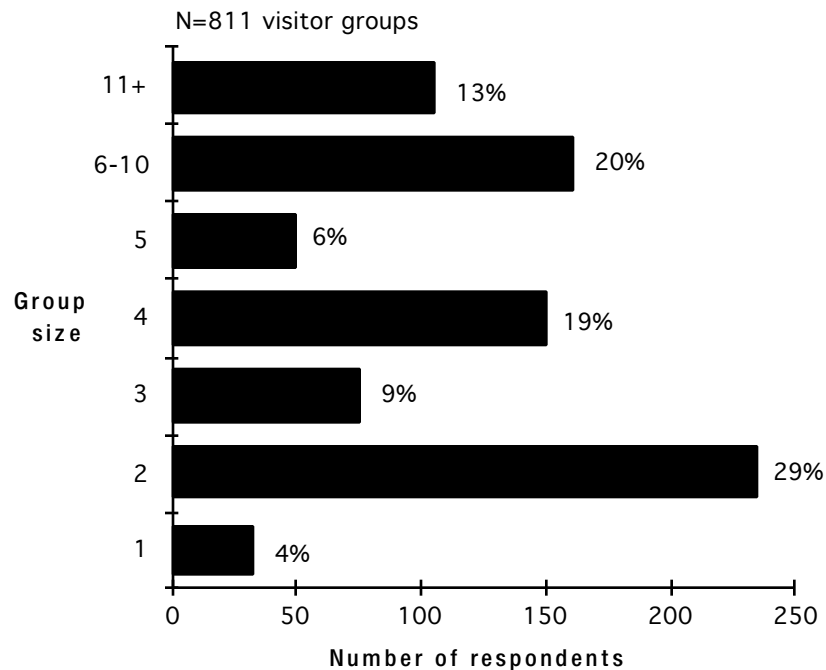


Figure 1: Visitor group sizes

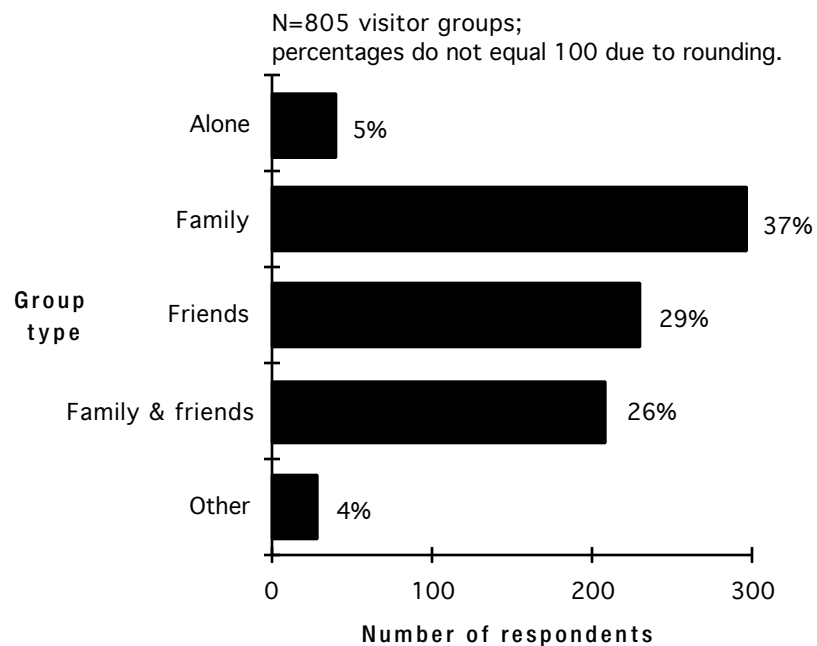


Figure 2: Visitor group types

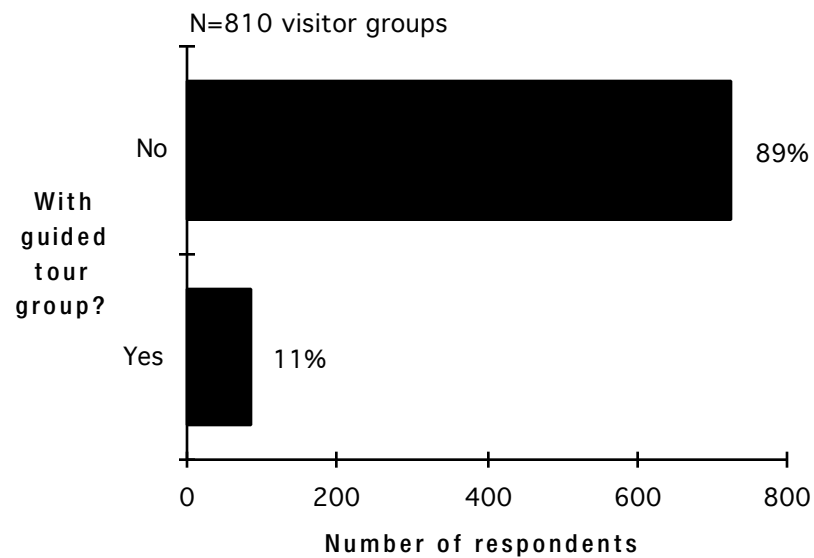


Figure 3: Traveling with guided tour?

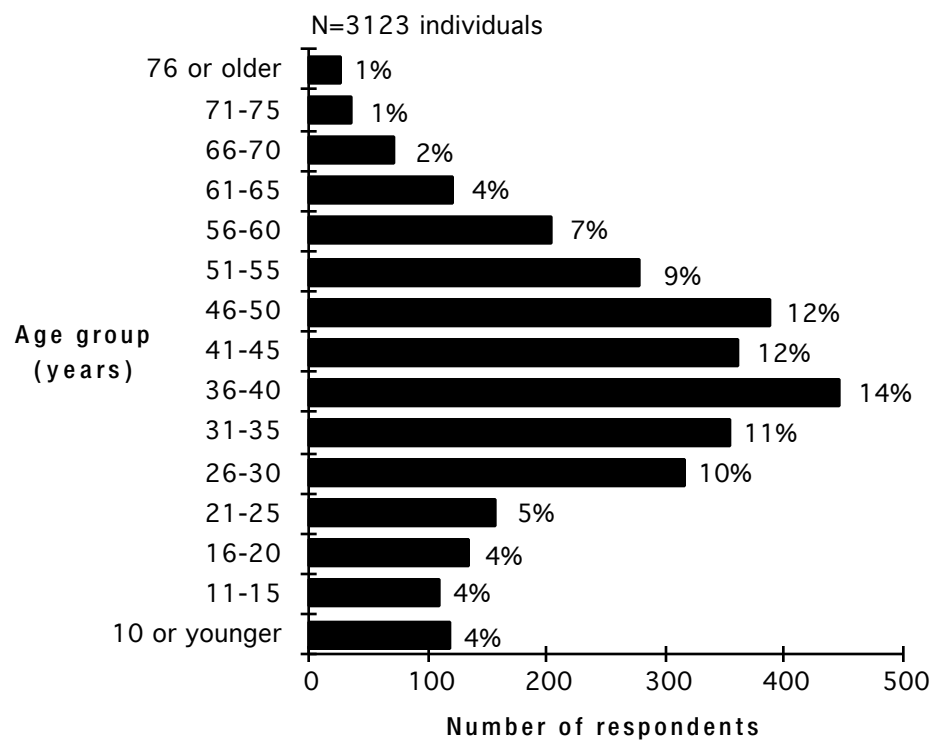


Figure 4: Visitor ages

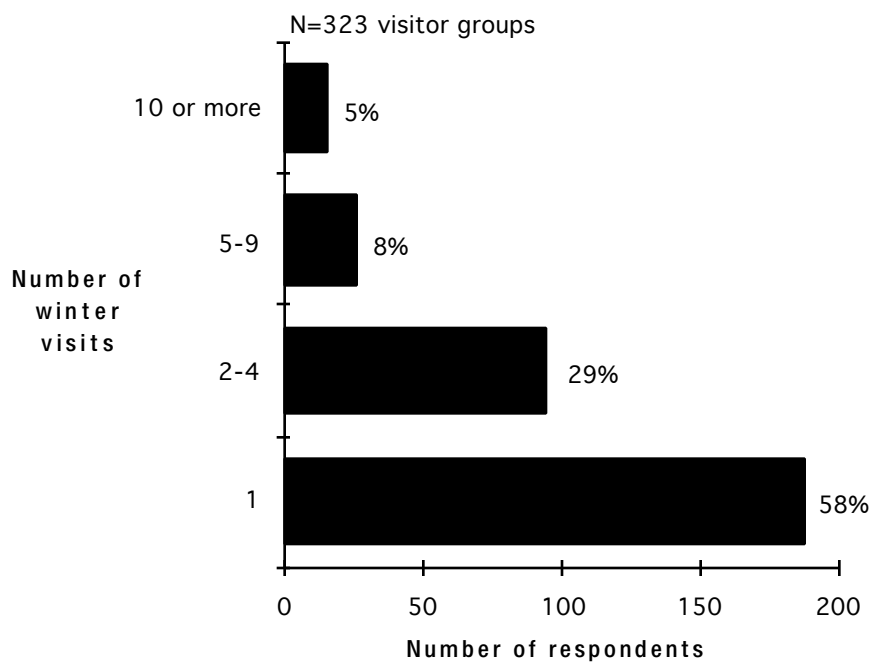


Figure 5: Number of winter visits to Grand Teton, including this visit

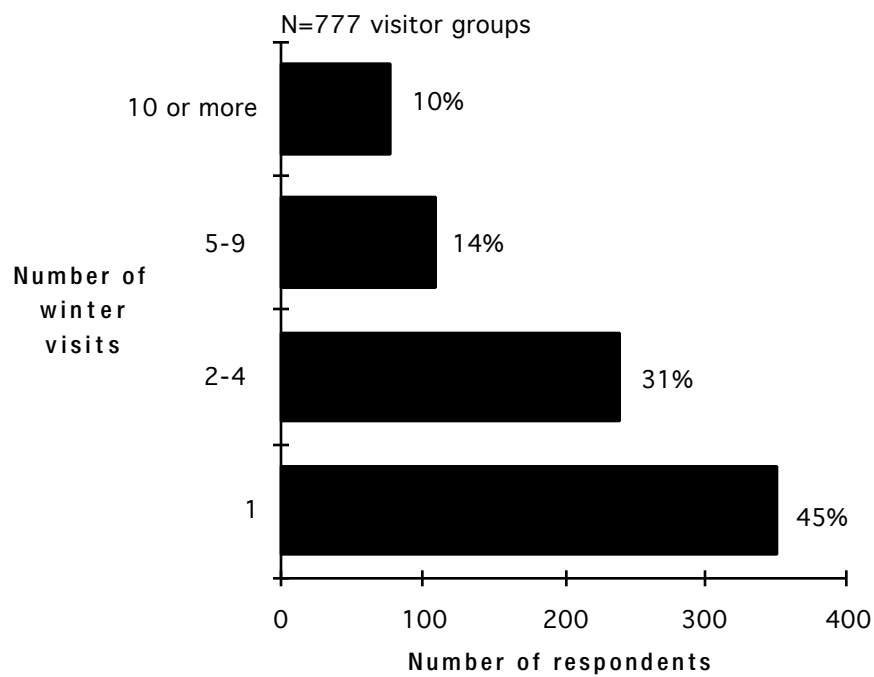


Figure 6: Number of winter visits to Yellowstone, including this visit

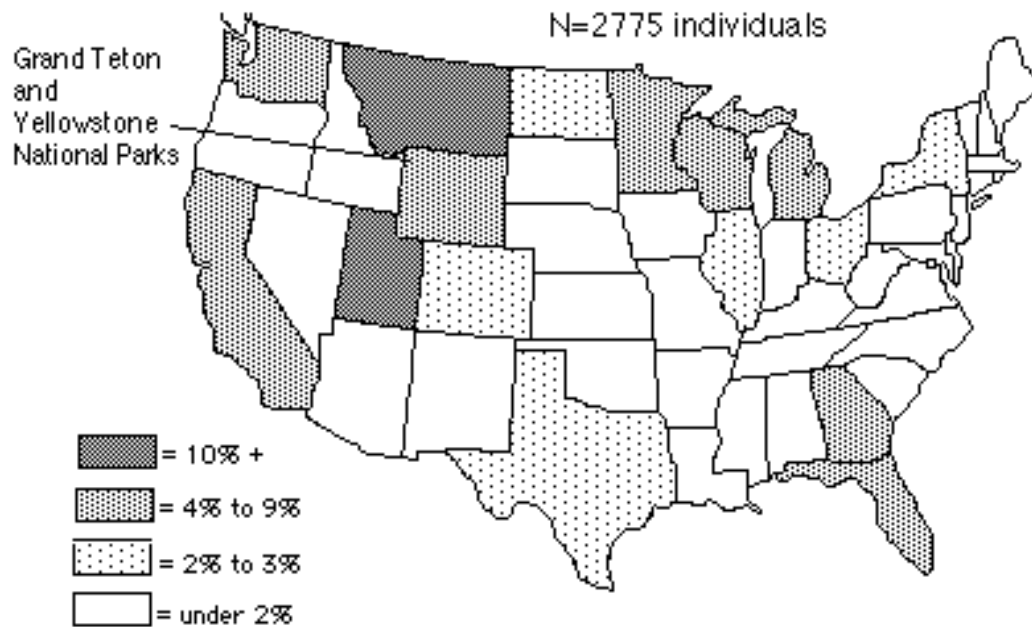


Map 1: Proportion of visitors from each foreign country

Table 2: Proportion of visitors from each foreign country

N=77 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

Country	Number of individuals	% of visitors
Canada	39	51
United Kingdom	16	21
Germany	7	9
Holland	3	4
Japan	2	3
Mexico	2	3
Russia	2	3
Saudi Arabia	2	3
Venezuela	2	3
Korea	1	1
New Zealand	1	1



Map 2: Proportion of visitors from each state

Table 3: Proportion of visitors from each state

N=2775 individuals;
percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

State	Number of individuals	% of visitors
Montana	543	20
Utah	273	10
Wyoming	243	9
Minnesota	177	6
Idaho	154	6
California	151	5
Wisconsin	102	4
Georgia	101	4
Washington	101	4
Florida	97	4
Michigan	97	4
Colorado	77	3
Ohio	65	2
Illinois	50	2
North Dakota	48	2
Texas	48	2
New York	46	2
Iowa	34	1
Pennsylvania	30	1
Maryland	26	1
Oregon	26	1
Virginia	24	1
Alabama	23	1
Nevada	19	1
Other states (24) + Washington D.C.	220	8

Length of stay

Forty-four percent of the visitors to Yellowstone stayed less than one day (see Figure 7). Forty percent of the visitors stayed 2 to 3 days. Of those visitors staying less than one day, most (46%) stayed 8 hours or more (see Figure 8).

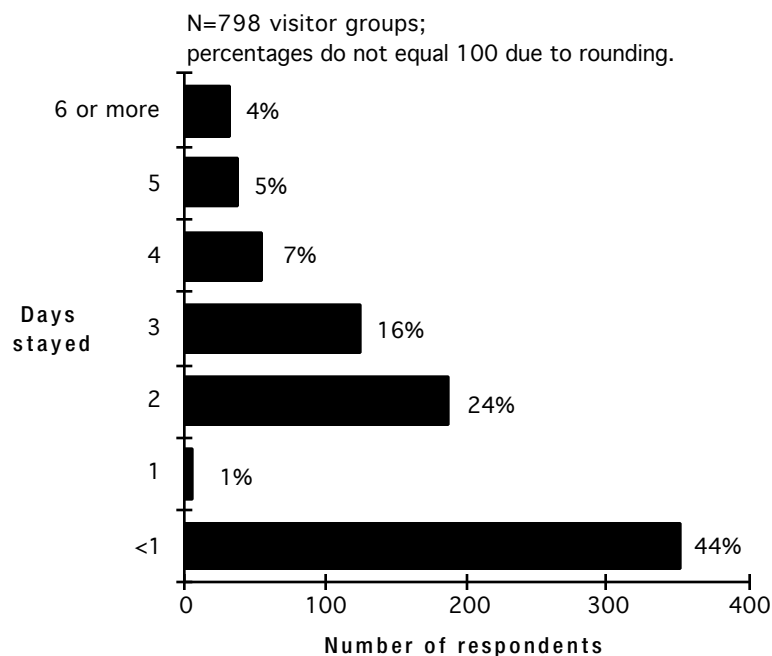


Figure 7: Length of stay (days)

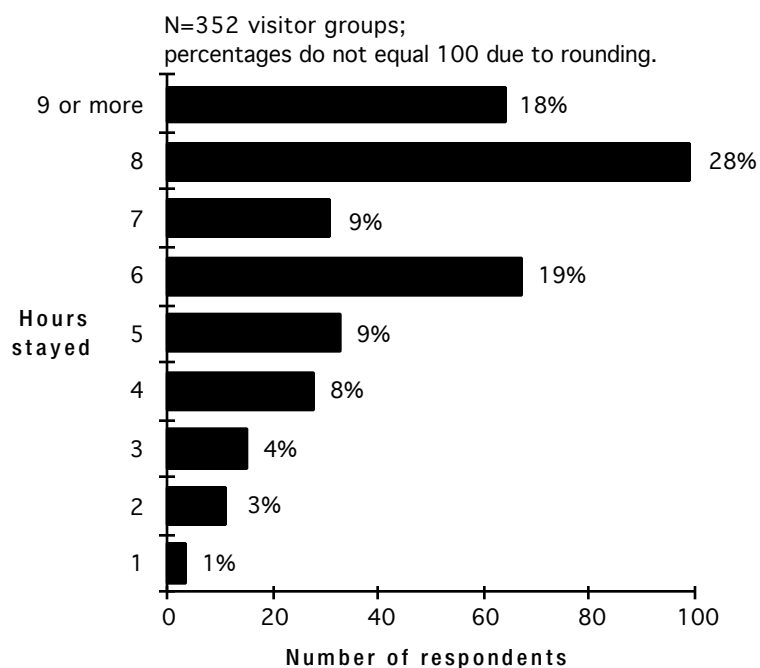


Figure 8: Length of stay (hours)

Common visitor activities on this visit were viewing wildlife (91%), viewing scenery (90%), snowmobiling (74%), and taking photographs (66%), as shown in Figure 9. Few visitors went dog sledding (<1%). On this visit, visitors also mentioned soaking in hot springs, driving to Cooke City, hiking, dining at Mammoth, shopping, visiting Old Faithful and ice skating as activities.

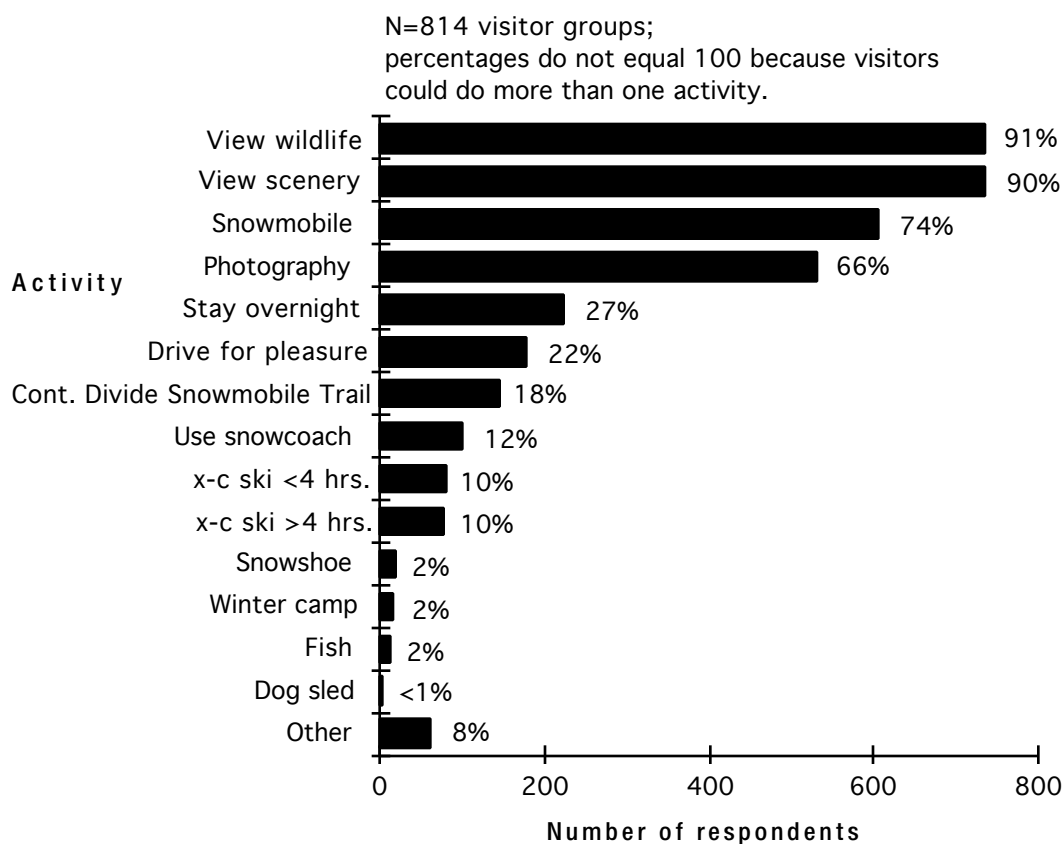


Figure 9: Visitor activities

Participation in winter recreation outside the parks

Visitors were asked "On this trip, did you and your group participate in winter recreation outside the parks but within 150 miles of Grand Teton/ Yellowstone National Parks?" Many visitors (62%) responded that they participated in recreation outside the parks (see Figure 10). Places where visitors participated in recreation included the West Yellowstone area, Big Sky, Montana, Jackson and Island Park, as shown in Table 4. Recreational activities included snowmobiling and skiing, as shown in Table 5.

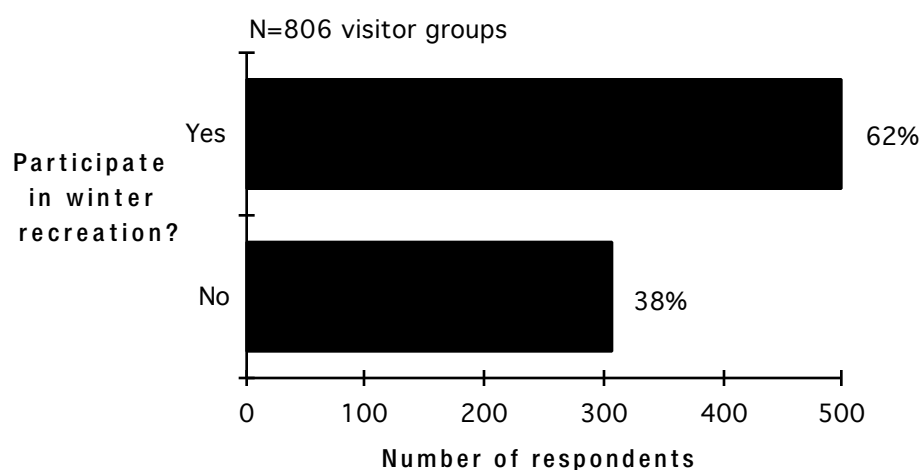


Figure 10: Visitor participation in winter recreation in the area outside of the parks

Table 4: Places where Yellowstone visitors participated in winter recreation outside the parks

N=687 responses

Place	Number of times mentioned
West Yellowstone area	139
Big Sky, MT	99
Jackson/ Jackson Hole	74
Two Top Mountain/trails	47
Island Park, ID	41
Grand Targhee	28
Lion's Head	28
Cooke City, MT	23
Idaho	20
Bridger Bowl	13
Snowmobile trails near park	13
Togwotee, WY	13

Place	Number of times mentioned
Bozeman, MT	12
Teton Village	12
Pahaska Tepee	10
Flagg Ranch	9
Snow King	9
Montana	8
Red Lodge, MT	8
Chico Hot Springs	7
Gardiner, MT	7
Gallatin National Forest	6
Cody, WY	5
Dubois, WY	5
Hebgen Lake	4
Last Chance, ID	4
National forests	4
Carrot Basin	3
Gallatin Canyon	3
Lone Mountain Ranch	3
Sleeping Giant, WY	3
Targhee National Forest	3
Ashton, ID	2
Bear Tooth Mountains	2
Bighorn Mountains	2
Big Spring, MT	2
Bridger-Teton Forest	2
Centennial Valley, MT	2
Horse Butte	2
Outside Grand Teton park	2
Outside Grand Teton and Yellowstone parks	2
Outside Yellowstone park	2
South Plateau	2
Sun Valley, ID	2
Billings, MT	1
Buffalo-Brimstone Ski Trails	1
Chico	1
Daisy Pass	1
Discovery Basin Ski Area	1
Enis/Mattison River area	1
Fremont, ID	1
Goff Creek	1
Grand Teton Pass	1
Granite Hot Springs	1
Grover, WY	1
Harriman State Park	1
Hoback Junction, WY	1
Huckleberry Hot Springs	1
Jardine	1
Lookout Point	1
Lulu Pass	1
Mack's Inn, ID	1
Madison Canyon	1
Meadow Creek Lodge	1
Mosquito Creek	1
North Fork of Shoshone River	1

Rendezvous Ski Trails	1
Shoshone National Forest	1
Stanley, ID	1
Star Valley	1
Summit Hot Springs	1
The Pines	1
Togette	1
Togerty	1
Top of the World	1
Victor, ID	1
Virginia City, MT	1
Wapiti, WY	1
Wyoming	1

Table 5: Activities visitors participated in outside the parks

N=729 responses

Activity	Number of times mentioned
Snowmobile	288
Ski	179
Cross country ski	36
Take photographs	27
Sightsee/ view scenery	26
Dine	20
Shop	16
View wildlife	14
Hike/walk	12
Fish	10
Stay in lodging	8
Swim	8
Visit museum	8
Sleigh ride	6
Dog sled	5
Drive car	5
Hunt	5
Visit elk refuge	5
Camp	4
Drink	3
Snowcoach	3
Socialize	3
Visit Grizzly Discovery Center	3
Ice skate	2
Relax	2
See movie	2
Soak in hot springs	2
Soak in hot tub	2
Visit IMAX theater	2
Other activities	23

In planning trips to national parks, the sources of information that visitors used most often were talking to someone who had been there (73%), newspapers and magazines (43%) and promotional materials (36%), as shown in Figure 11. Eleven percent of Yellowstone visitors do not plan their trips to national parks. The least used source of information was radio programs (4%). As additional sources of information, visitors mentioned previous visits, reading books, living nearby, using maps, travel guides, Chambers of Commerce and calling/ writing the park.

Sources of national park information

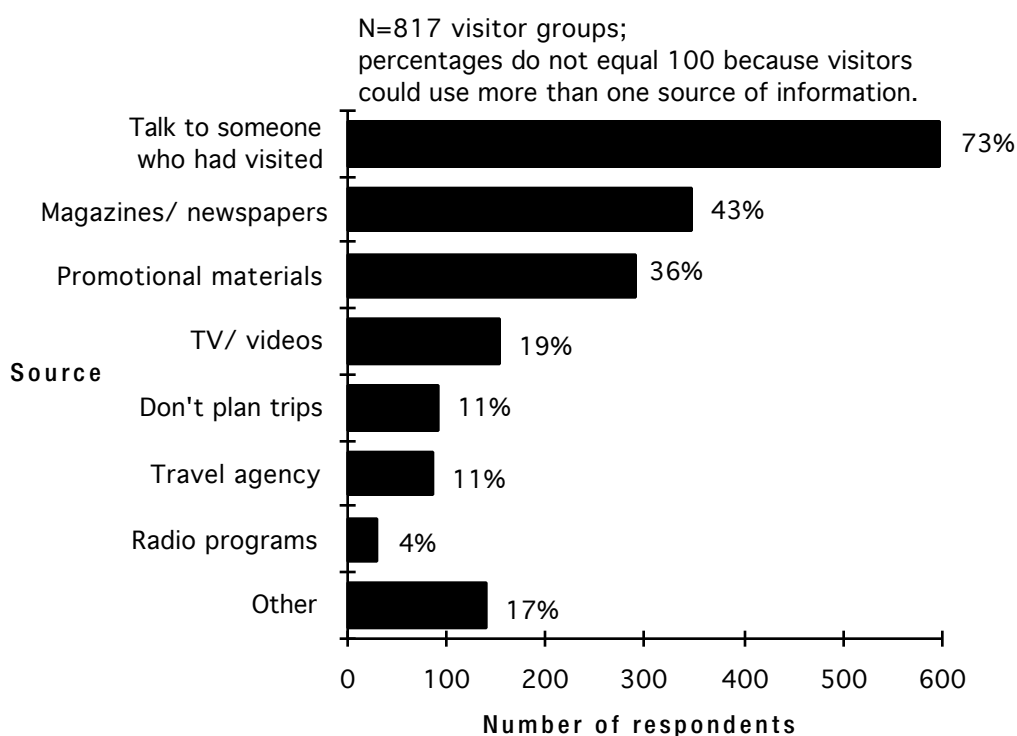


Figure 11: Sources of planning information

**Sources
which
influenced
decision to
visit**

Visitors were asked "On this trip, which of the following sources influenced you and your group to decide to visit Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Parks?" The most commonly listed source was previous visits (73%), as shown in Figure 12. Television and radio programs (5%) was the least influential source. "Other" sources included the park's reputation for winter recreation, a friend or relative who had visited, living or working nearby, being on a guided ski trip, traveling to Cooke City and an area ski resort.

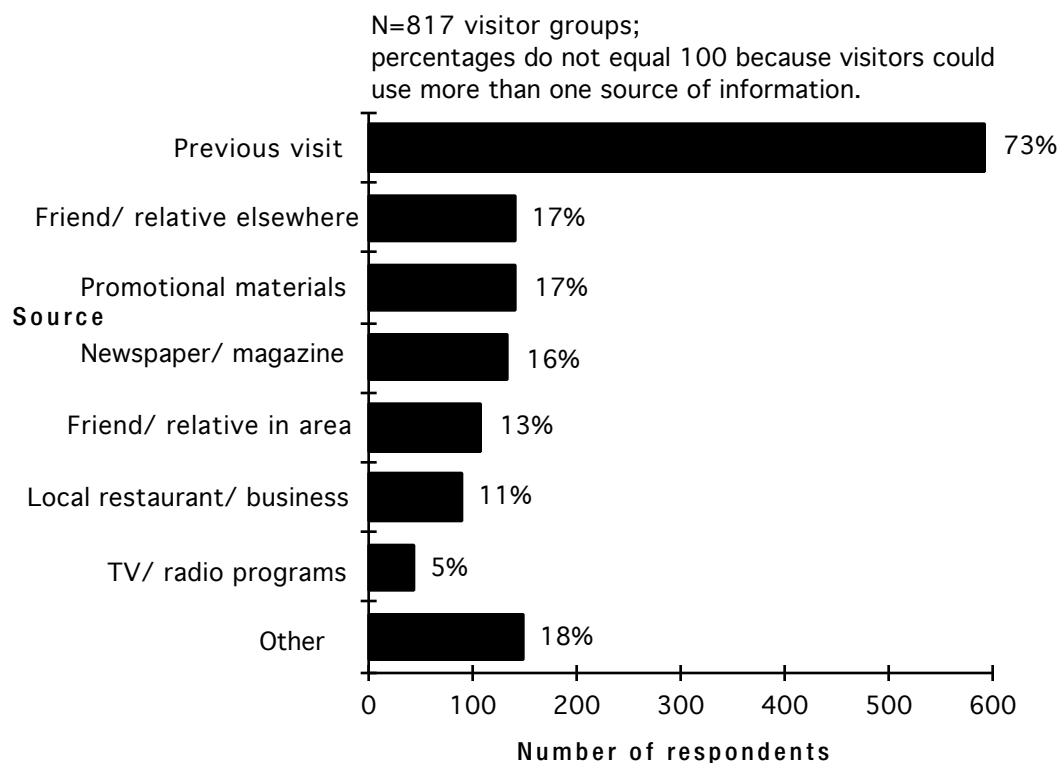
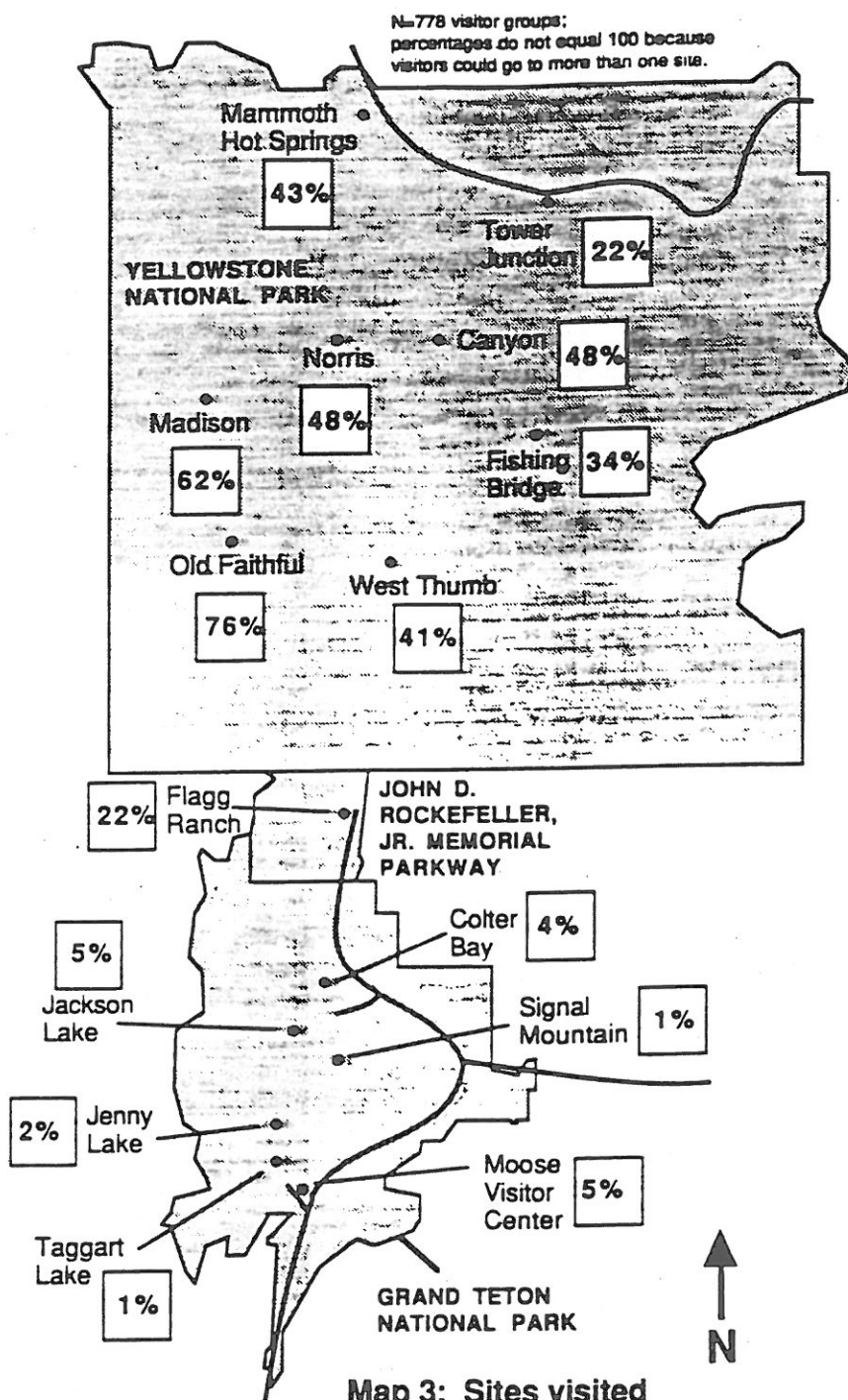


Figure 12: Sources which influenced decision to visit

Visitors were asked what places they visited at Grand Teton and Yellowstone on this visit. The place most visited by Yellowstone visitors was Old Faithful (76%), followed by Madison (62%), Norris (48%), and Canyon (48%), as shown in Map 3. The least visited places were Signal Mountain and Taggart Lake in Grand Teton National Park (each 1%).

Sites visited



**Education/
information
services:
use,
importance
and quality**

The most commonly used education/information services and facilities by Yellowstone visitors were the park brochure/map (89%), visitor center exhibits (50%), roadside or trailside exhibits (47%) and visitor center staff (45%), as shown in Figure 13. The least used service was the park information radio station (7%).

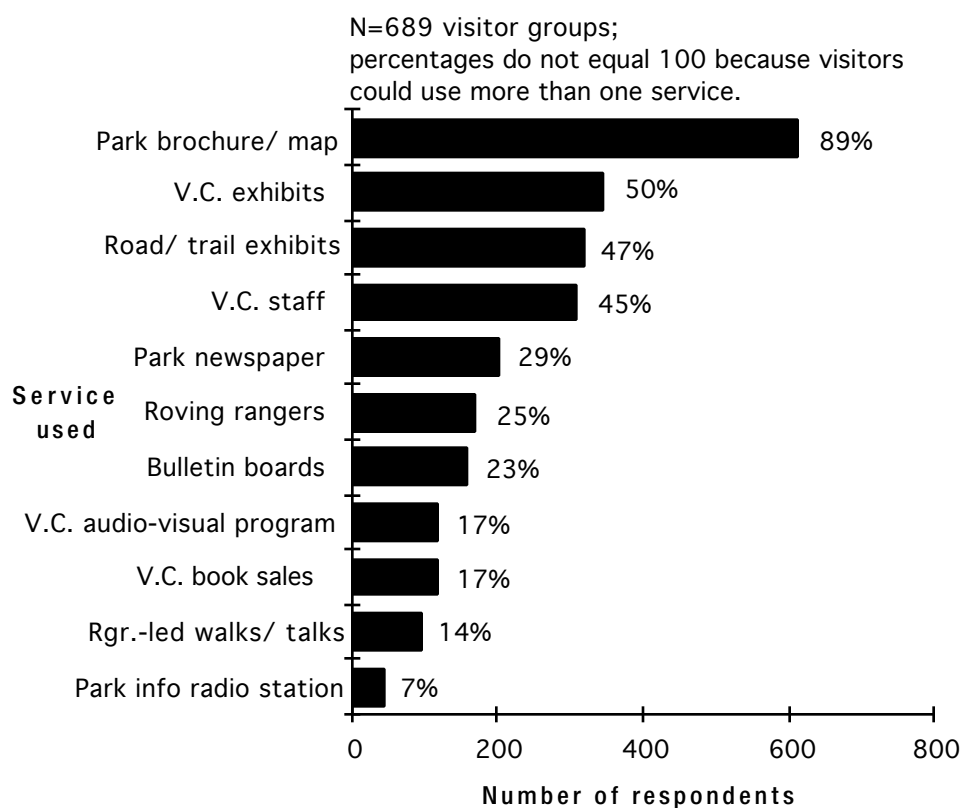


Figure 13: Use of educational and informational services and facilities

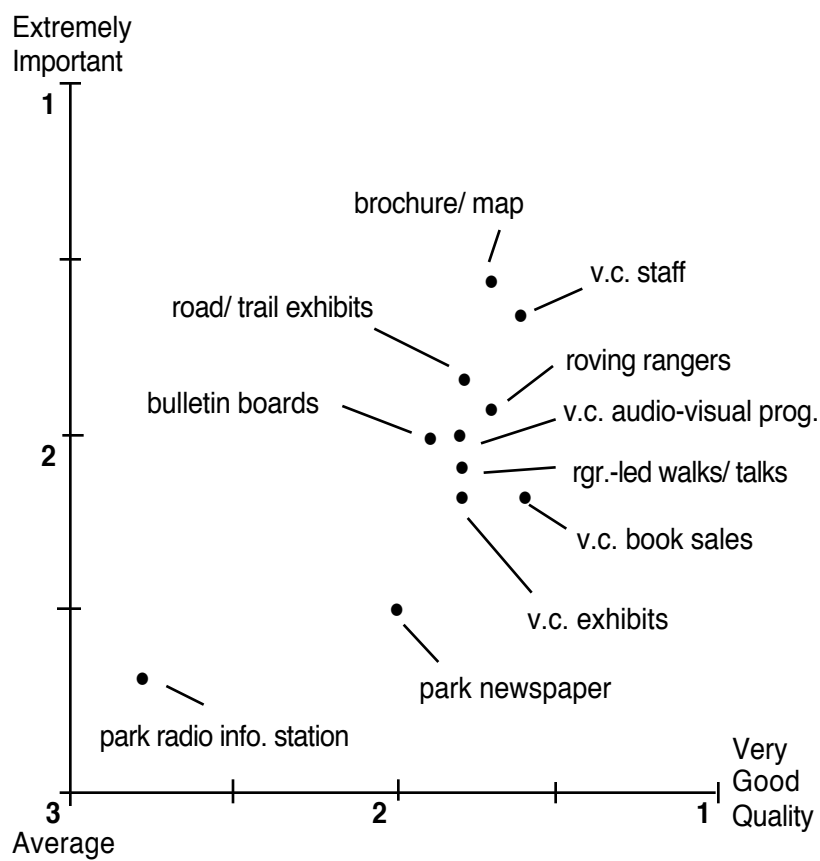
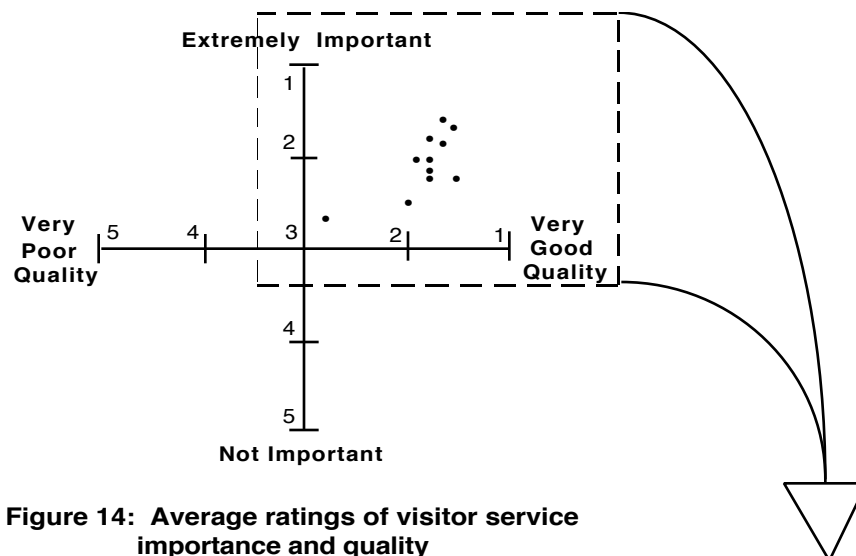
Visitors rated the importance and quality of each of the educational and informational services and facilities they used. They used a five point scale (see boxes below).

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 14 shows the average importance and quality ratings for each service and facility. 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 14. All services and facilities were rated above average in importance and quality.

Figures 15-25 show that several services and facilities received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: park brochure/map (83%), visitor center staff (81%) and road or trailside exhibits (79%). The highest "not important" rating was for park information radio station (9%).

Figures 26-36 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" quality ratings: visitor center staff (88%), visitor center book sales (87%), park brochure/map (85%) and road/ trailside exhibits (84%). The services which received the highest "very poor" quality ratings were the park radio information station (7%) and roving rangers (6%).



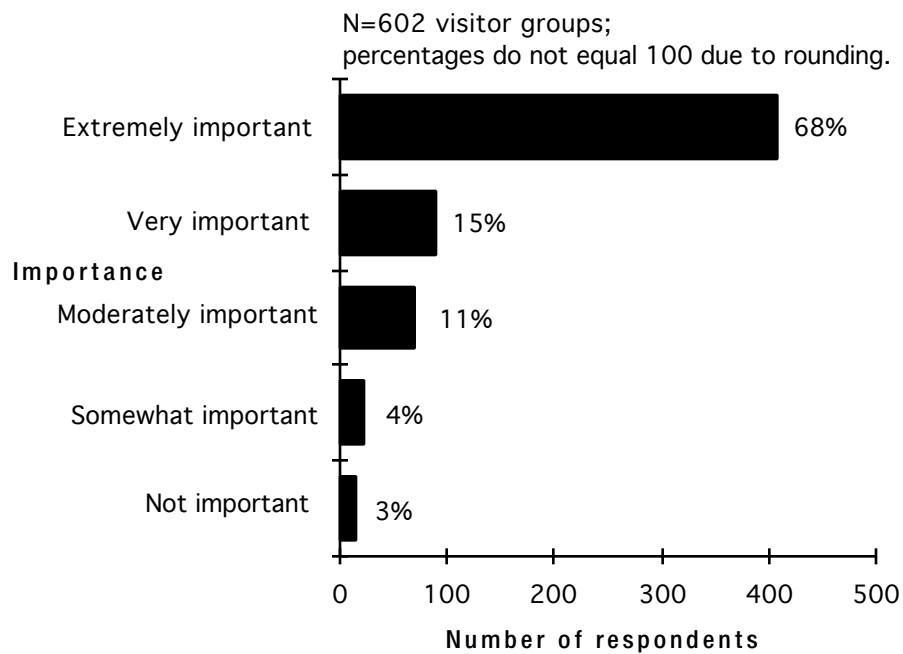


Figure 15: Importance of park brochure/map

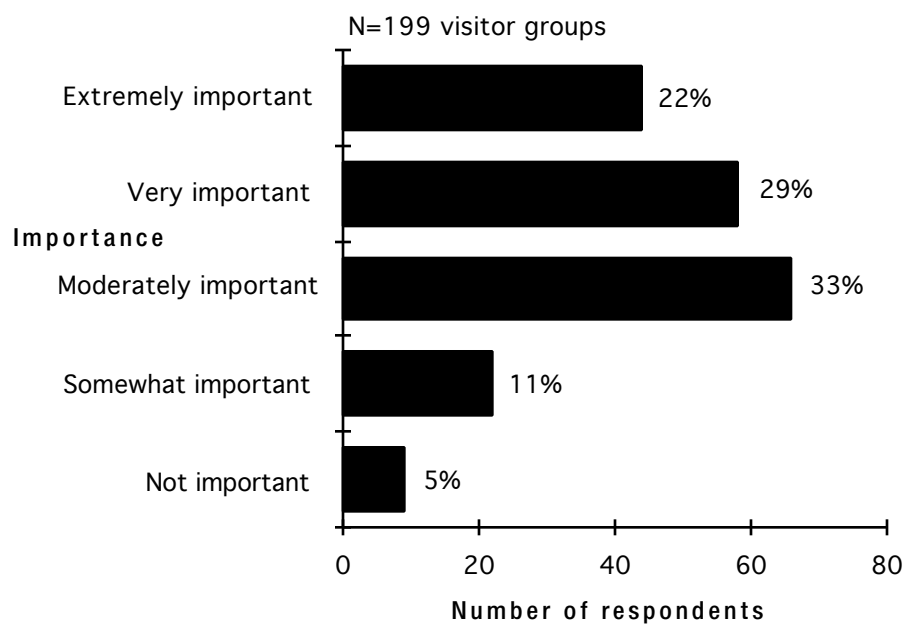


Figure 16: Importance of park newspaper

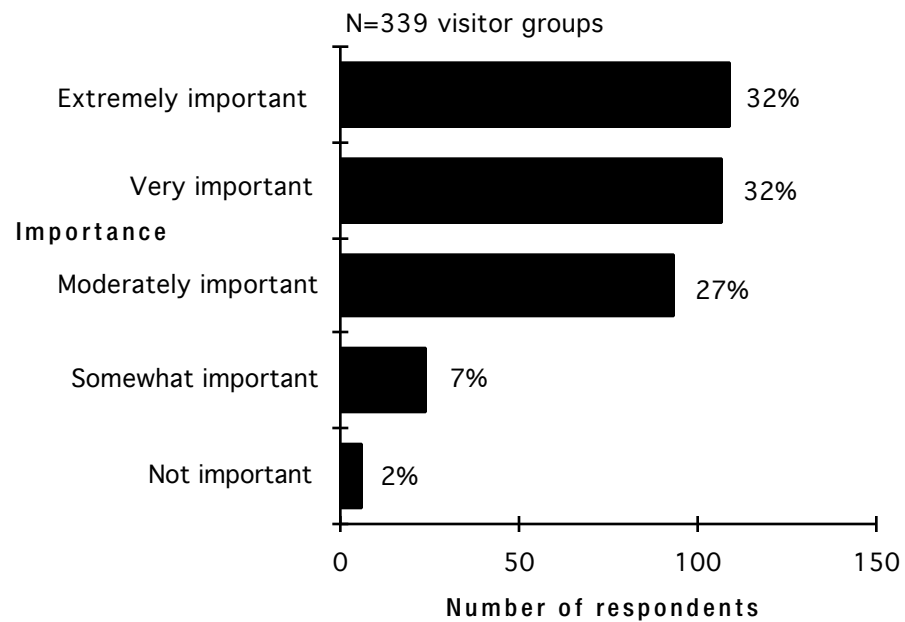


Figure 17: Importance of visitor center exhibits

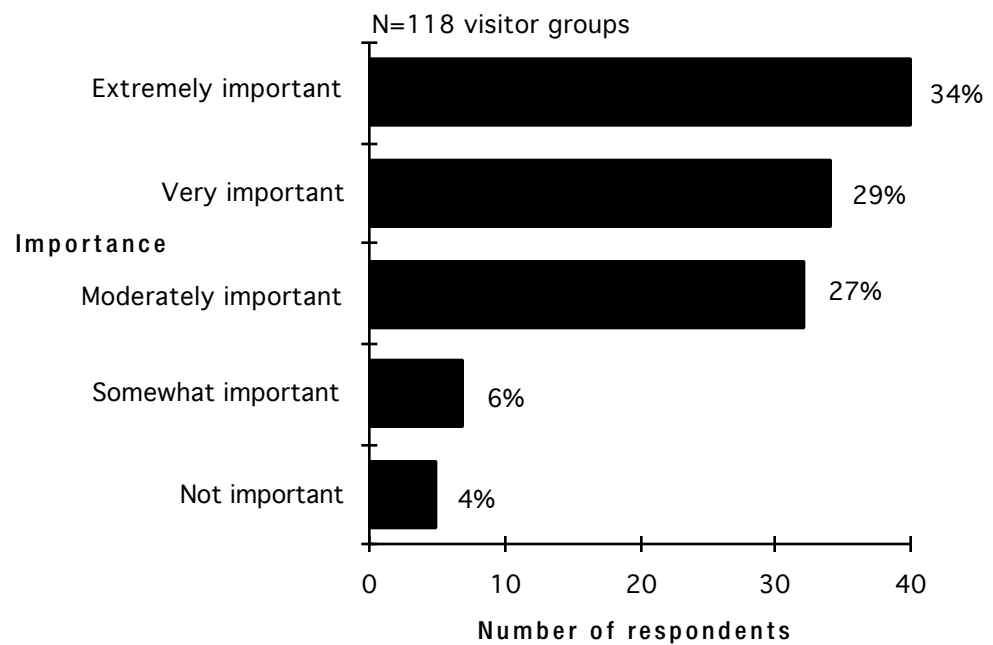


Figure 18: Importance of visitor center book sales

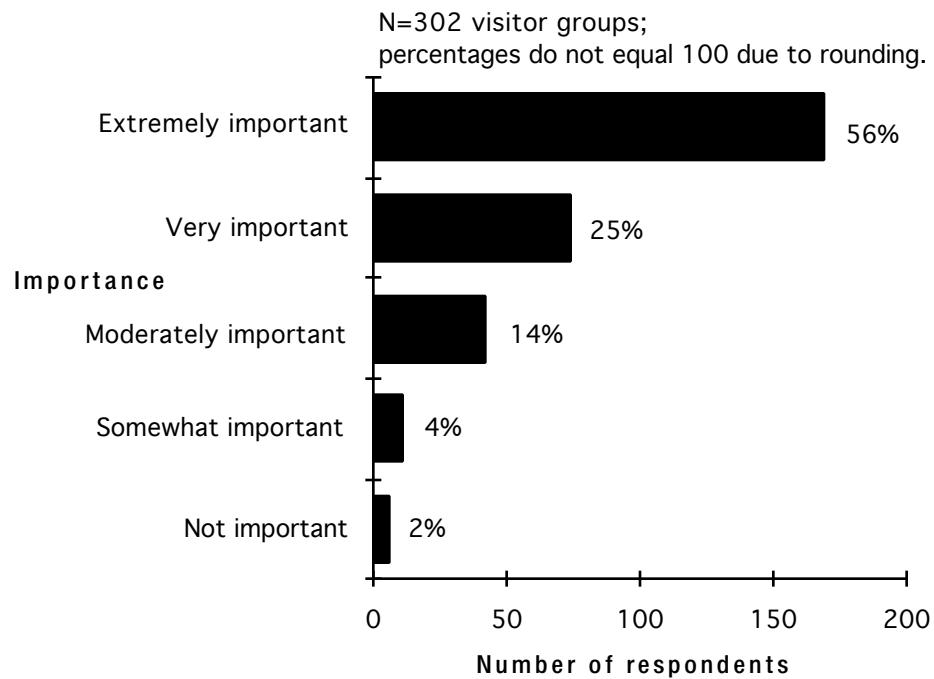


Figure 19: Importance of visitor center staff

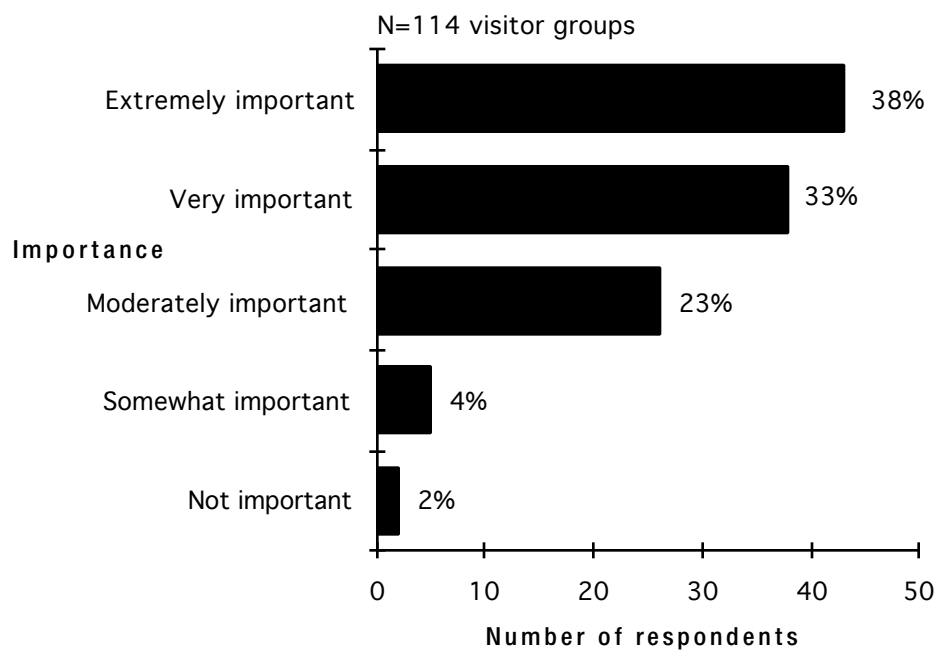


Figure 20: Importance of visitor center audio-visual programs

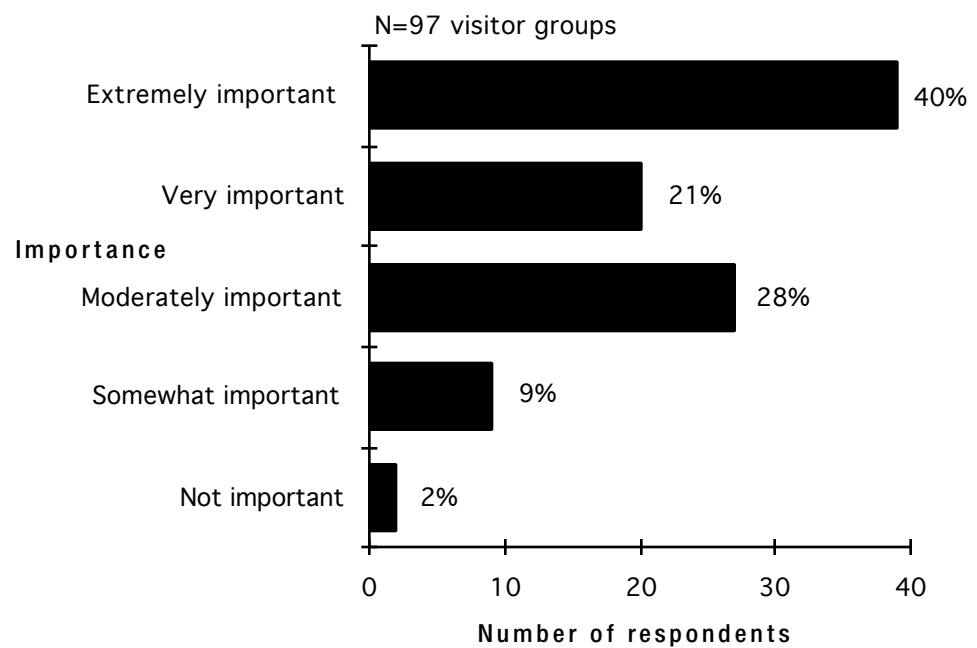


Figure 21: Importance of ranger-led walks/talks

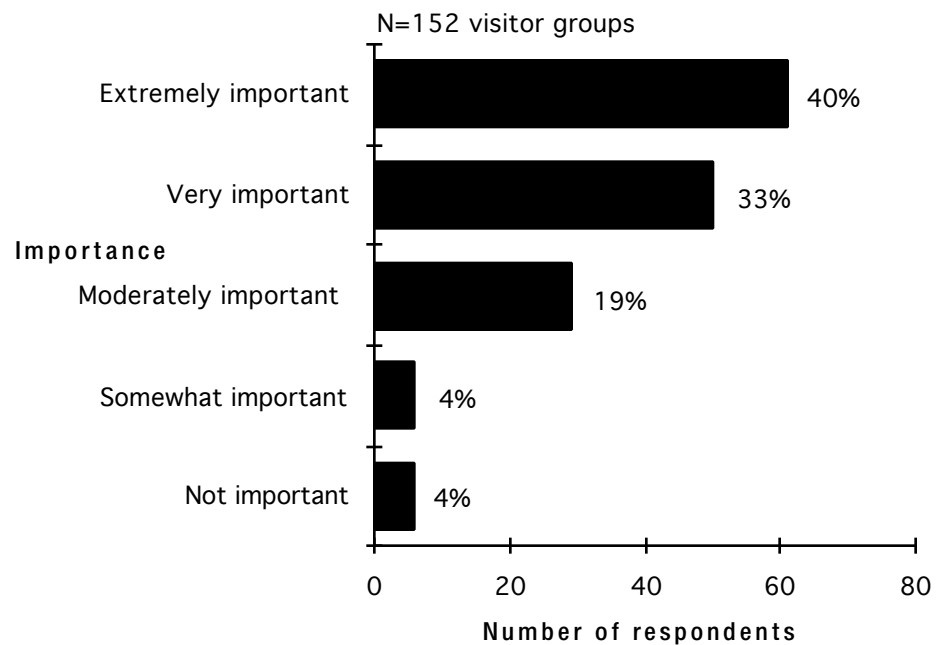


Figure 22: Importance of bulletin boards

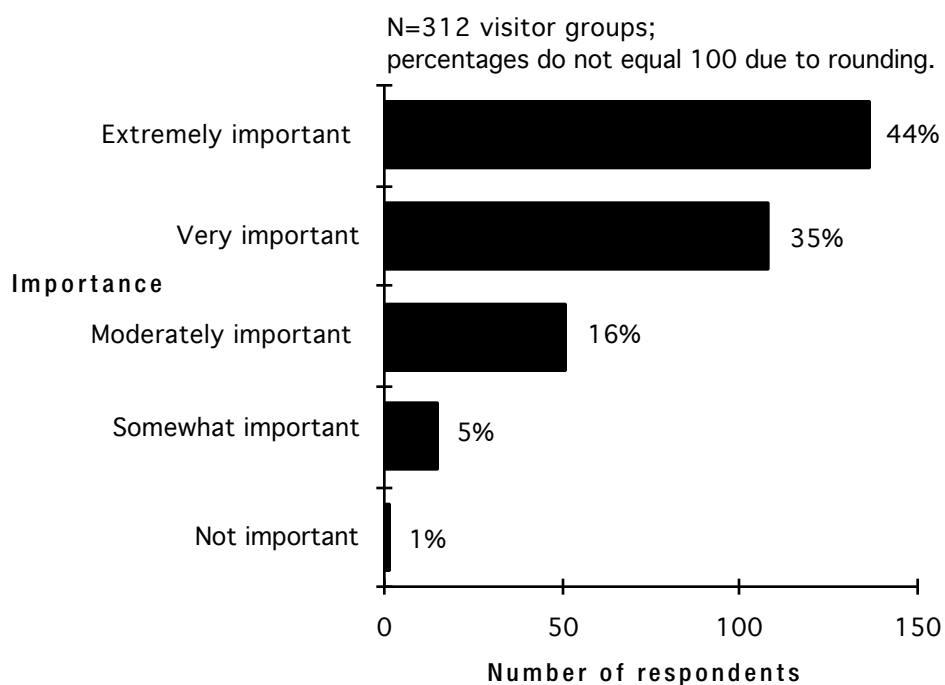


Figure 23: Importance of road/trailside exhibit

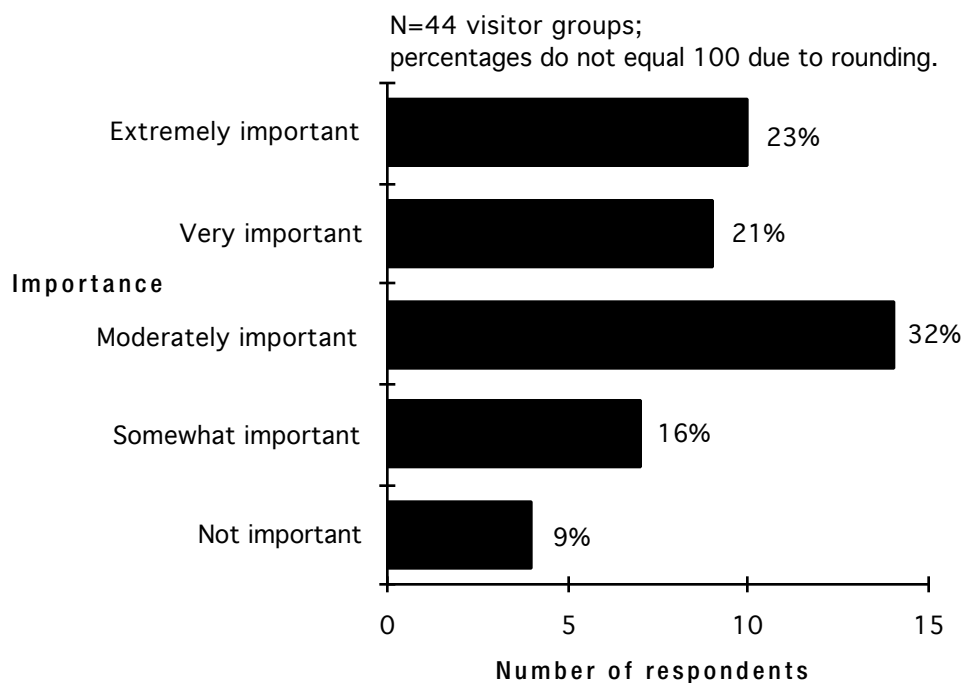


Figure 24: Importance of park radio information station

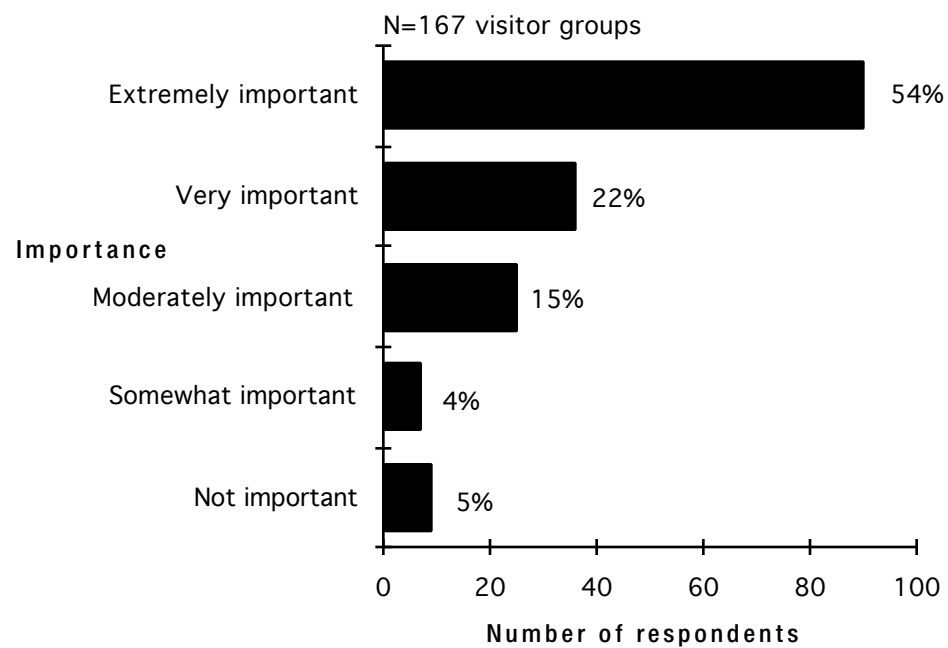


Figure 25: Importance of roving rangers

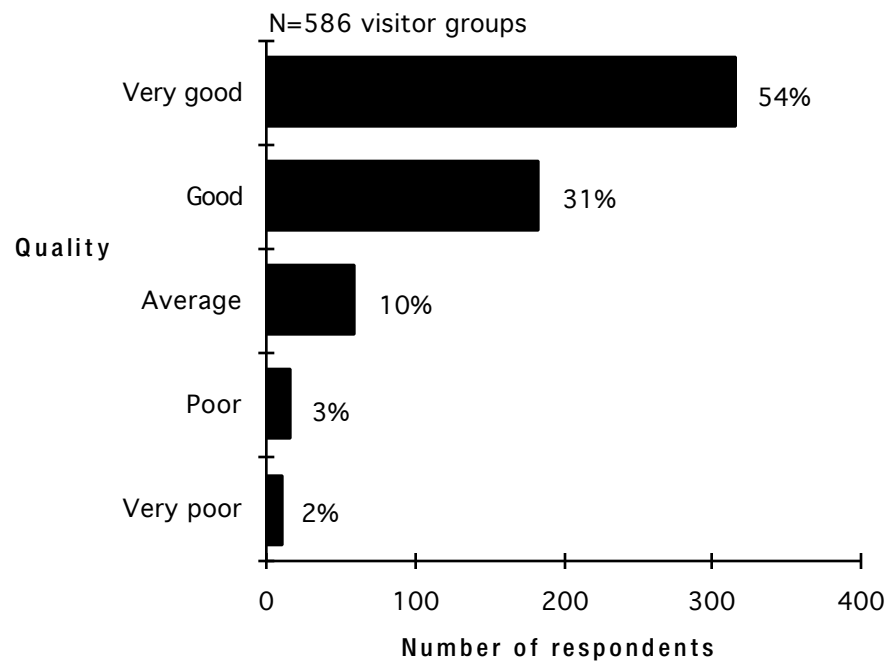
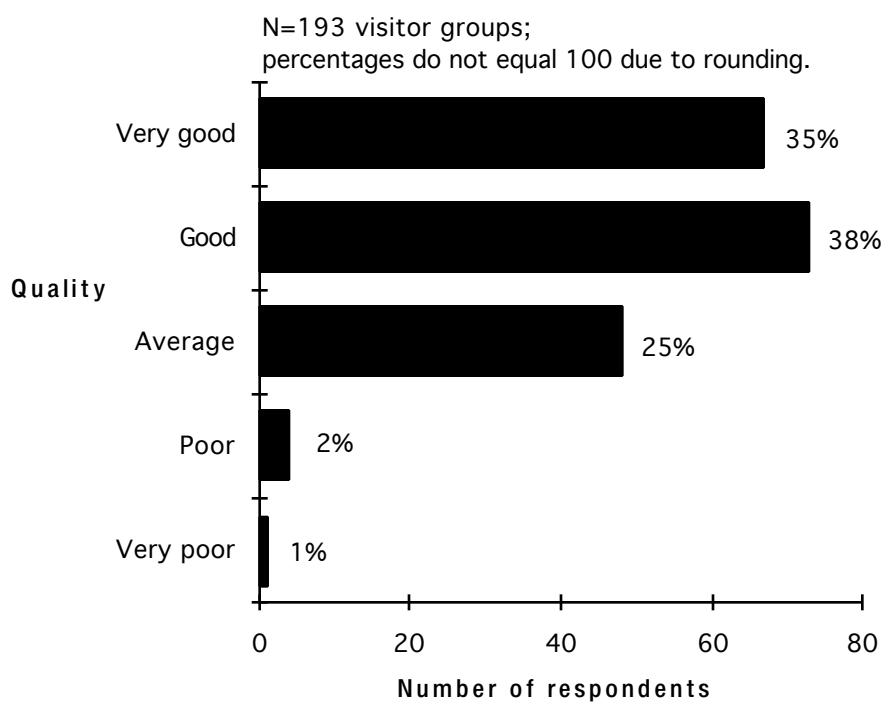
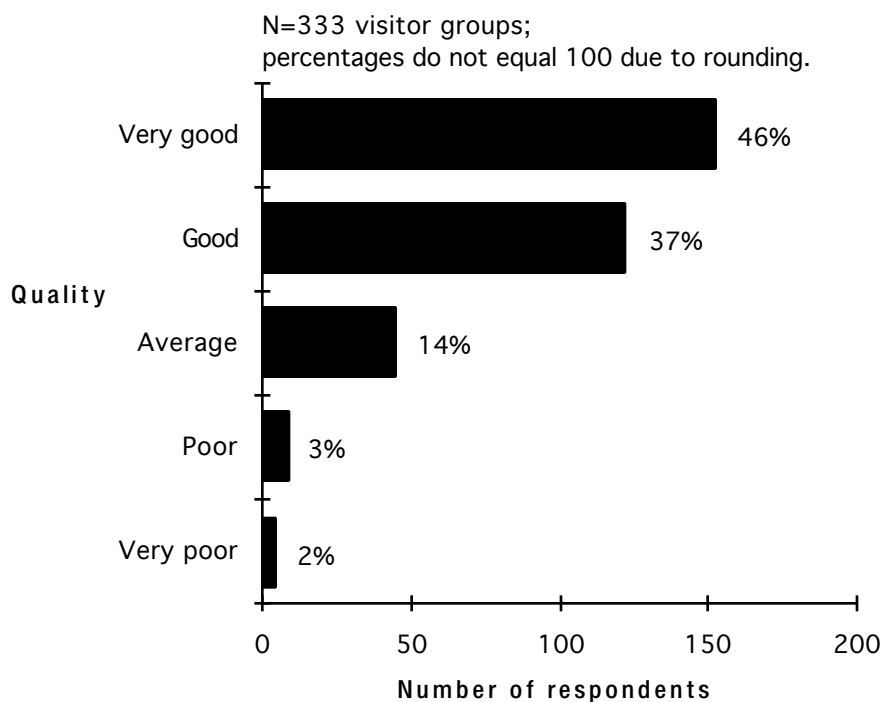
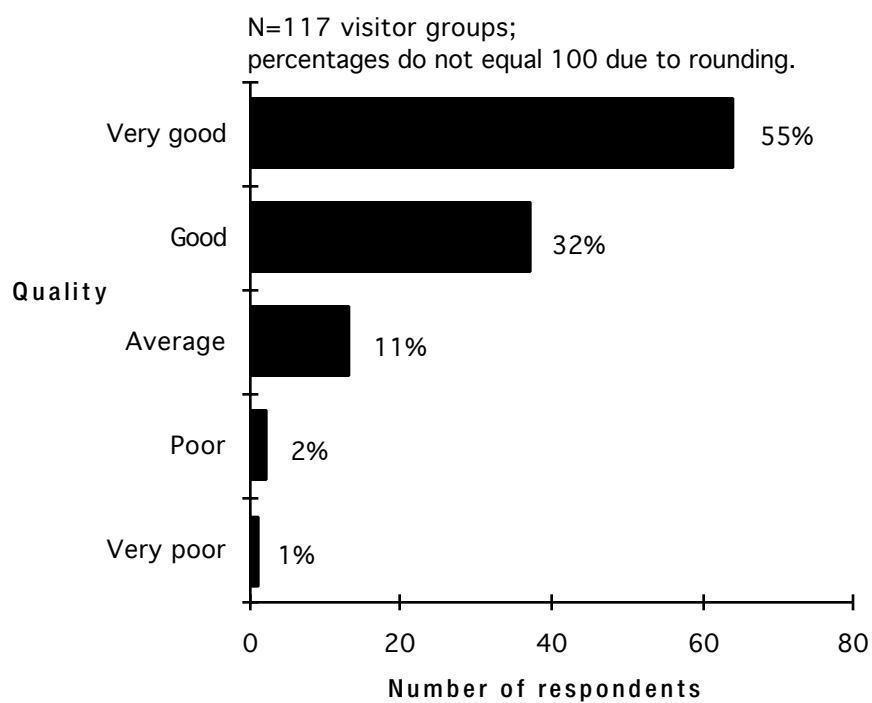
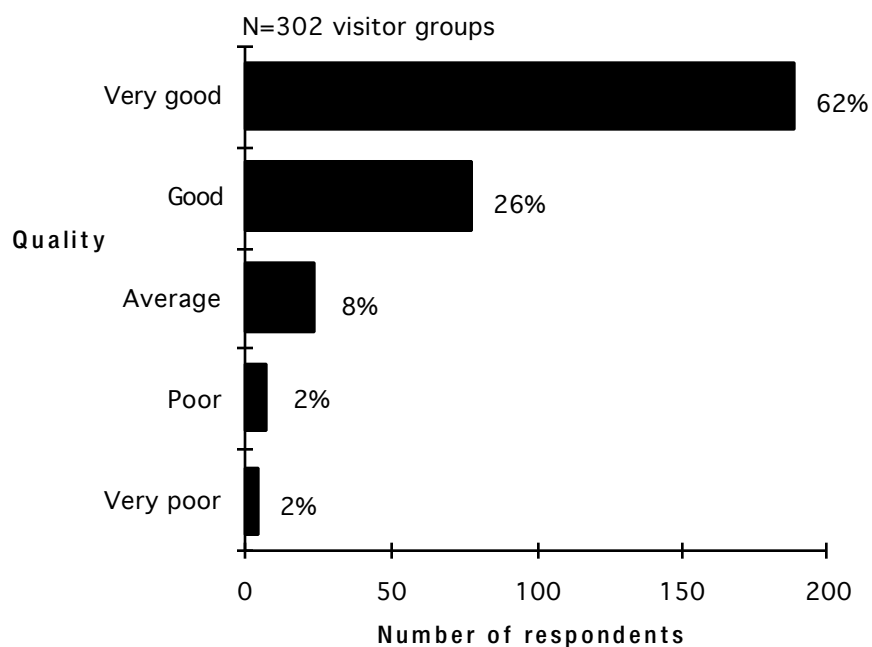


Figure 26: Quality of park brochure/map

**Figure 27: Quality of park newspaper****Figure 28: Quality of visitor center exhibits**

**Figure 29: Quality of visitor center book sales****Figure 30: Quality of visitor center staff**

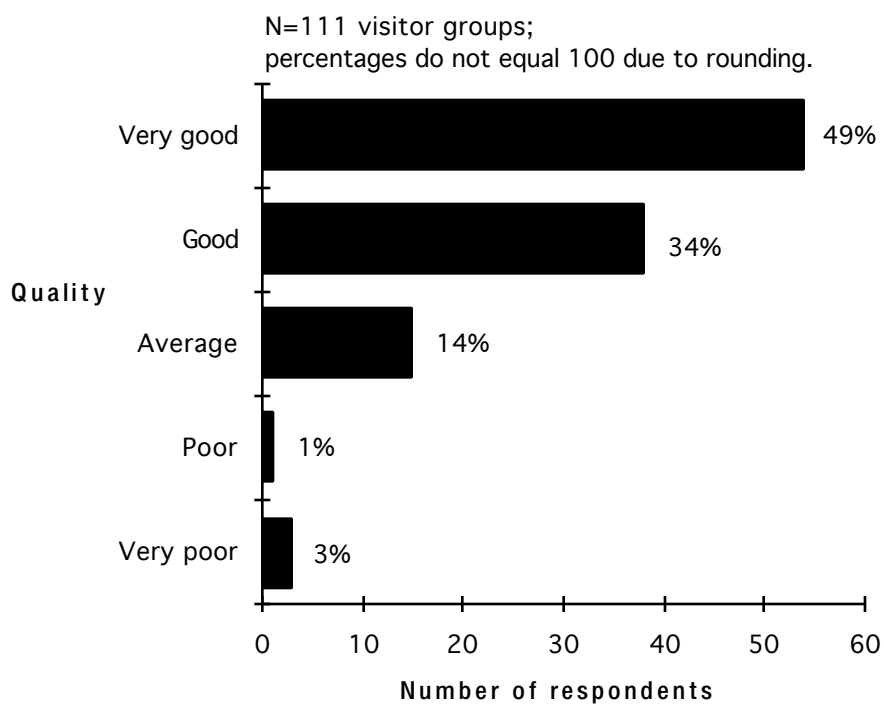


Figure 31: Quality of visitor center audio-visual programs

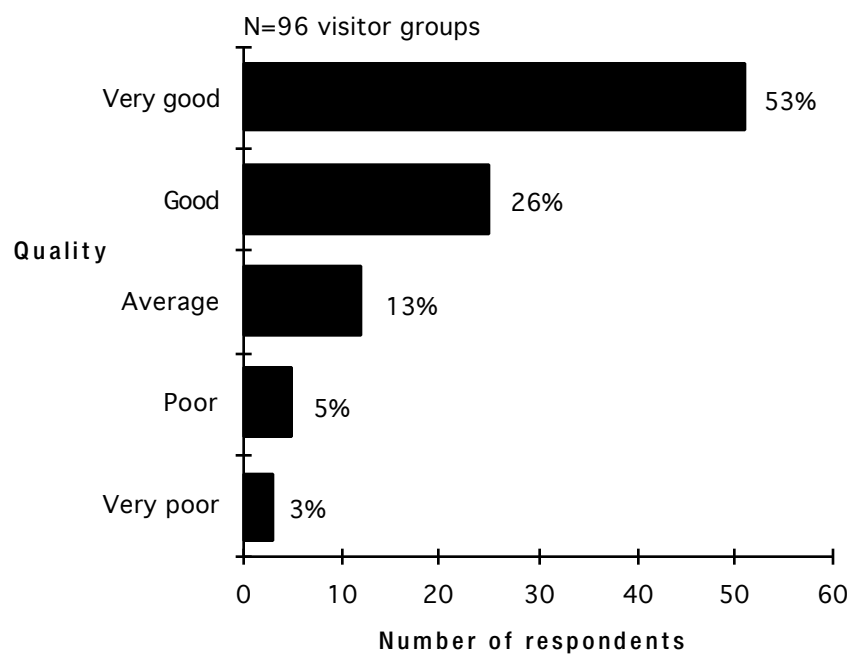
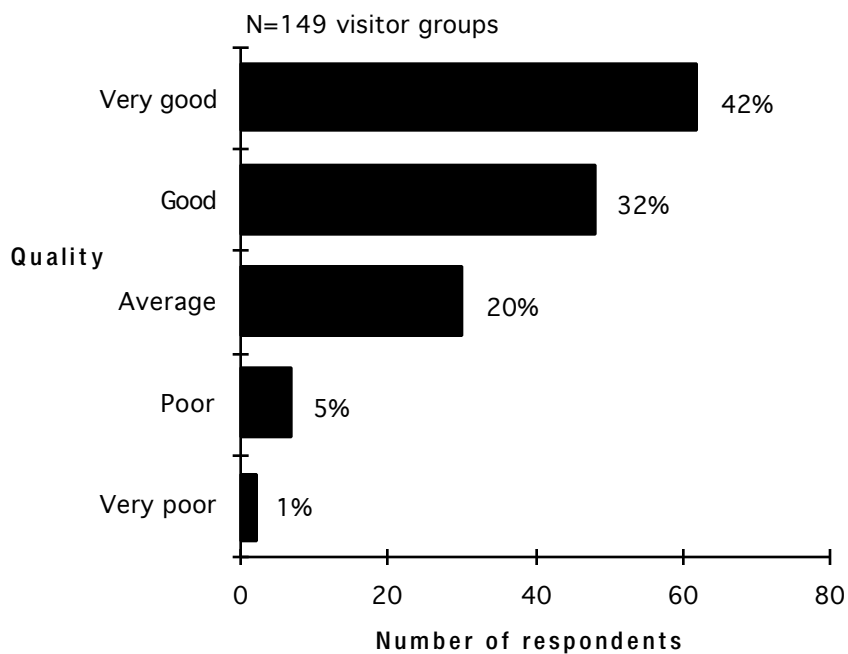
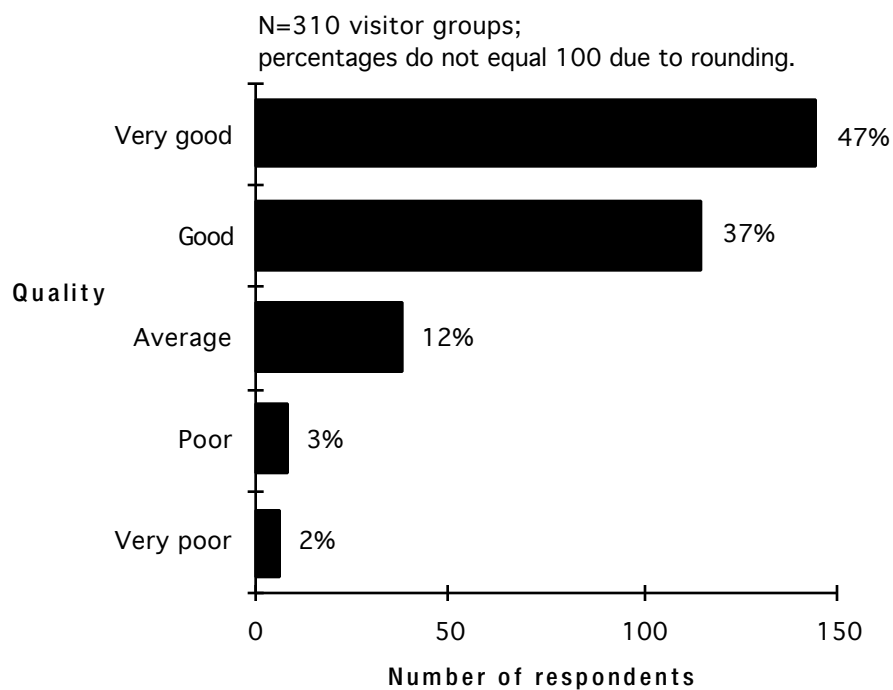


Figure 32: Quality of ranger-led walks/talks

**Figure 33: Quality of bulletin boards****Figure 34: Quality of roadside/trailside exhibits**

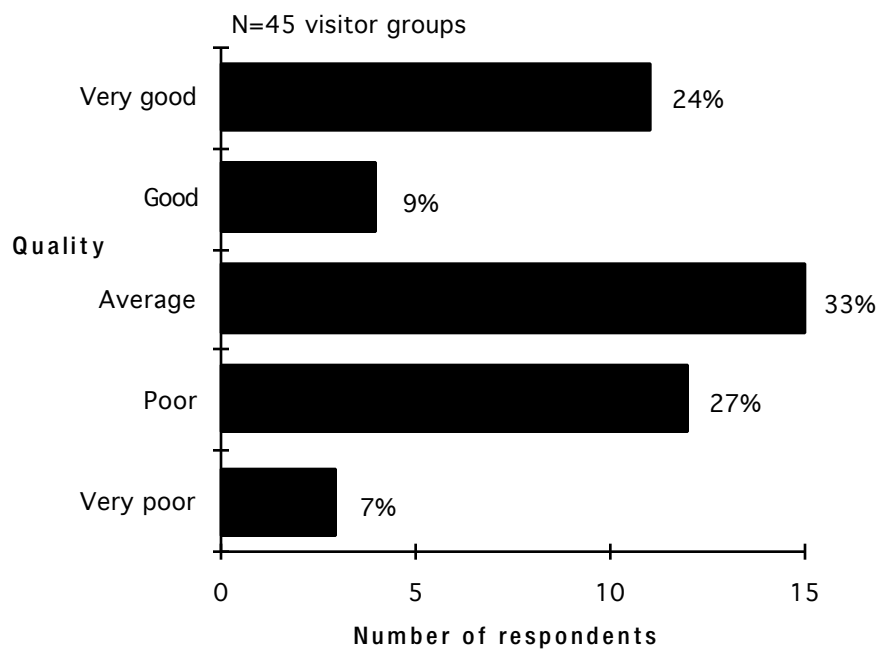


Figure 35: Quality of park radio information station

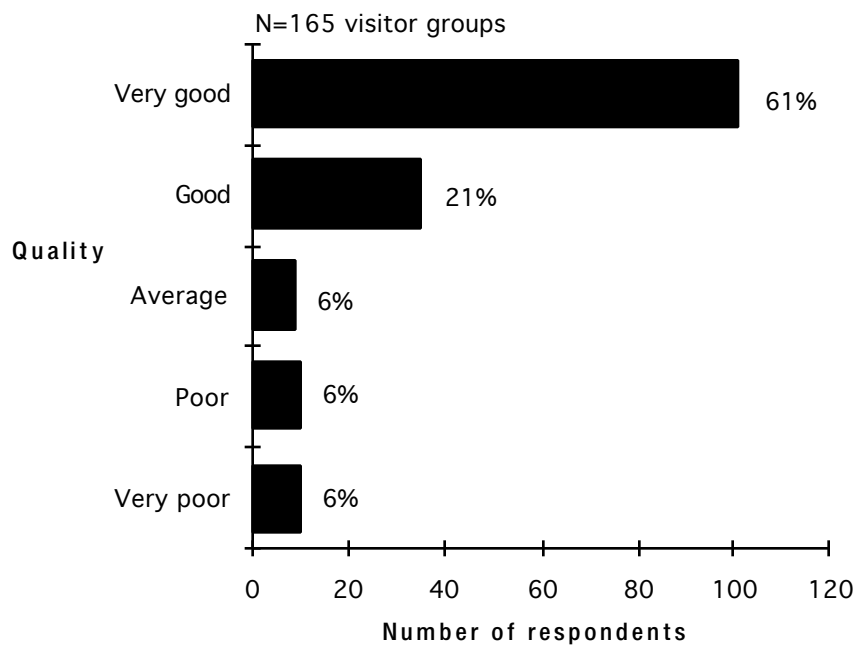


Figure 36: Quality of roving rangers

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

The services and facilities most commonly used by visitors were restrooms (84%), groomed snowmobile routes (75%), warming huts (62%), information/direction signs (62%), food service (57%) and the visitor center (57%), as shown in Figure 37. The least used service was the Jenny Lake snowmobile route (2%).

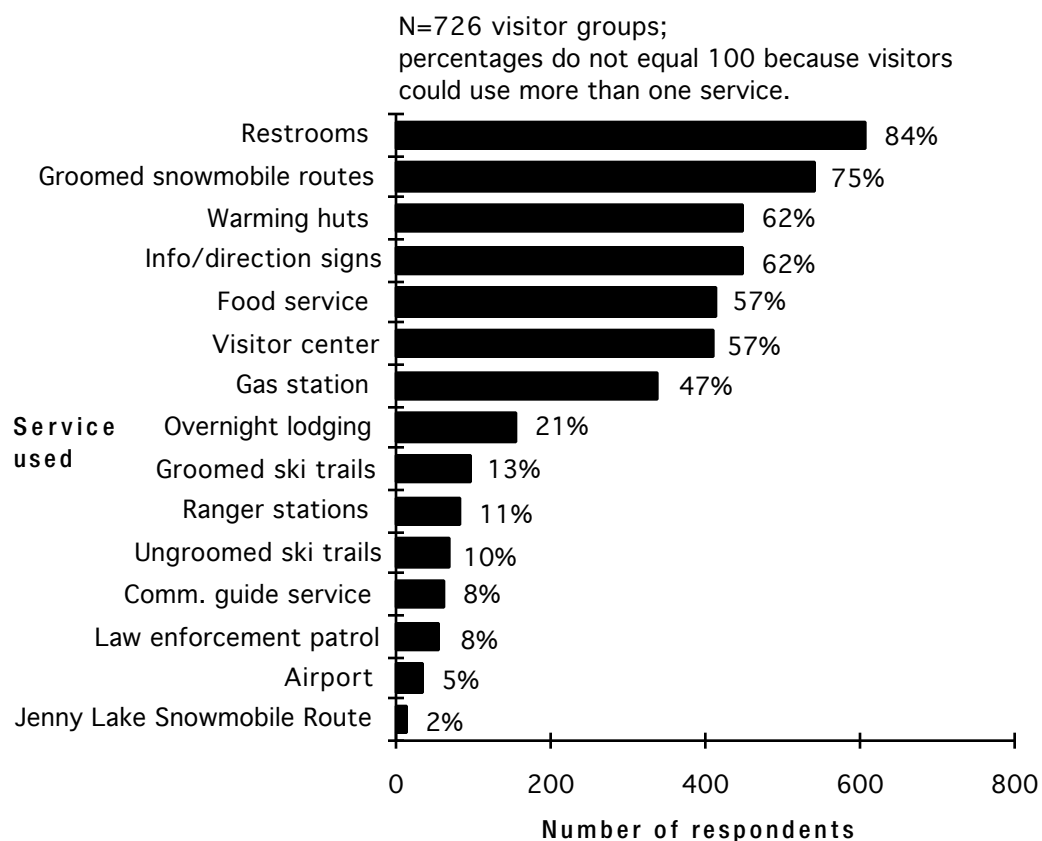


Figure 37: Use of visitor services and facilities

Visitors rated the importance and quality of each of the visitor services and facilities 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 38 shows the average importance and quality ratings for each service and facility. 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 38. All services and facilities were rated above average in importance and quality. The services which do not appear in Figure 38 were rated by too few visitors to provide reliable results.

Figures 39-53 show that several services received the highest "very important" to "extremely important" ratings: the airport (94%), ungroomed ski trails, restrooms, gas station, and informational/ directional signs (each 92%). The highest "not important" rating was for law enforcement patrol (9%).

Figures 54-68 show that several services were given high "good" to "very good" quality ratings: the visitor center (86%), commercial guide service (85%), the airport (84%), and informational/directional signs (82%). The service which received the highest "very poor" quality rating was law enforcement patrol (12%).

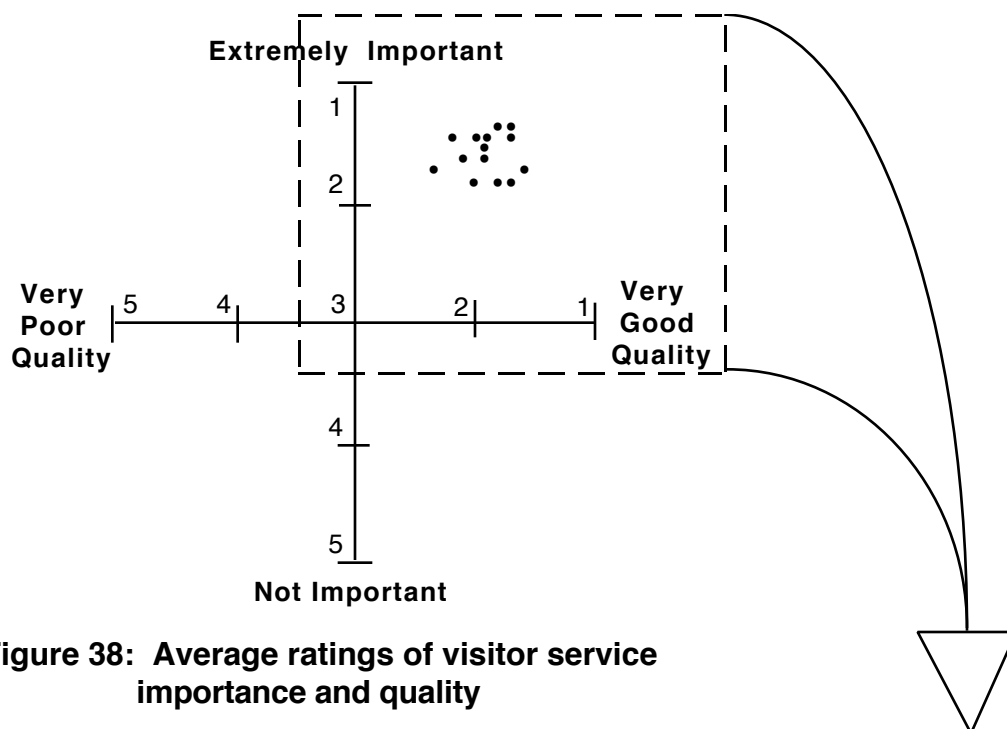


Figure 38: Average ratings of visitor service importance and quality

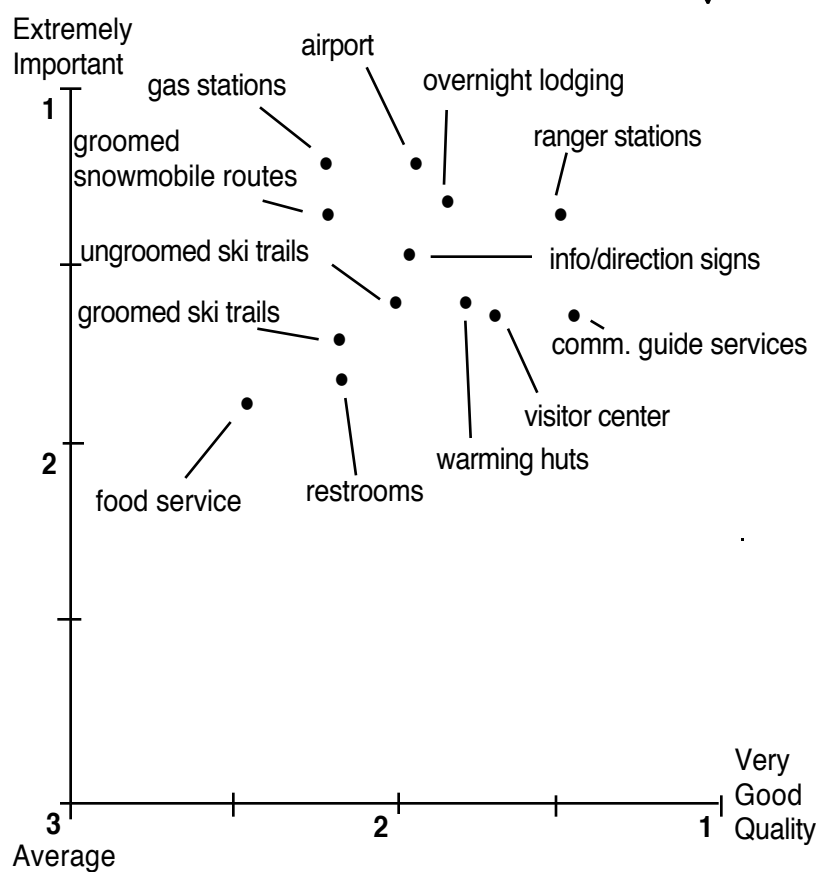


Figure 38: Detail

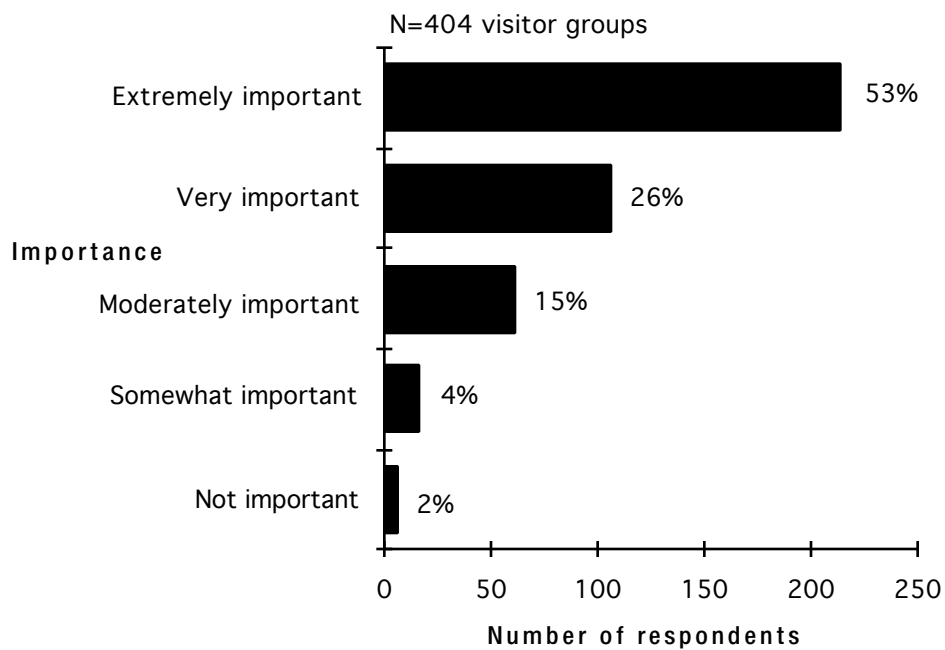


Figure 39: Importance of visitor center

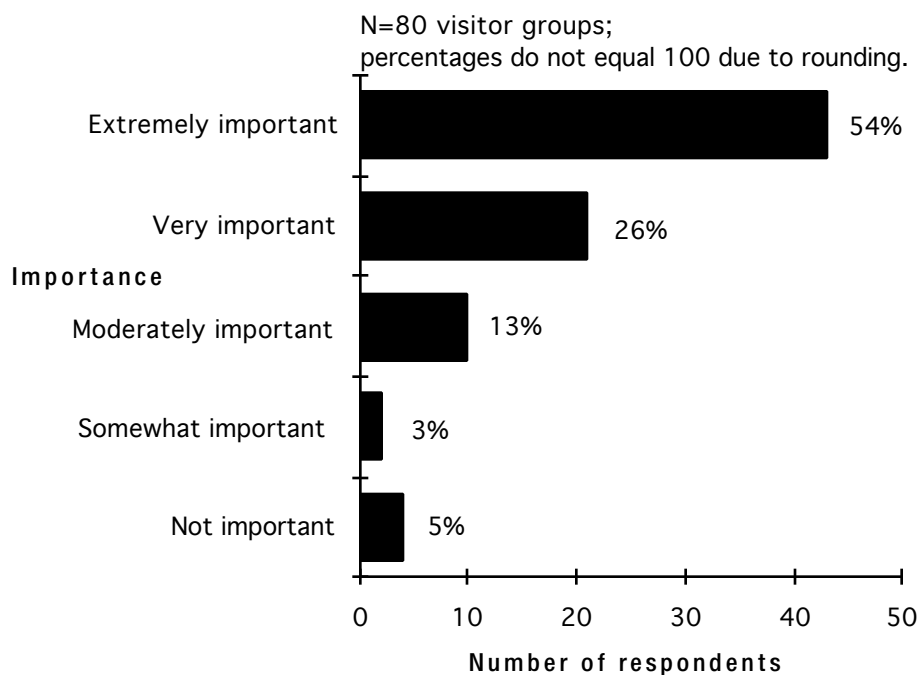


Figure 40: Importance of ranger stations

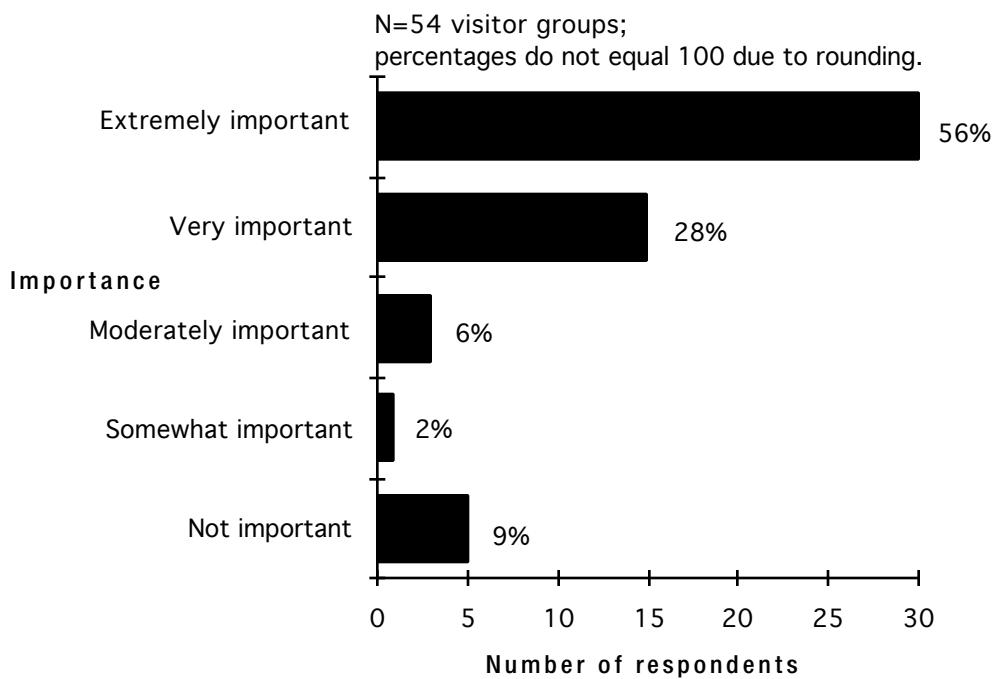


Figure 41: Importance of law enforcement patrol

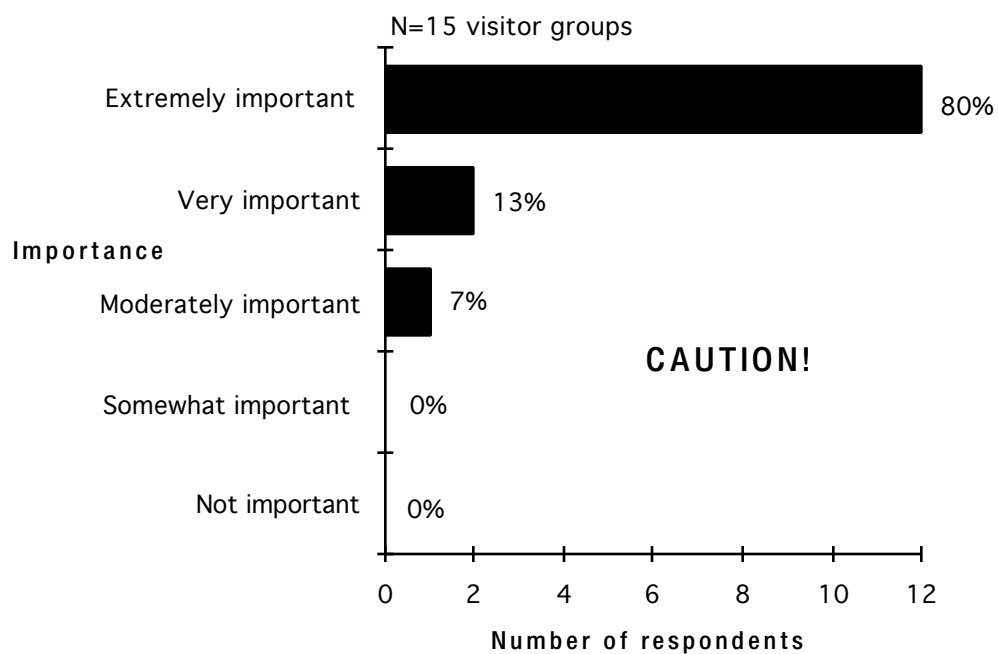


Figure 42: Importance of Jenny Lake snowmobile route

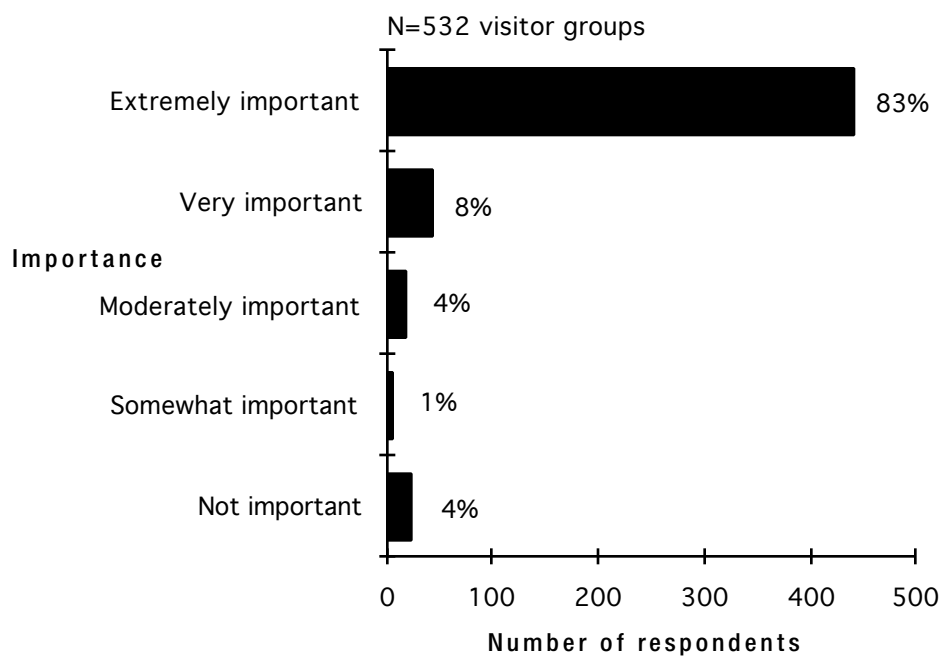


Figure 43: Importance of groomed snowmobile routes

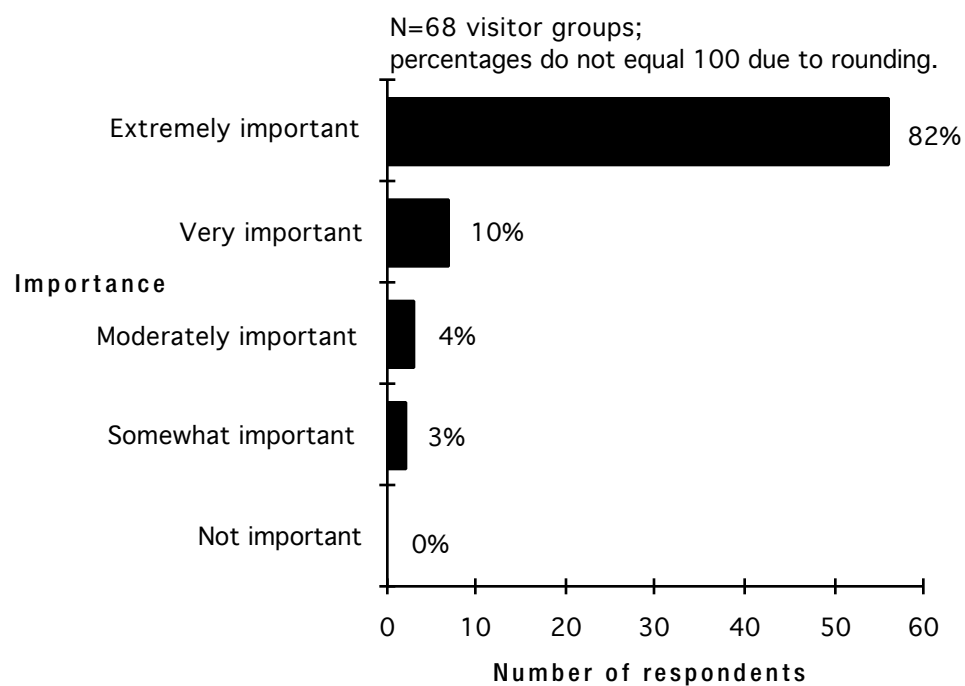
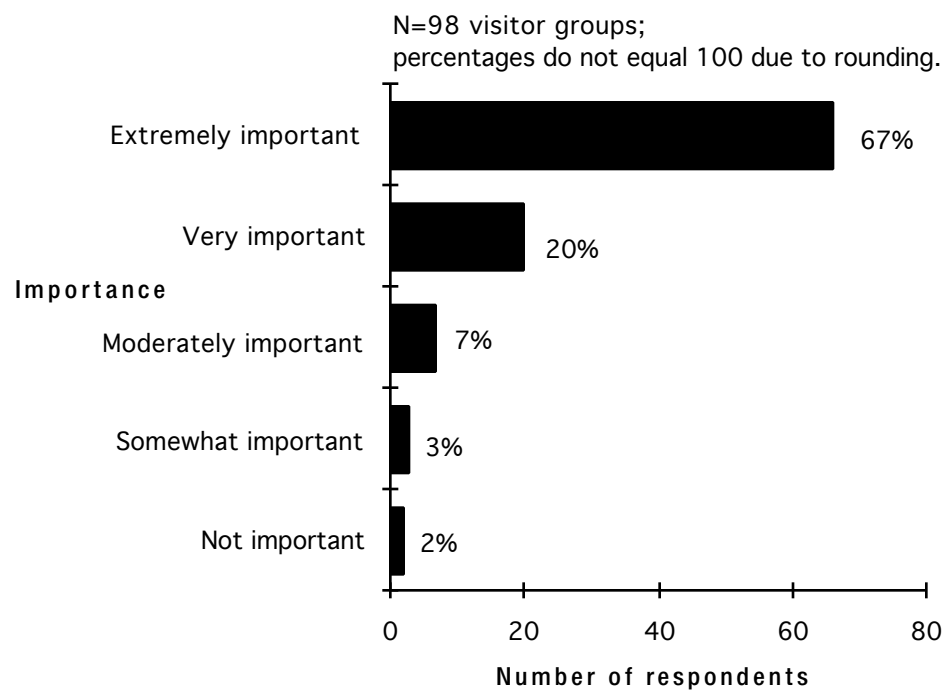
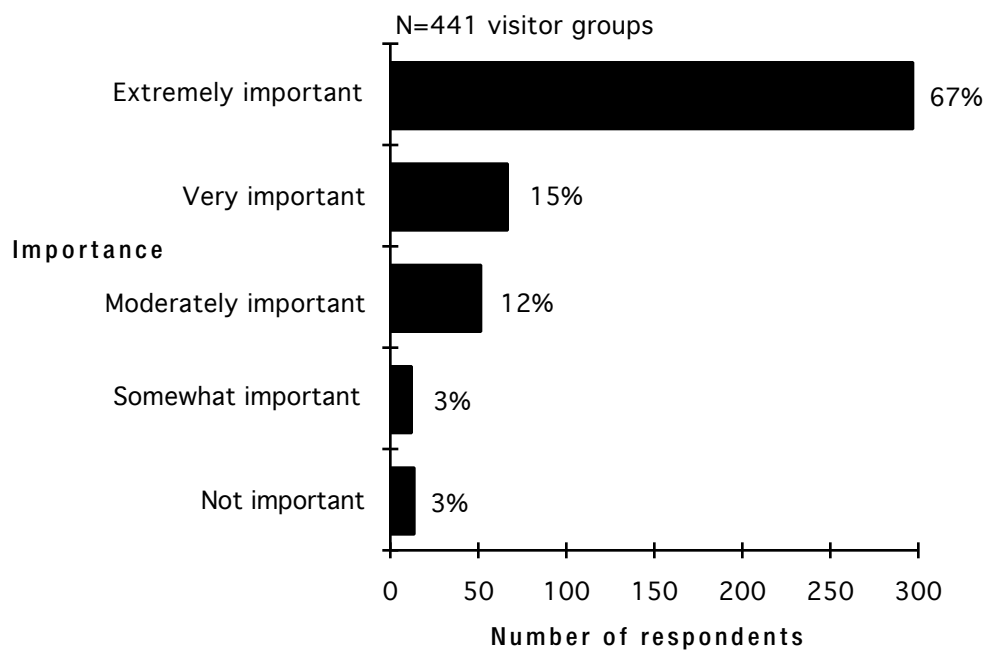


Figure 44: Importance of ungroomed ski trails

**Figure 45: Importance of groomed ski trails****Figure 46: Importance of warming huts**

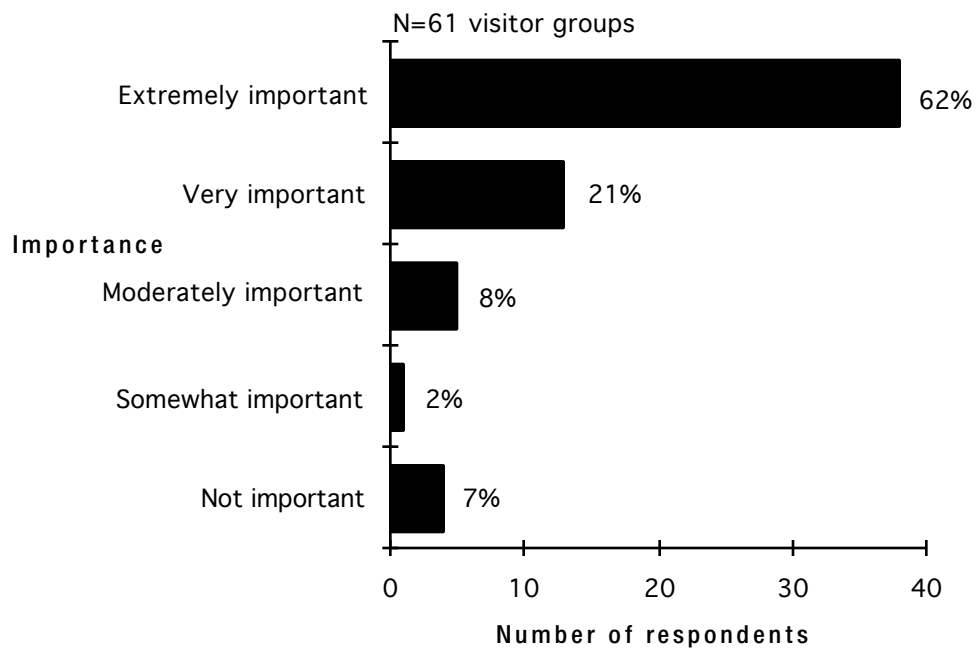


Figure 47: Importance of commercial guide service

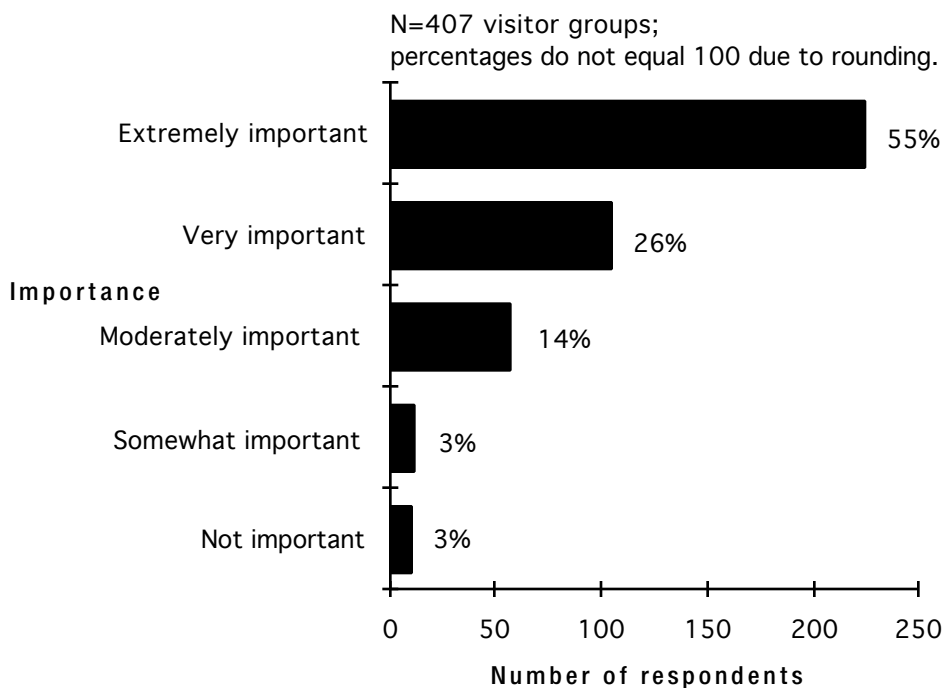
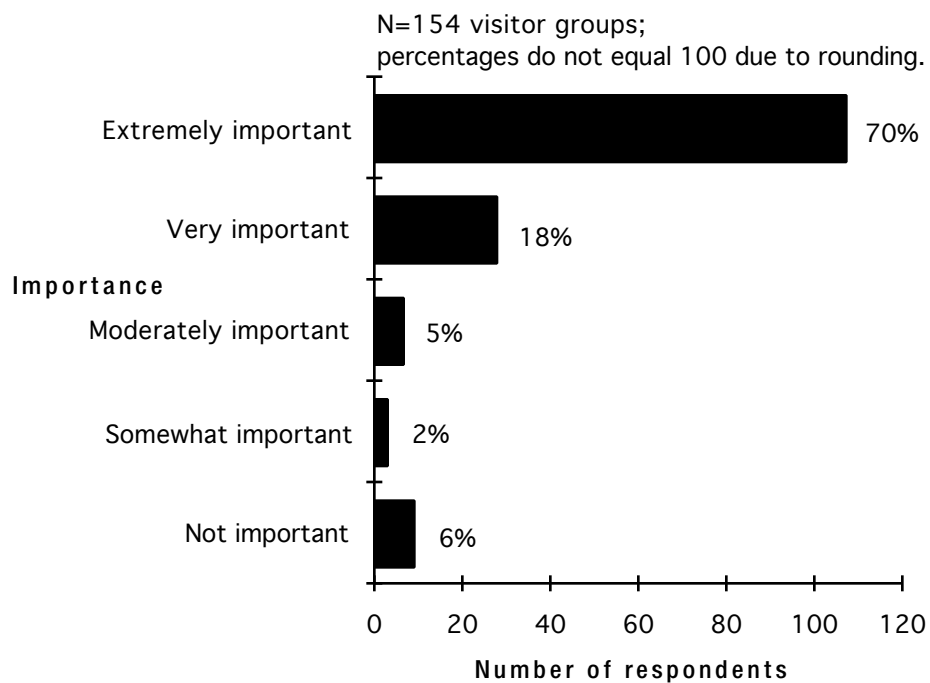
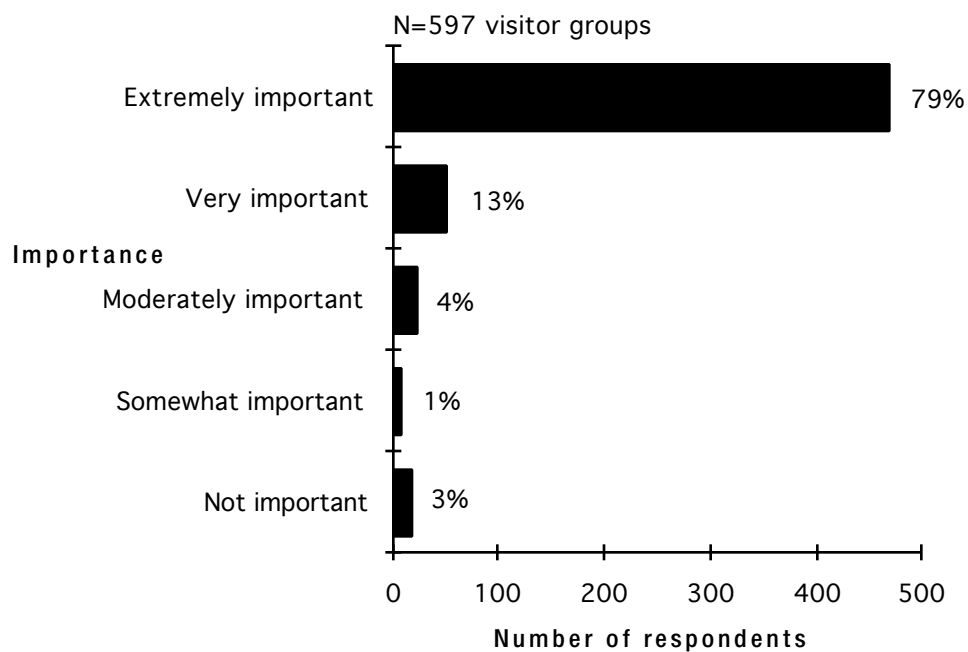
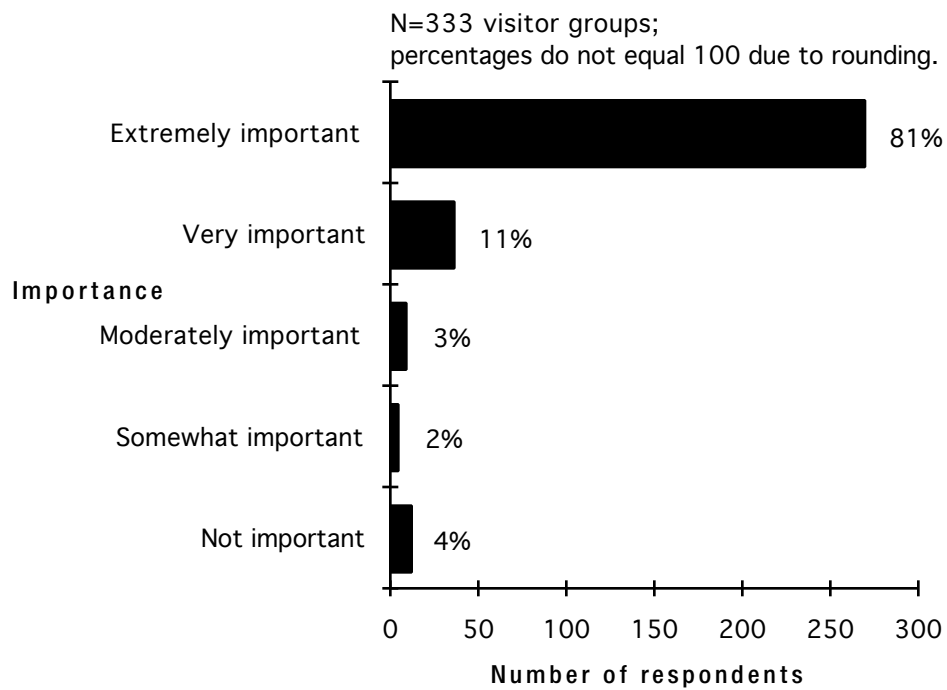
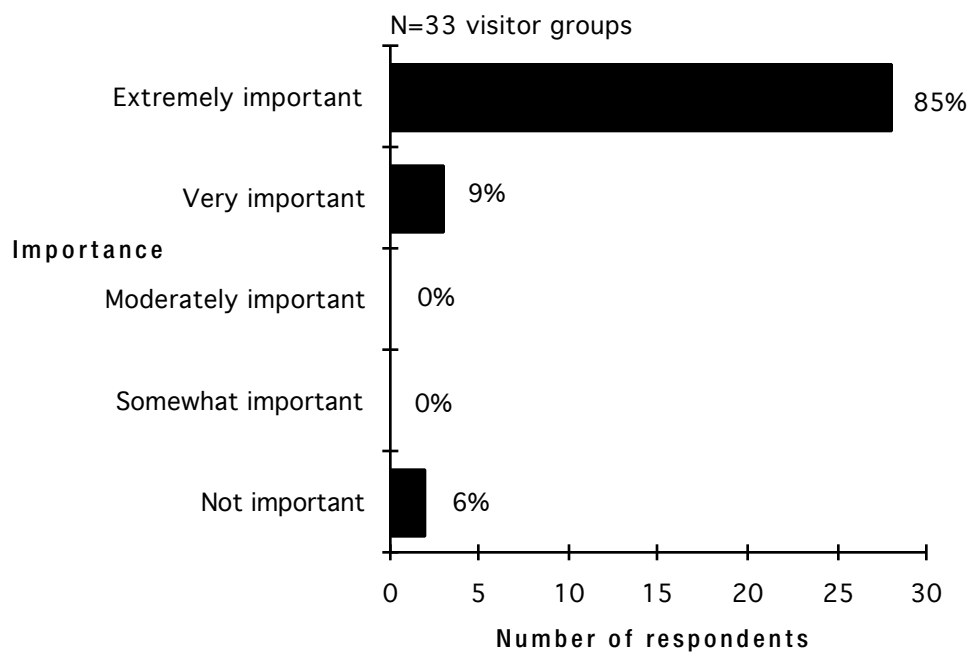


Figure 48: Importance of food service

**Figure 49: Importance of overnight lodging****Figure 50: Importance of restrooms**

**Figure 51: Importance of gas station****Figure 52: Importance of airport**

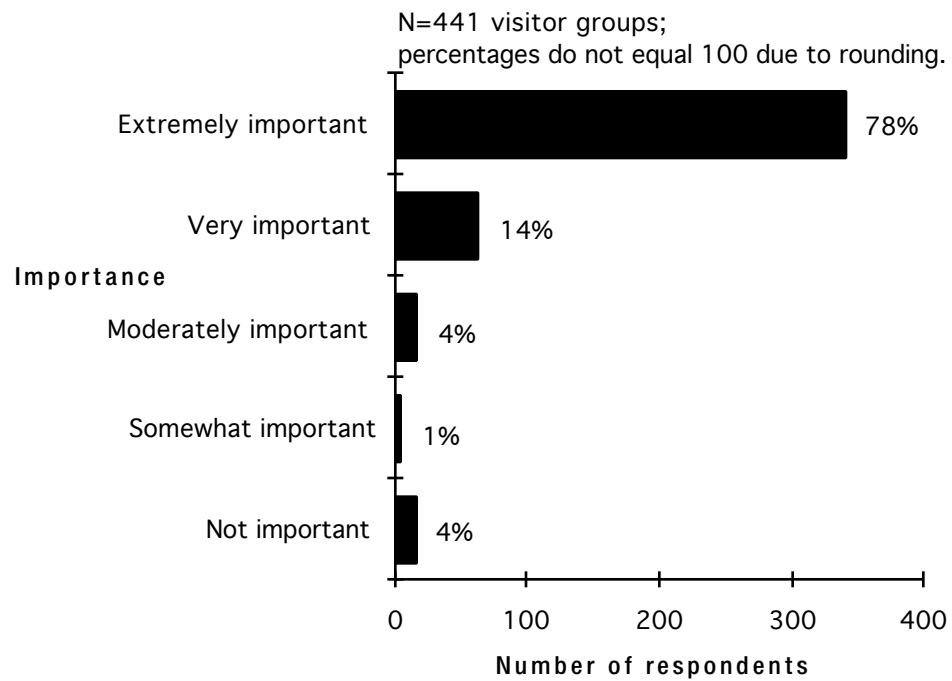


Figure 53: Importance of informational/directional signs

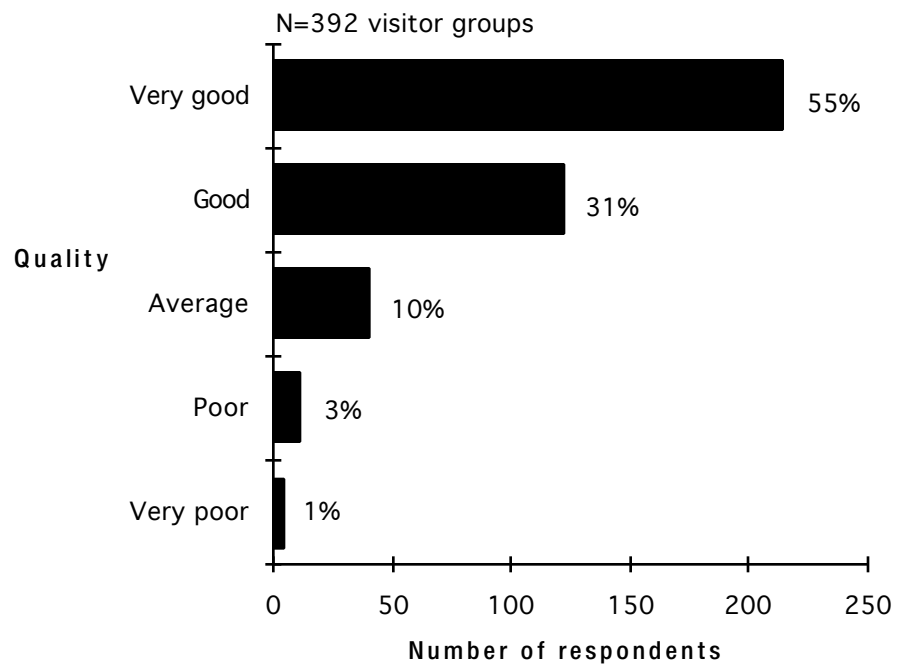
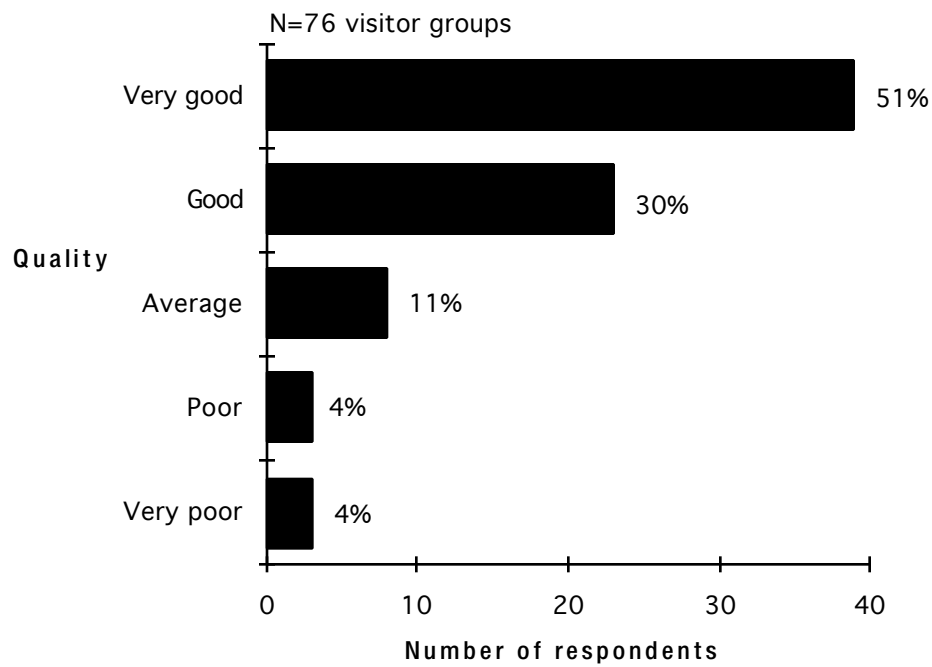
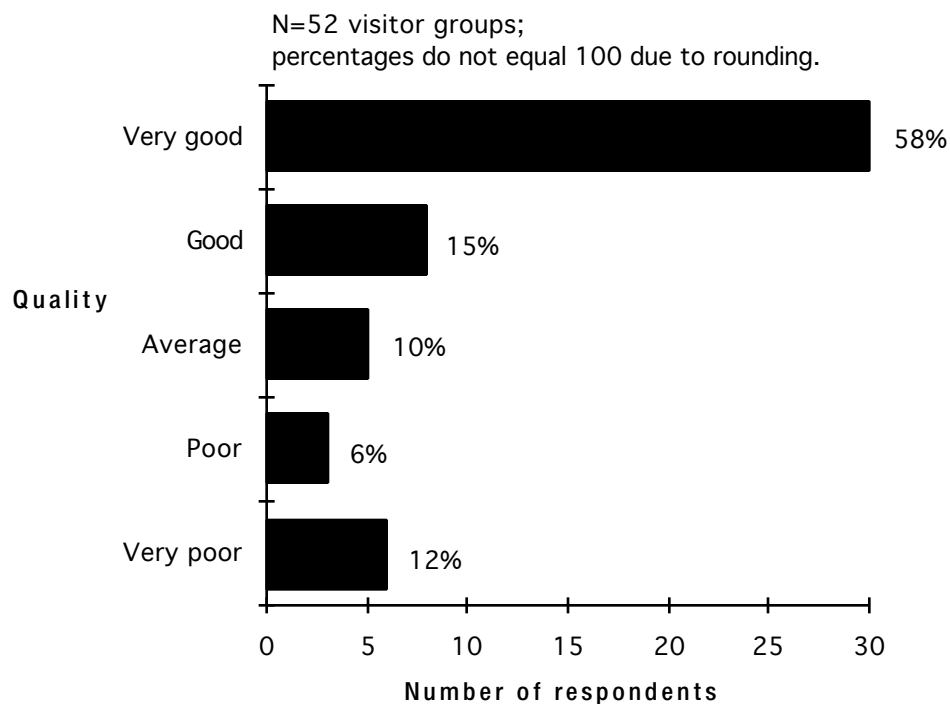


Figure 54: Quality of visitor center

**Figure 55: Quality of ranger stations****Figure 56: Quality of law enforcement patrol**

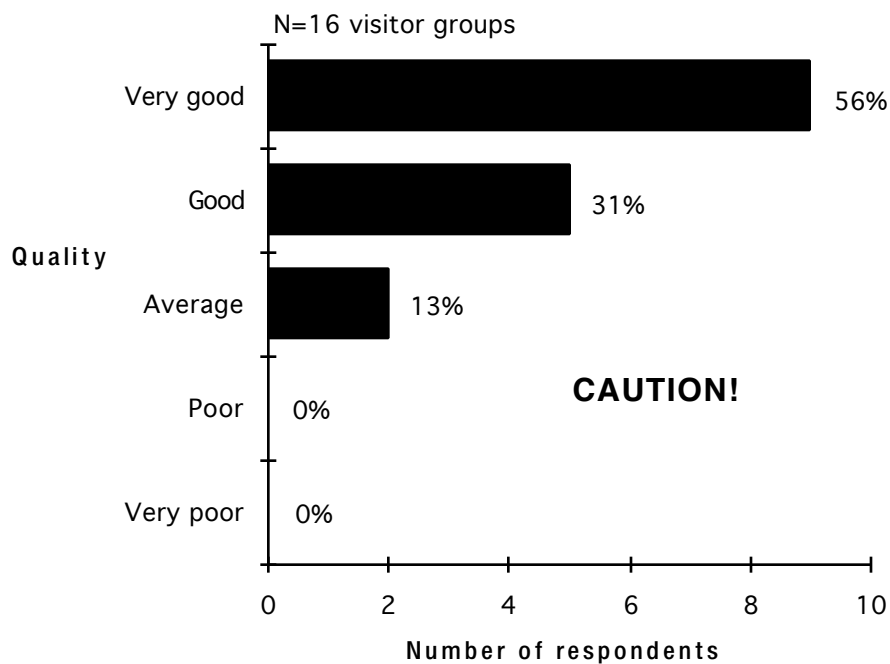


Figure 57: Quality of Jenny Lake snowmobile route

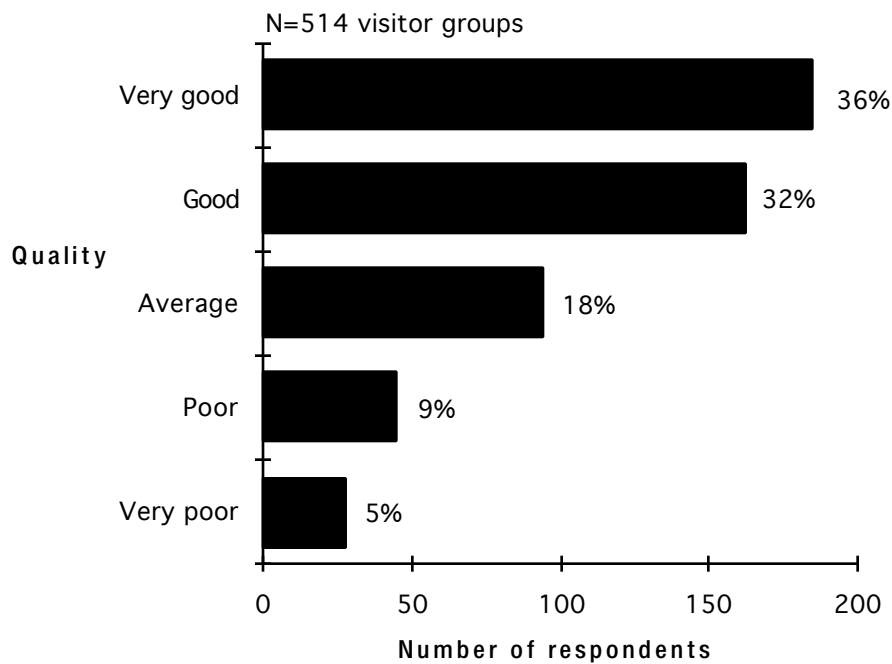


Figure 58: Quality of groomed snowmobile routes

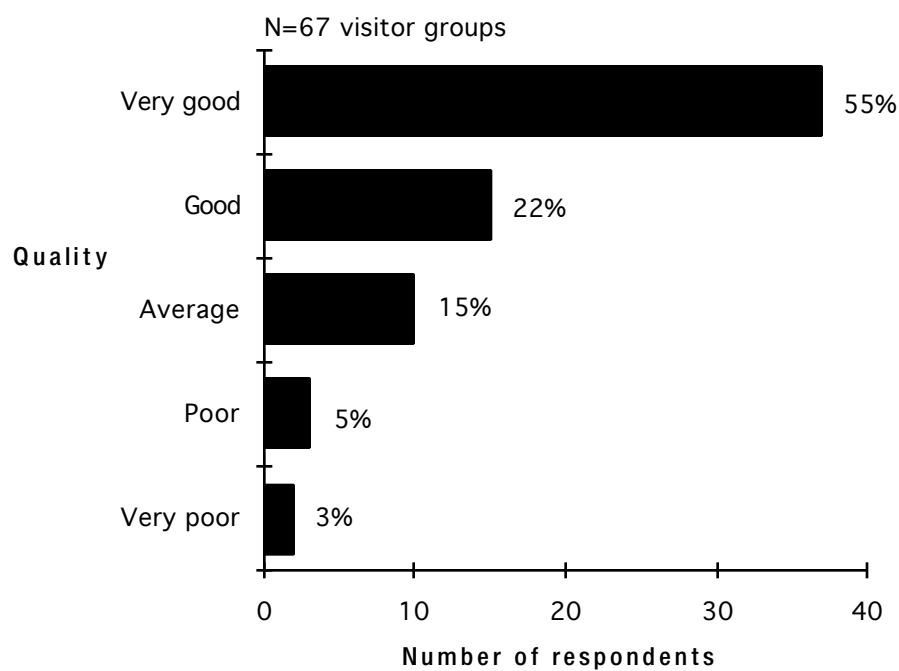


Figure 59: Quality of ungroomed ski trails

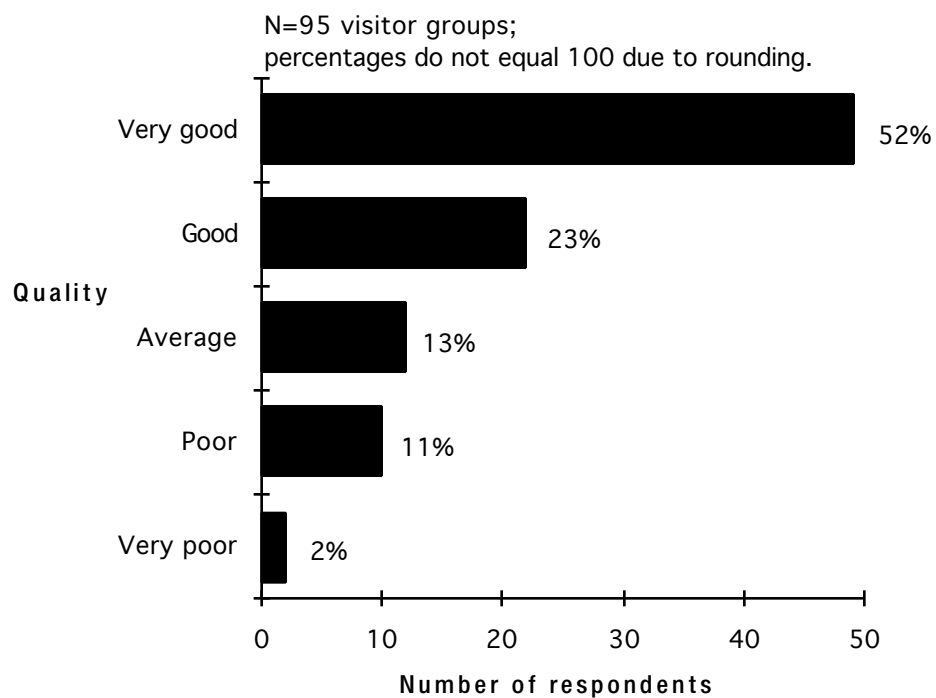
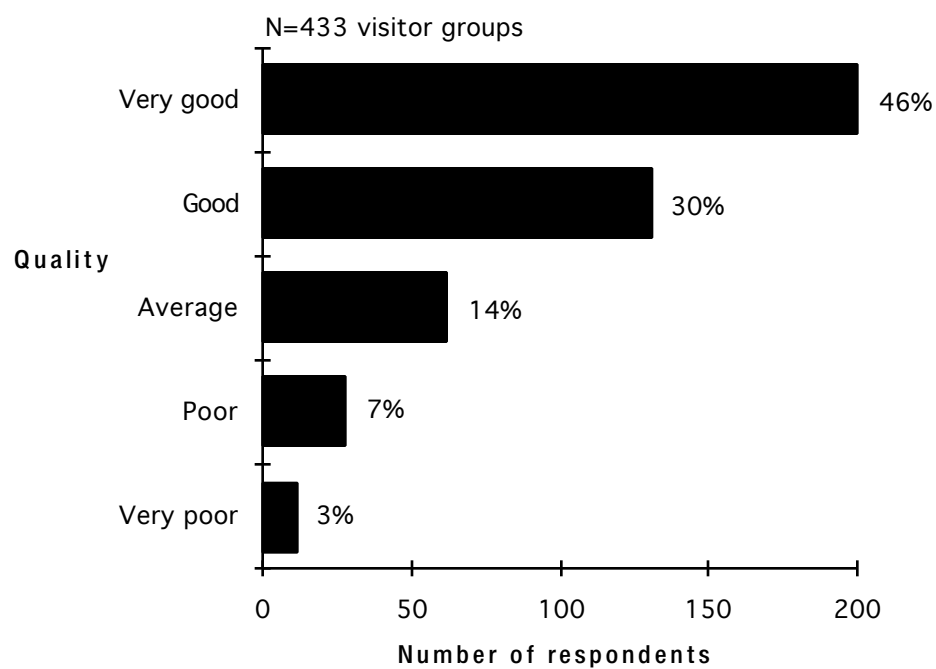
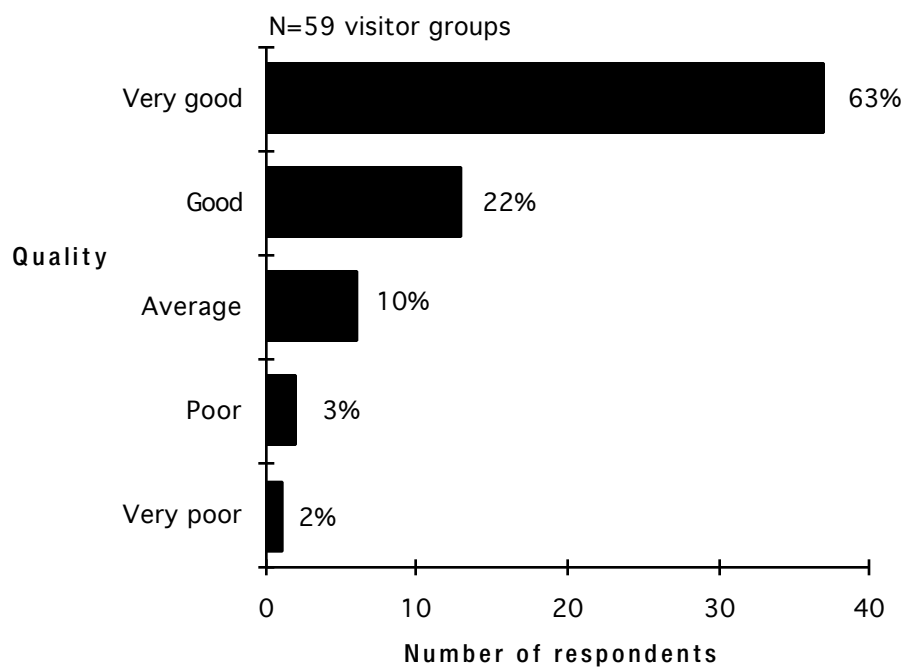
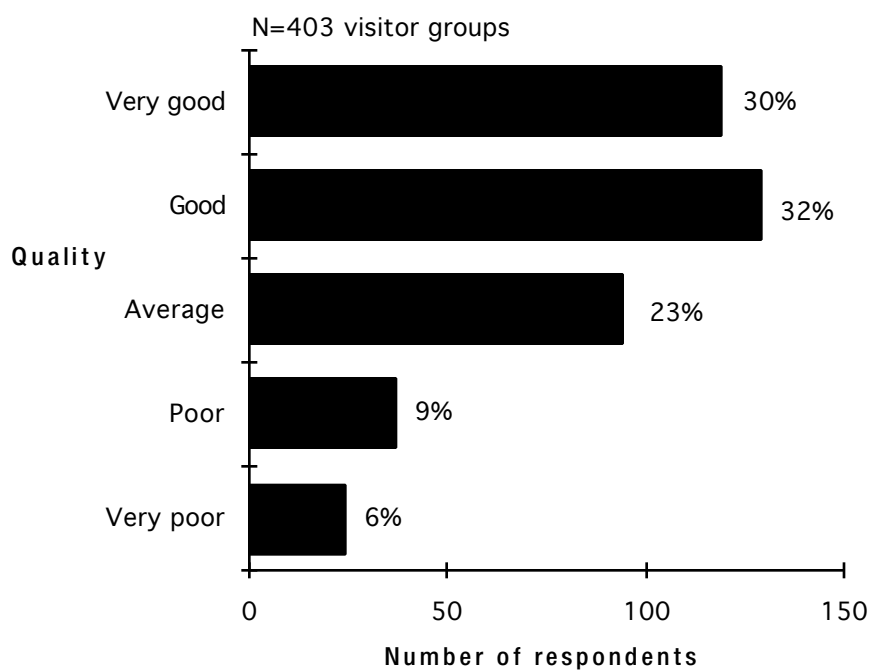
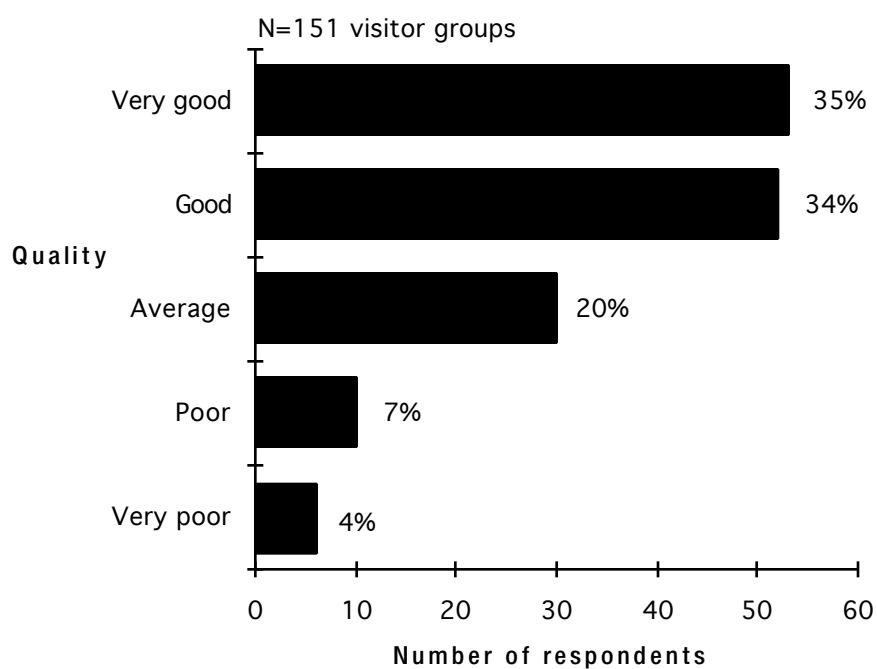
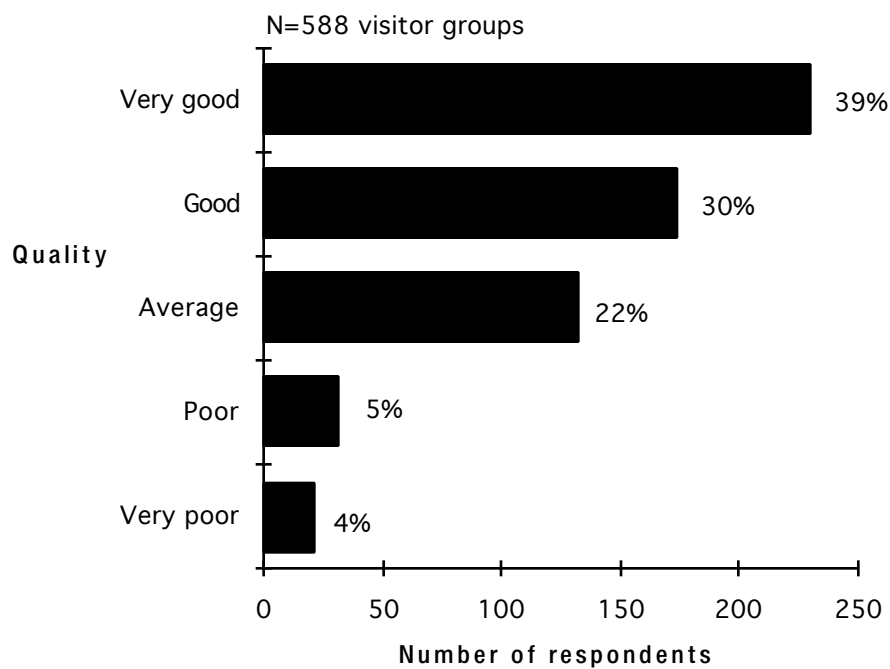
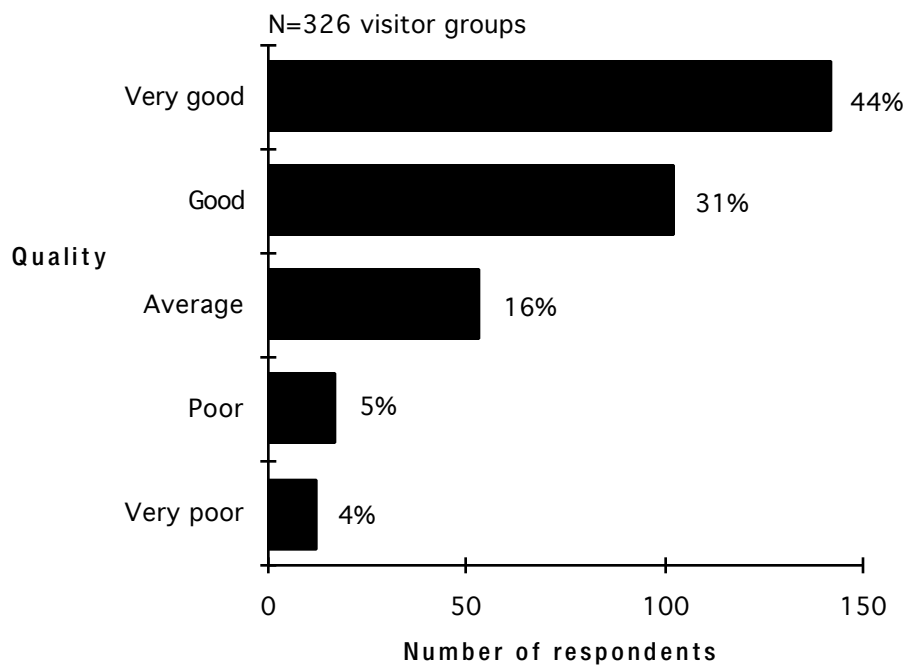
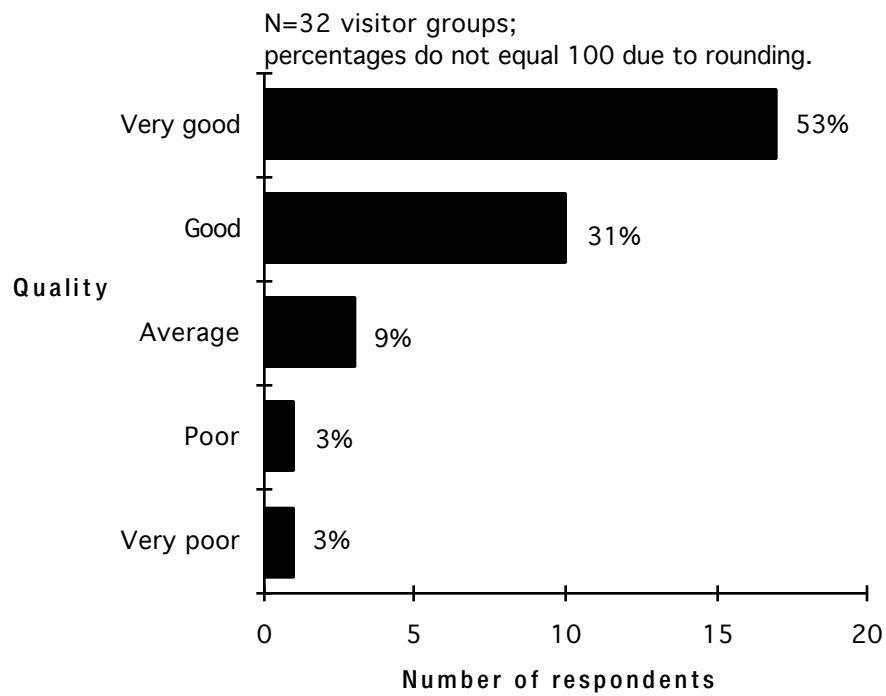
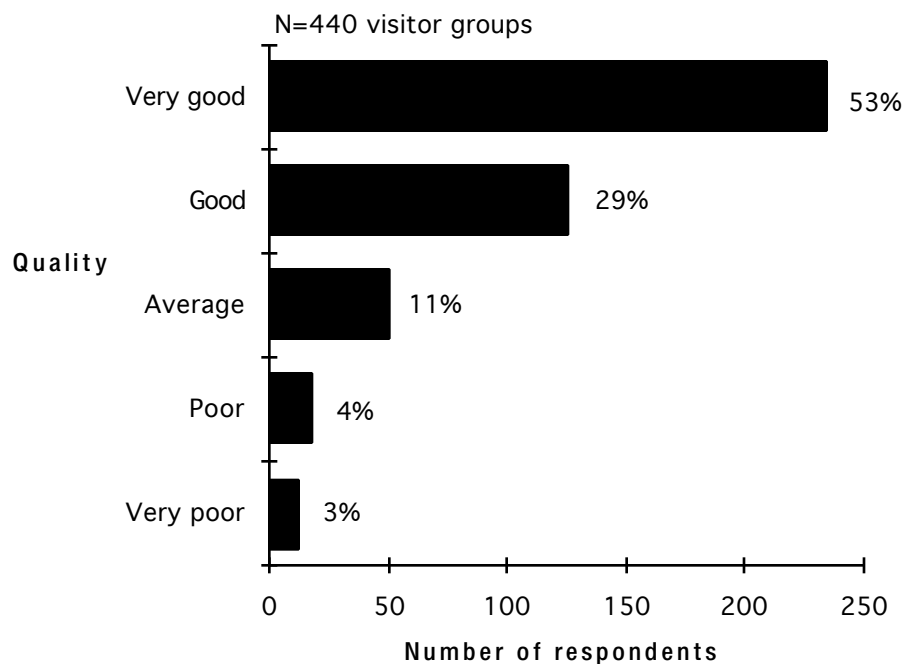


Figure 60: Quality of groomed ski trails

**Figure 61: Quality of warming huts****Figure 62: Quality of commercial guide service**

**Figure 63: Quality of food service****Figure 64: Quality of overnight lodging**

**Figure 65: Quality of restrooms****Figure 66: Quality of gas station**

**Figure 67: Quality of airport****Figure 68: Quality of informational/directional signs**

**Importance of
park qualities**

Visitors were asked to rate the importance of several qualities to their winter visit to Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Parks. These qualities included scenery, wildlife, thermal features, clean air, quiet and solitude (see Figures 69-74). The qualities which received the highest "extremely important" to "very important" ratings were scenery (94%), wildlife (93%), and clean air (84%), as shown in Figures 69, 70 and 72. The qualities which received the highest "not important" ratings were solitude (6%) and quiet (5%), as shown in Figures 73 and 74.

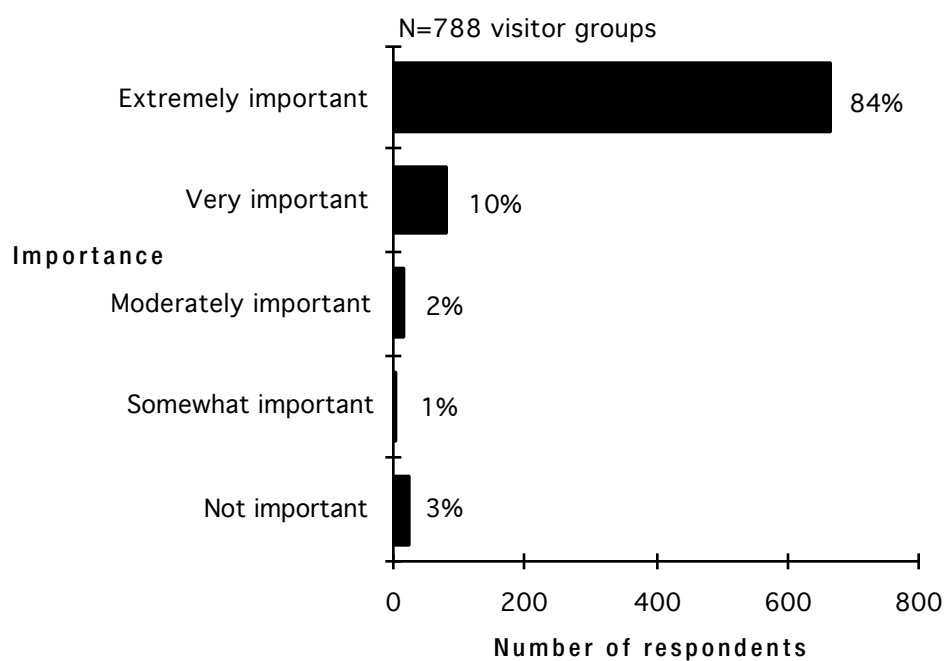
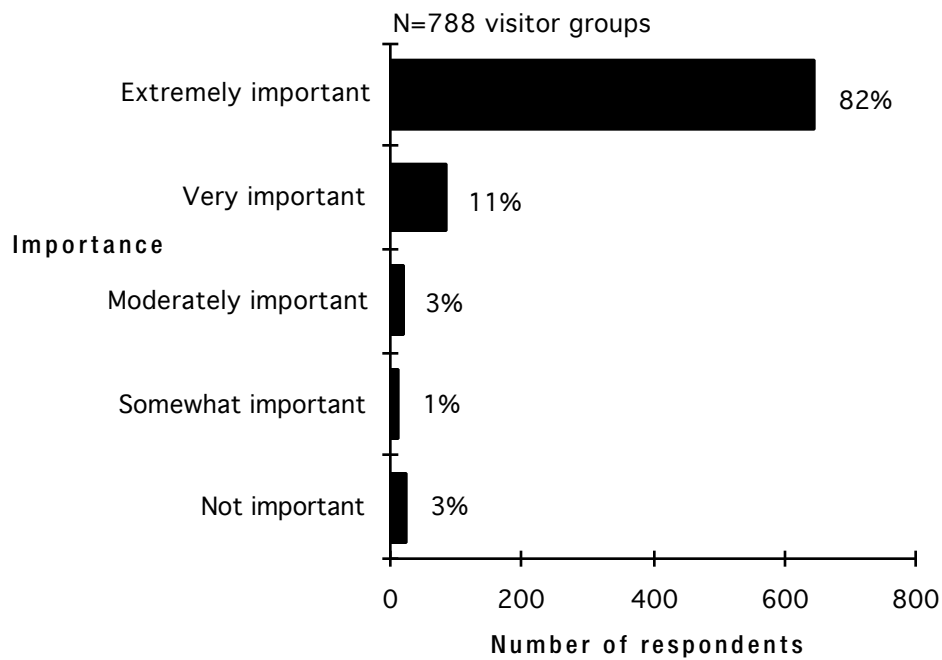
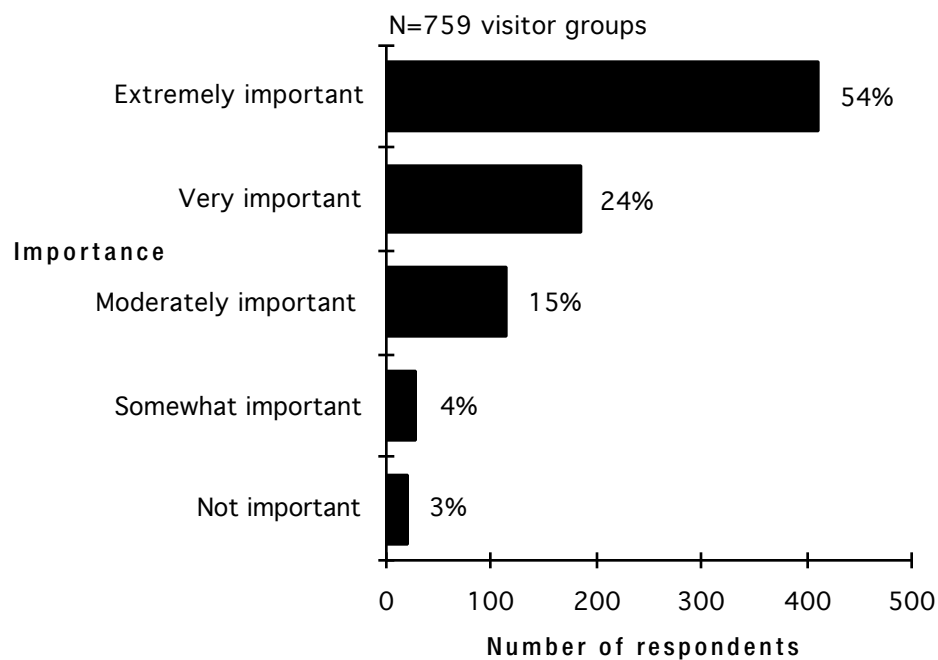
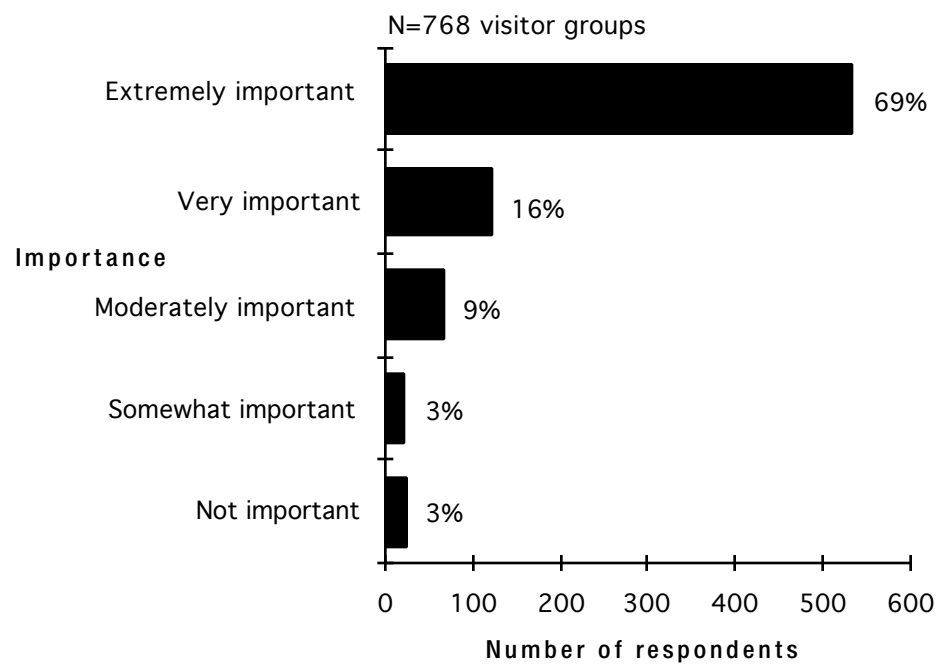
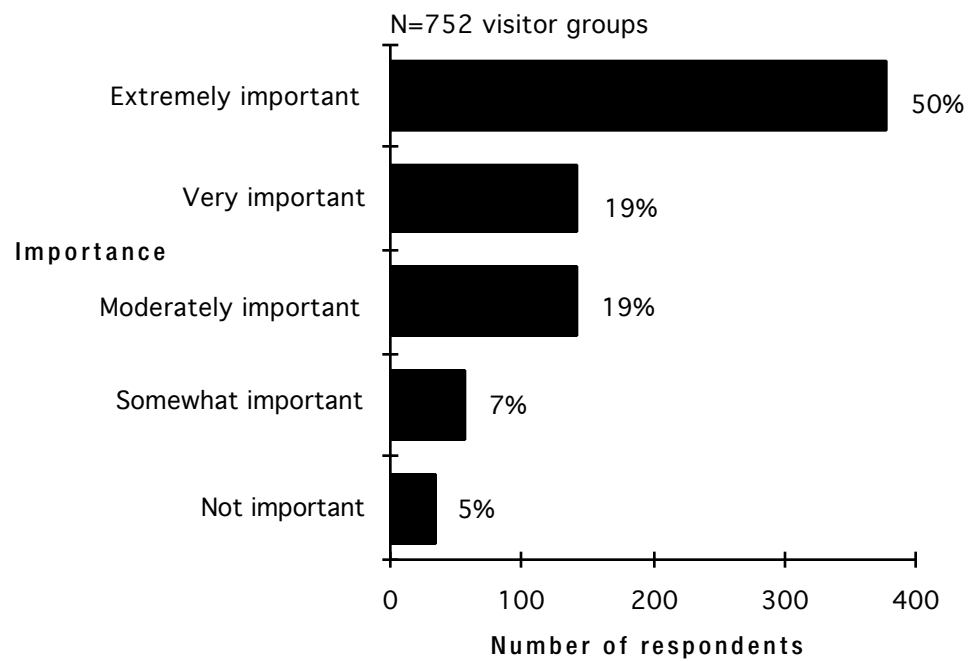


Figure 69: Importance of scenery

**Figure 70: Importance of wildlife****Figure 71: Importance of thermal features**

**Figure 72: Importance of clean air****Figure 73: Importance of quiet**

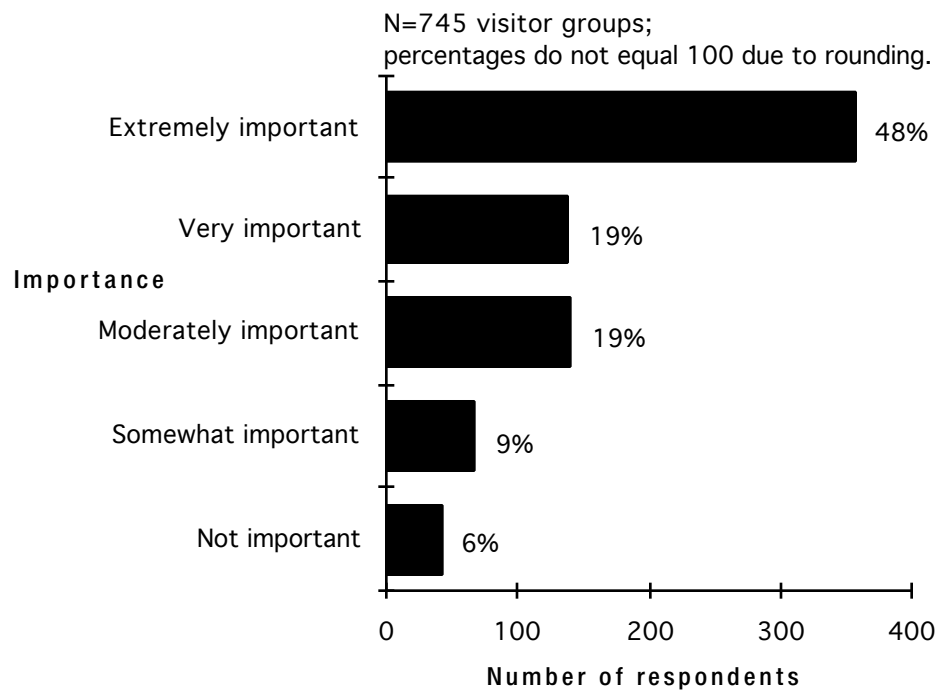


Figure 74: Importance of solitude

**Importance of
park activities**

Visitors were asked to rate the importance of activities to their winter visit to Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Parks. The "extremely important" to "very important" ratings were 87% for recreational activities (skiing, snowmobiling, etc.) and 57% for educational opportunities, as shown in Figures 75 and 76. The "not important" rating was 6% for recreational activities and 7% for educational opportunities.

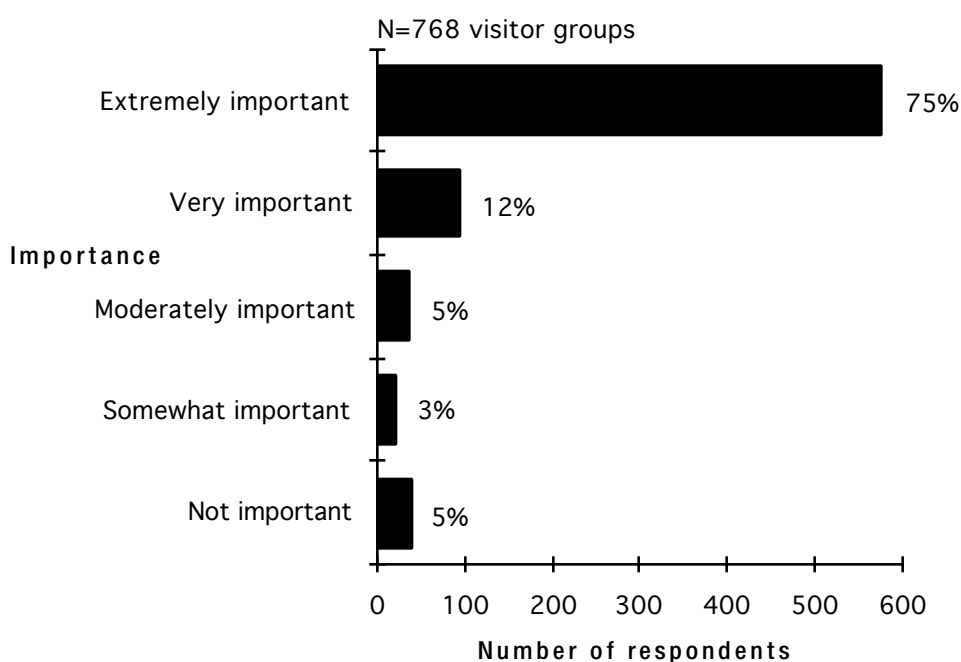


Figure 75: Importance of recreational activities (skiing, snowmobiling, etc.)

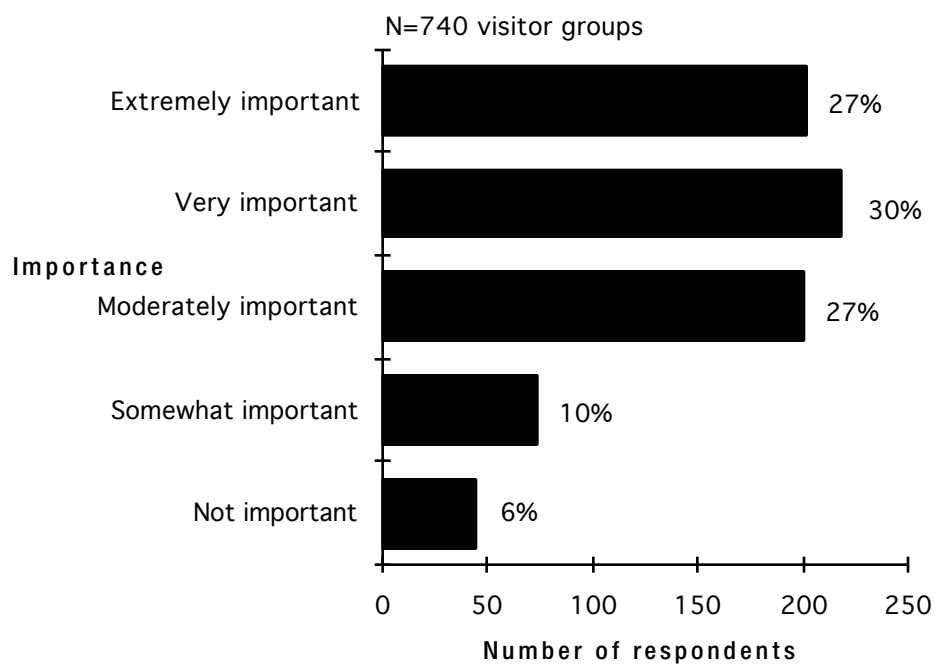


Figure 76: Importance of educational opportunities

Expenditures

Visitors were asked to list their expenditures both in and outside Grand Teton and Yellowstone during this visit. They were asked how much money they spent for lodging (motel, camping, etc.), travel (gas, plane fare, rental car, etc.), food (restaurant, groceries, etc.), rental equipment (snowmobile, skis, etc.), commercial guide services and "other" items (entrance fees, film, gifts, etc.).

One-third of the groups (33%) spent up to \$500 for total expenditures in and outside the parks during this visit (see Figure 77). Ten percent of the groups spent \$4001 or more. NOTE: One large expenditure (considered an outlier) was removed from these results.

In the parks, 53% of the visitor groups spent up to \$200 for total expenditures during this visit (see Figure 78). The largest proportion of money was spent for lodging (25%) and travel (24%) (see Figure 79).

In the parks, 59% of visitor groups spent no money for lodging (see Figures 80). For travel, half of the visitors (50%) spent up to \$100 (see Figures 81). Many visitor groups (57%) spent up to \$100 for food (see Figure 82). Almost two-thirds of the visitor groups (66%) spent no money for rental equipment (see Figure 83). For commercial guide services, 86% of visitor groups spent no money (see Figure 84). For "other" items, 77% visitor groups spent up to \$100 (see Figure 85).

Outside the parks, many visitor groups (36%) spent \$1200 or more for total expenditures during this visit (see Figure 86). Outside the parks, the largest proportion of visitors' money was spent for lodging (23%) and travel (22%), as shown in Figure 87.

For lodging, 23% of visitor groups spent \$601 or more outside the parks (see Figure 88). For travel, 45% of visitor groups spent up to \$100 (see Figure 89). For food, 42% of visitor groups spent up to \$100 (see Figure 90). For rental equipment, 39% of visitor groups spent no money outside the parks (see Figure 91). Most (91%) spent no money for commercial guide services (see Figure 92). For "other" expenditures, 53% of visitor groups spent up to \$100 (see Figure 93).

The average visitor group expenditure in and outside the parks during this visit was \$2058. The average per capita expenditure was \$346. The median visitor group expenditure (i.e. 50% of visitor groups spent less; 50% spent more) was \$855.

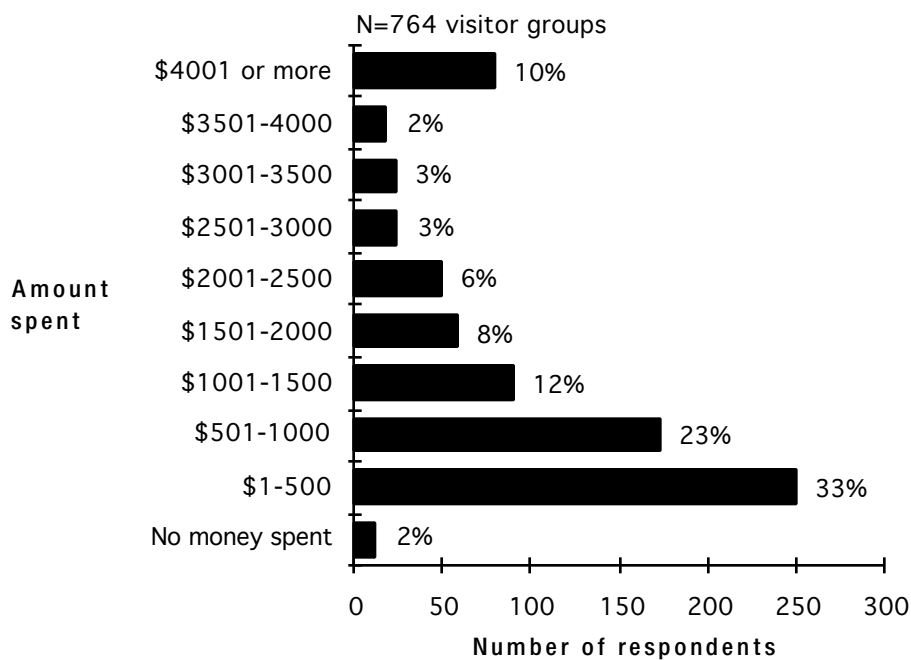


Figure 77: Total expenditures in and outside of Grand Teton/ Yellowstone

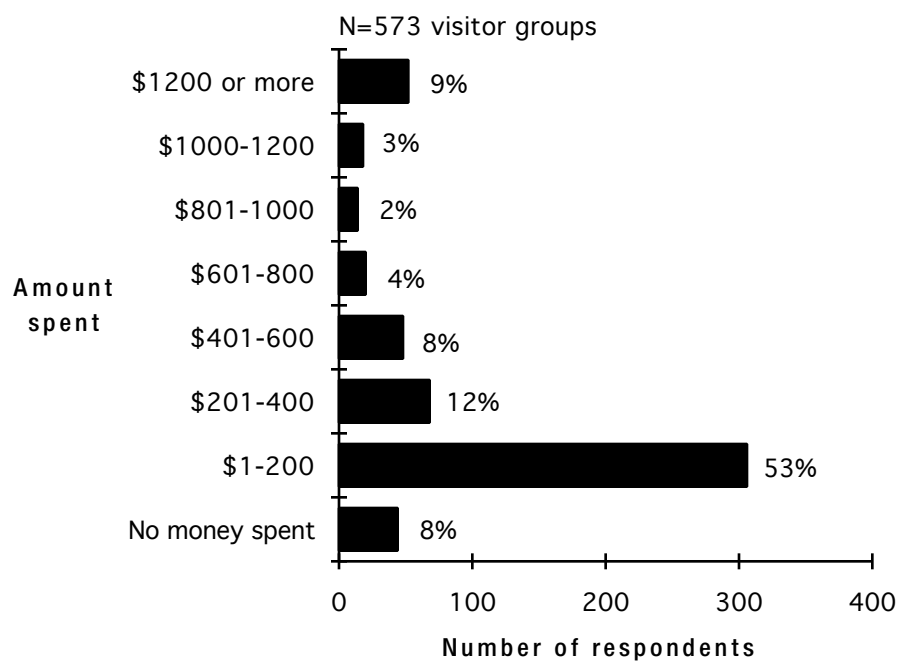


Figure 78: Total expenditures in Grand Teton/Yellowstone

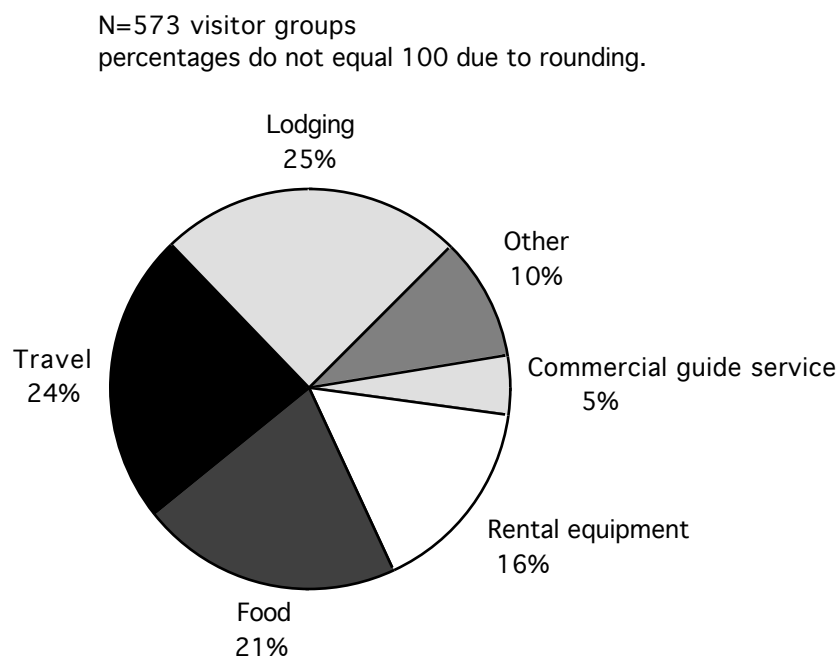


Figure 79: Expenditures by category in Grand Teton/ Yellowstone

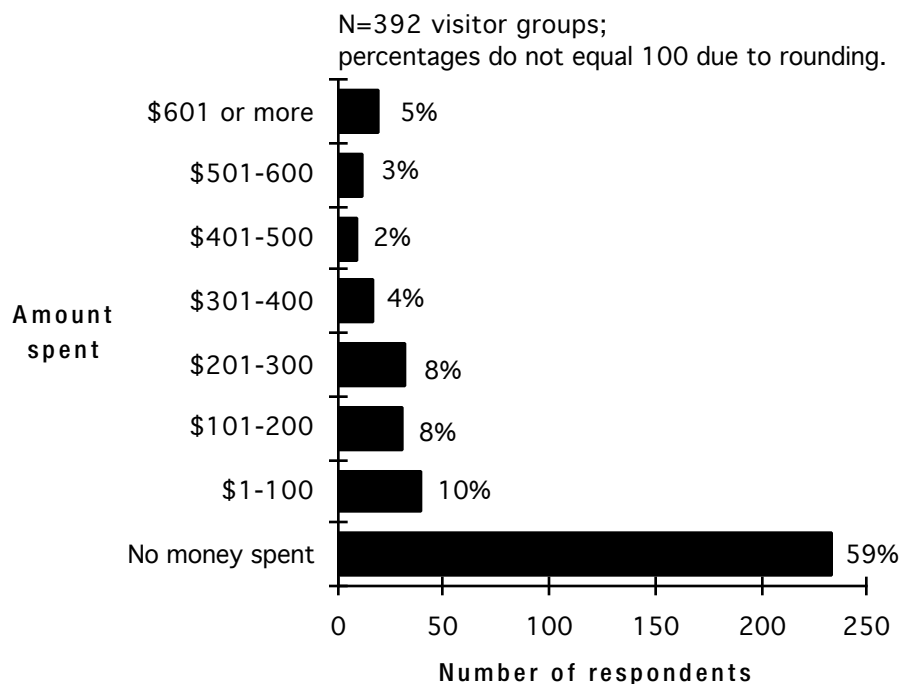
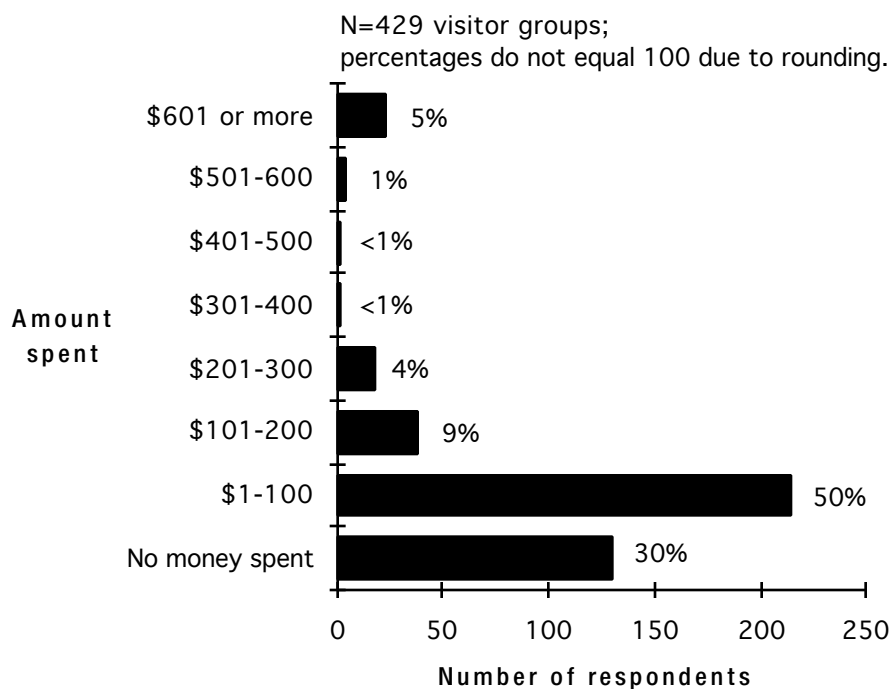
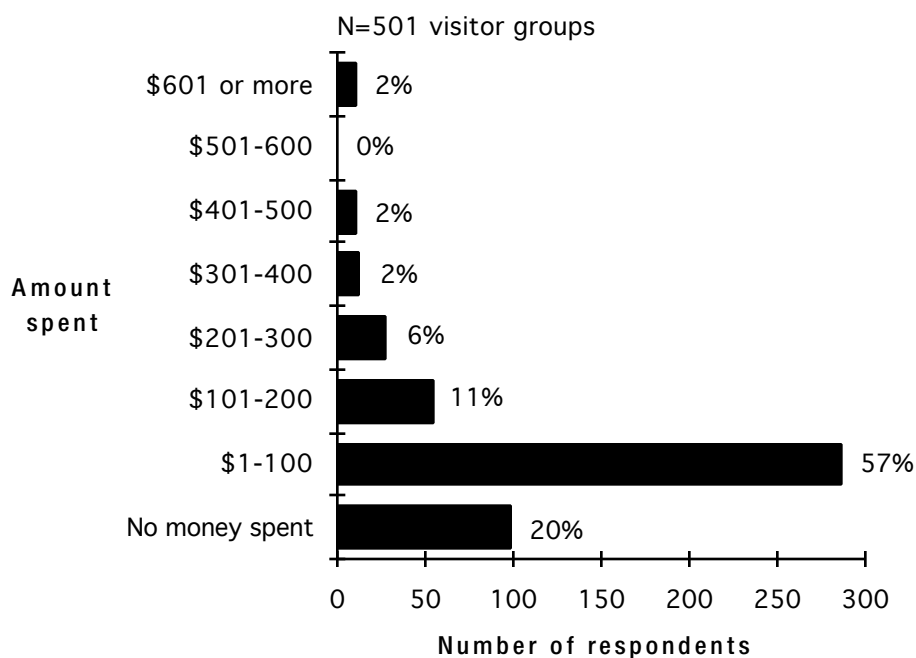


Figure 80: Lodging expenditures in Grand Teton/Yellowstone

**Figure 81: Travel expenditures in Grand Teton/Yellowstone****Figure 82: Food expenditures in Grand Teton/Yellowstone**

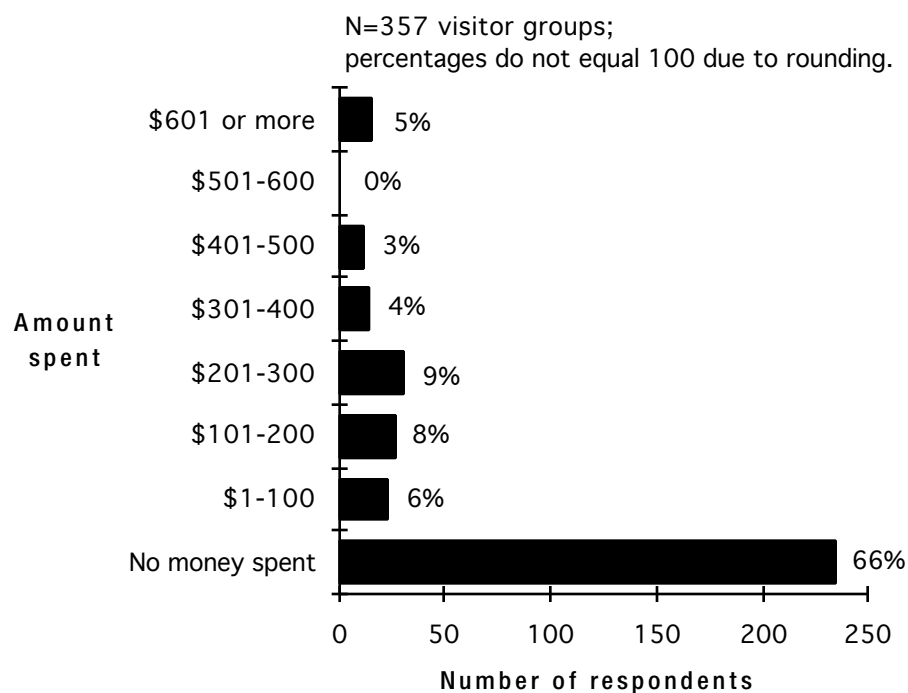


Figure 83: Rental equipment expenditures in Grand Teton/ Yellowstone

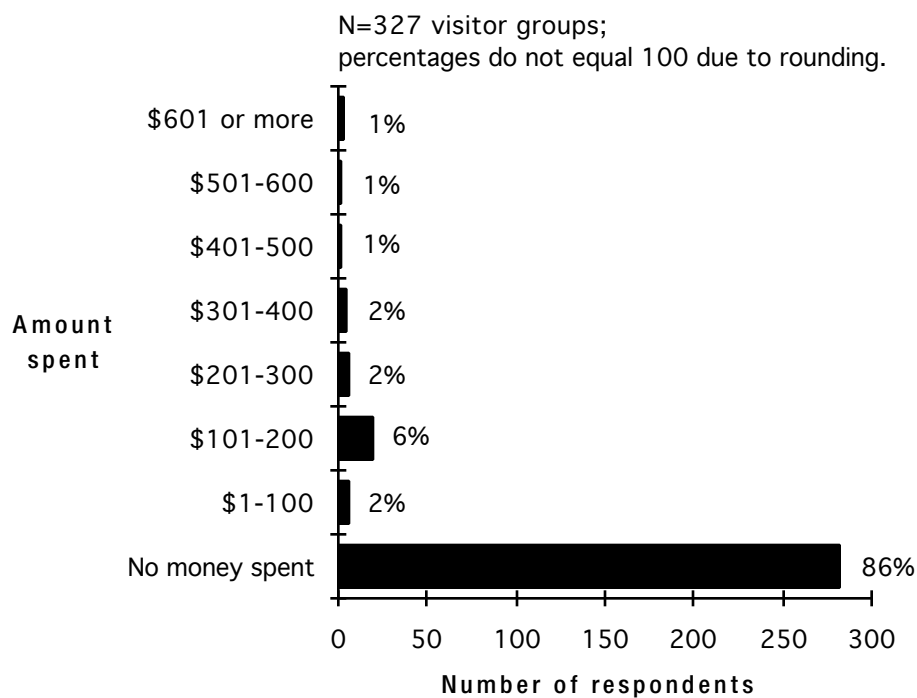


Figure 84: Commercial guide service expenditures in Grand Teton/Yellowstone

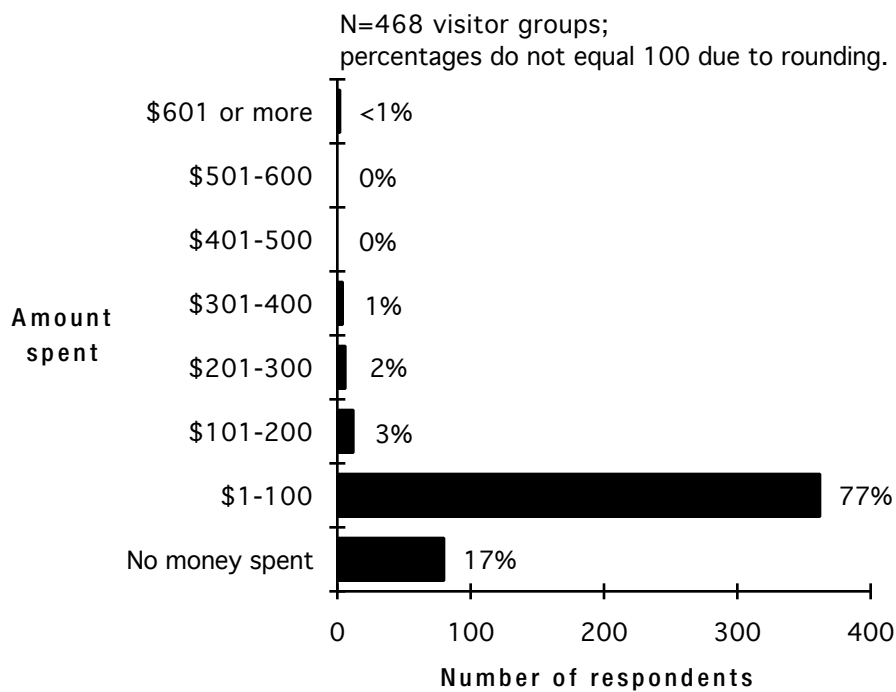
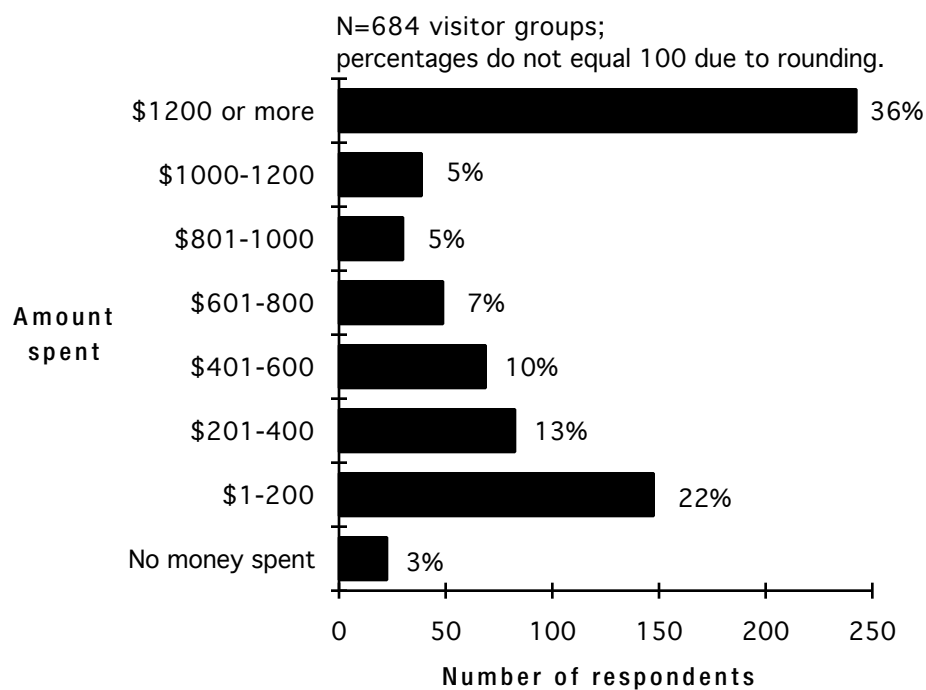


Figure 85: "Other" expenditures in Grand Teton/Yellowstone



**Figure 86: Total expenditures outside Grand Teton/
Yellowstone**

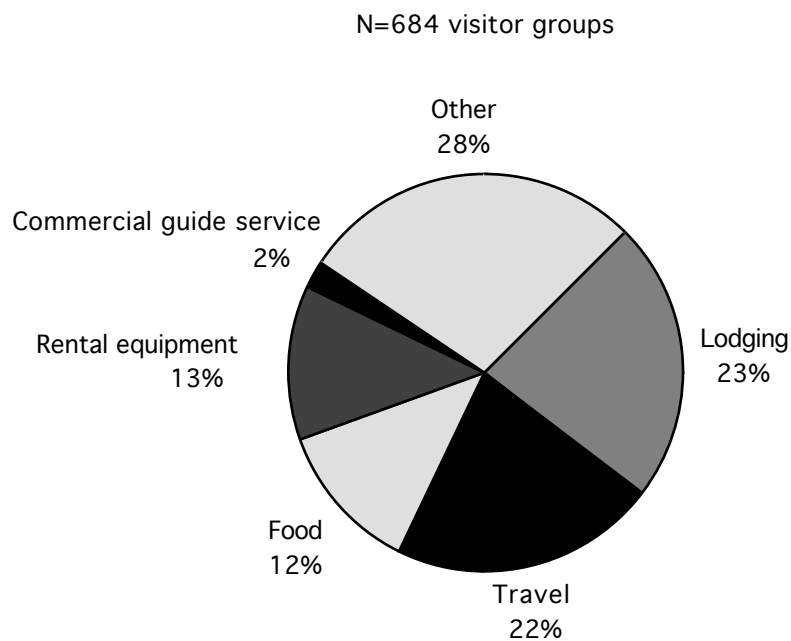


Figure 87: Expenditures by category outside Grand Teton/Yellowstone

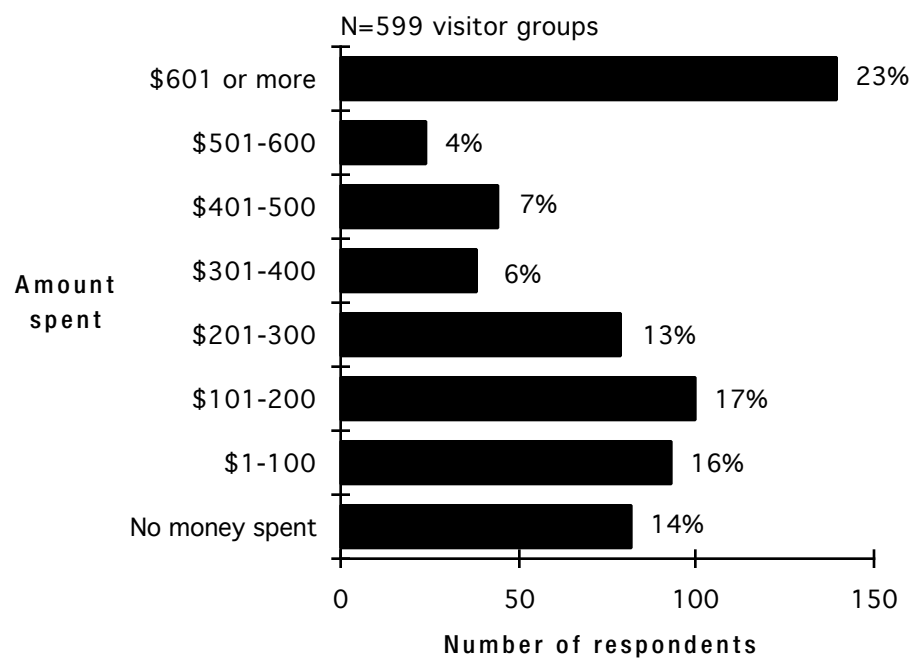
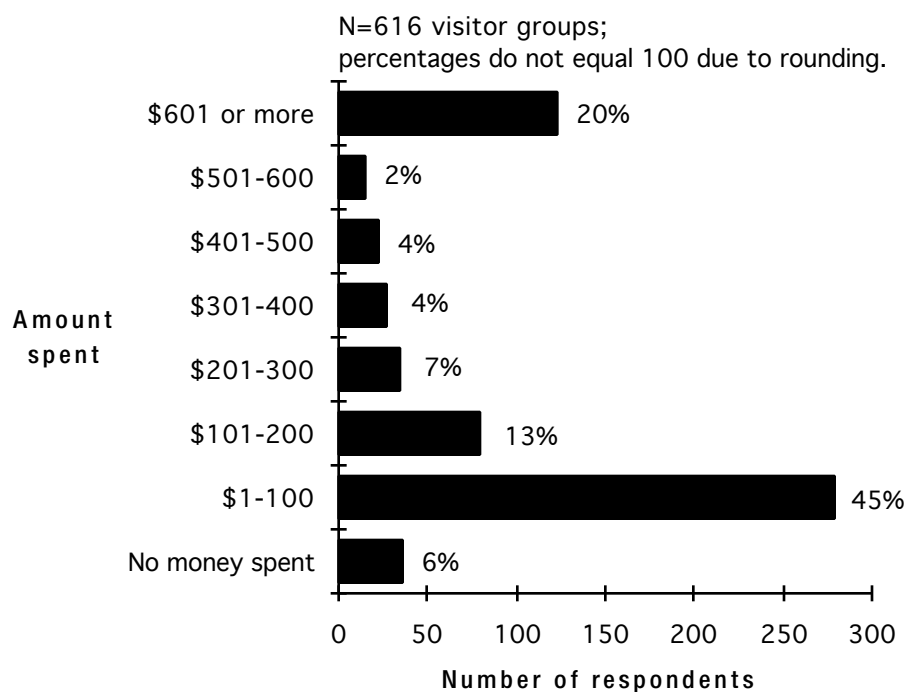
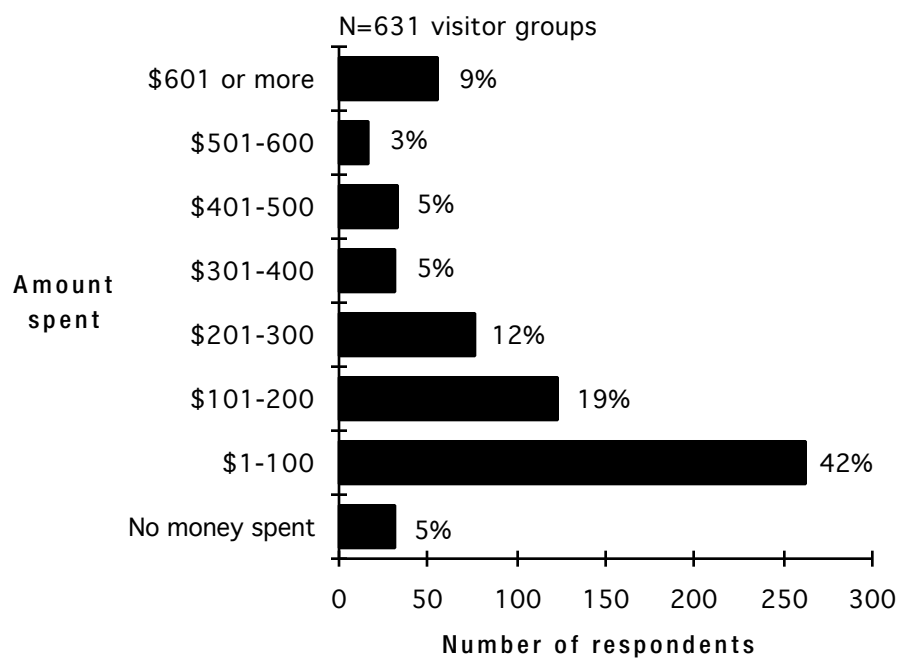


Figure 88: Lodging expenditures outside Grand Teton/Yellowstone



**Figure 89: Travel expenditures outside Grand Teton/
Yellowstone**



**Figure 90: Food expenditures outside Grand Teton/
Yellowstone**

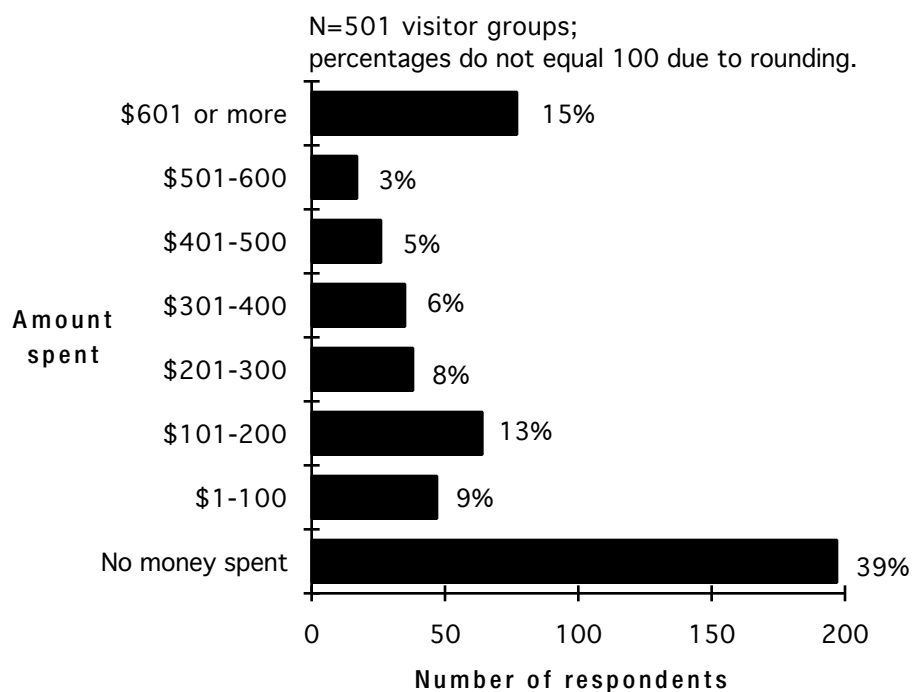


Figure 91: Rental equipment expenditures outside Grand Teton/Yellowstone

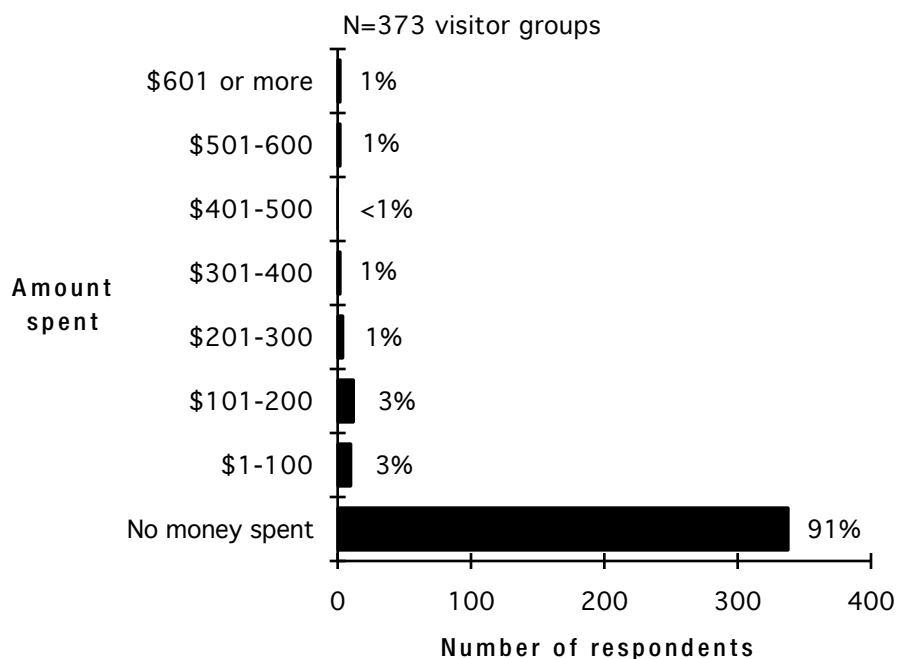
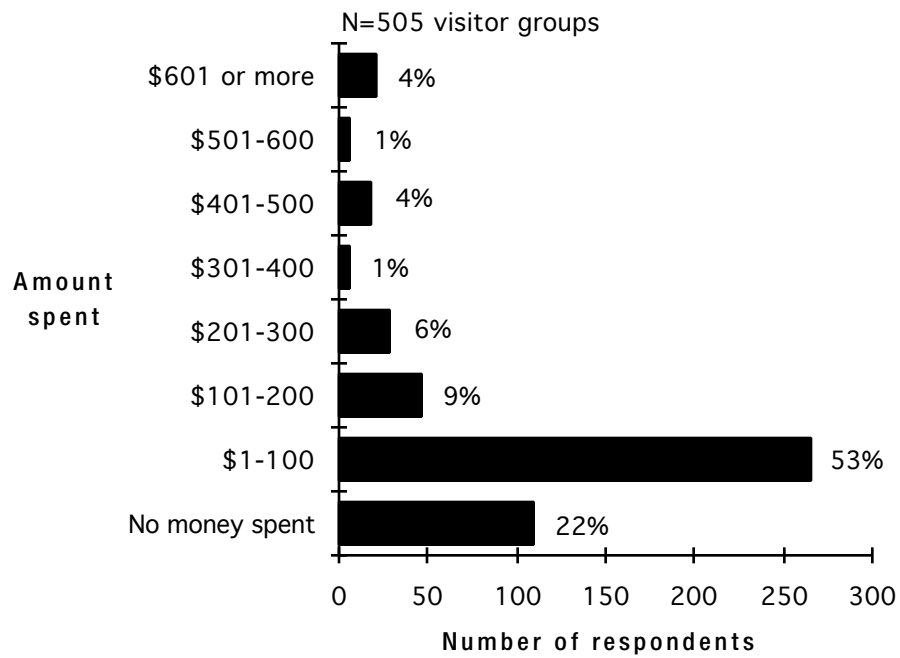


Figure 92: Commercial guide service expenditures outside Grand Teton/Yellowstone



**Figure 93: "Other" expenditures outside Grand Teton/
Yellowstone**

**Opinions about
visitor use
limits in winter**

Visitors were asked, "In your opinion, should the number of people visiting Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Parks in winter be limited?"

Many visitors (62%) said winter use should not be limited (see Figure 94).

Visitors who answered that winter use should be limited were asked to list the ways that it should be limited. Most (71%) preferred a reservation system. A daily use limit (first come, first served until a limit is reached) was preferred by 44% of the visitors (see Figure 95). Thirty-four percent of the visitors suggested "other" ways to limit use: limit the number of snowmobiles, prohibit snowmobiles, reduce the number of snowmobile tours, track number of people in park, and a higher snowmobile fee.

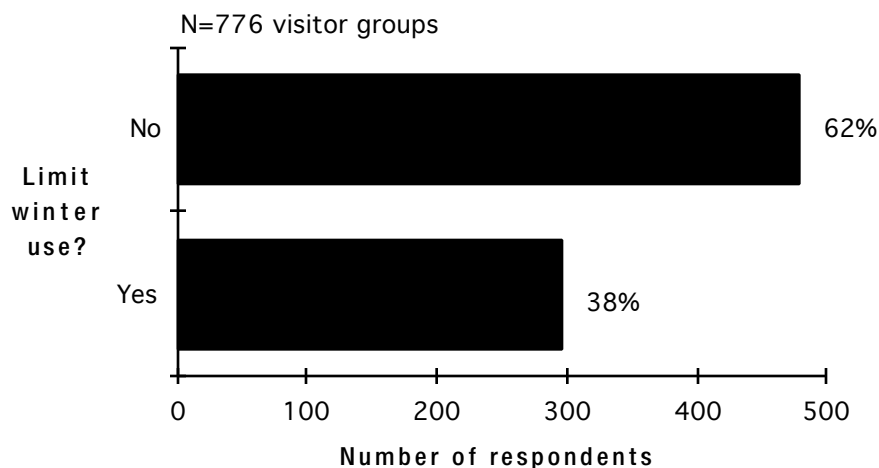


Figure 94: Limit visitor use in winter?

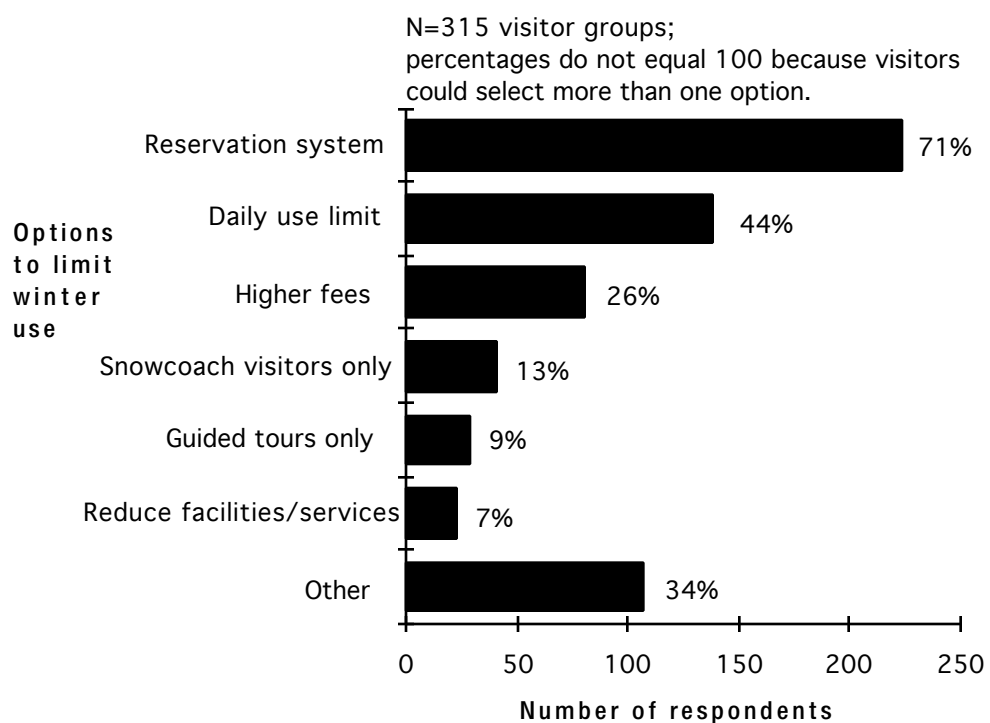


Figure 95: Preferred ways to limit visitor use in winter

**What visitors
liked most**

Visitors were asked, "What did you and your group like most about your visit to Grand Teton and/or Yellowstone National Parks?" A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix.

Visitors' likes

N=1909 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Rangers/staff helpful or friendly	20
Concession staff courteous	9
Law enforcement rangers' presence	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Learning about park	5
Interpretive lecture	4
Snowshoe hike	2
Other comments	2
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Trails well groomed	53
Park well kept/clean	9
Snowmobile trails	7
Trails	7
Warming huts	4
Other comments	6
CONCESSIONS	
Snowcoach guided tour/van	15
Park lodging	9
Restaurant at Mammoth	3
Good food	8
POLICIES	
Freedom of travel	17
Comments	2
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
Uncrowded conditions	34
Less people than summer	9
Other comment	1

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Wildlife	560
Scenery/beauty	531
Snowmobiling	99
Solitude	94
Snow	57
Thermal features	56
Cross-country skiing	37
Skiing	32
Winter in Yellowstone	21
Enjoyed visit	17
Photography	17
Everything	13
Wilderness	13
Nice people	12
Old Faithful	12
Outdoor recreation	12
Clean air	9
Nature/trees	9
Change in routine	8
Places without snowmobiles/people	8
Weather	8
Boiling River	7
Being with family/friends	6
Grand Canyon of Yellowstone	4
Hiking	4
Park is open in winter	3
Easy access to snowmobile routes	2
Geology	2
Good snowmobile service	2
Prefer winter to summer visit	2
Shopping	2
Sylvan Pass	2
The ride	2
Other comments	18

What visitors liked least

Visitors were asked, "What did you like least about your visit to Grand Teton National Park/ Yellowstone National Park?" A summary of their comments appears below and in the appendix.

Visitor dislikes

N=977 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Rude rangers	13
Lack of enforcement rangers	4
Rangers	4
Concession staff tired/bored/unknowledgeable	4
Business employee in town	2
Gas station attendants	2
Snowcoach driver chasing bison	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Lack of more detailed maps/information	3
Lack of planned activities	2
Other comment	1
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Trails/road needed grooming	134
Roads for cars in poor condition	13
Cold restrooms	9
Crowded warming huts	7
Lack of restrooms	6
Restroom unclean	5
Restrooms/toilets	5
Lack of warming huts	4
Lack of pullouts	3
Ski trail poorly marked	3
Lack of parking at ski trailheads	2
Ski trail ungroomed	2
Wait to use restroom	2
Other comments	10
CONCESSIONS	
Limited concessions/ restaurants	22
Food quality poor	10
Lack of lodging	7
Snowcoach tour too expensive	5
Expensive gas	5
Gas station hours too short	4
Lack of food at Old Faithful	4
Lack of gas stations	4
Lodging	4

Lodging room temperature uncomfortable	3
Lack of service at park restaurants	3
Limited facilities	3
Lodging expensive	2
Restaurant hours too short	2
Limited menu choices	2
Other comment	1

POLICIES

Limited access in park	16
Lack of car access to park	15
Expensive entrance fee	10
Speed limit too low	7
Snowmobiles improperly parked	5
NPS limiting number of snowmobiles	2
Other comments	4

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Burned area	14
Animals starving	10
Snowmobilers chasing animals	7
Bison on road/ trail	6
Would like to see more kinds of animals	6
Overpopulated bison	5
Overgrazed land	3
Wolf reintroduction	2
Burned timber should have been harvested	2
Snowmobiles stressing animals	2
Other comments	7

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Nothing	81
Noise from snowmobiles	79
Pollution from snowmobiles	65
Too many snowmobiles	64
Too many people	43
Snowmobiles	31
Cold temperatures	27
Dangerous, speeding snowmobile drivers	25
Poor snow conditions for recreation	15
Lack of time	14
Rude visitors	16
Weather	12
Large snowmobile groups	8
Rude snowmobile drivers	8
Unknowledgeable snowmobile drivers	8
Going home	6
Expensiveness of trip	5
Long drive to park	4
Snowmobile rental expensive	4
Mechanical problems with snowmobile	4
Too many people at Old Faithful	3
Snowcoach priority to road/facilities	3
People who rent sleds	3
Traffic/cars	3

Thermal water unevenly heated for hotpotting	2
Drunk snowmobile drivers	2
Long distances to points of interest	2
Snowcoach tour	2
Sylvan Pass scary	2
Trying to pass snowcoaches	2
Other comments	15

Planning for the future

Visitors were asked "If you were planning for the future of Grand Teton and/or Yellowstone National Park, what would you propose? Please be specific." A summary of their responses is listed below and in the appendix.

Planning for the future

N=1299 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Provide more enforcement rangers on trails	27
Employ enough professional staff to meet your needs	2
Other comments	7
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Educate visitors about snowmobile safety	17
Provide more information about park activities, areas	9
Improve maps	8
Offer more guided tours	7
Educate visitors about encounters with wildlife	6
Provide more evening programs	6
Offer more interpretive programs and exhibits	5
Expand public outreach and education on park issues	4
Offer more children's activities	3
Provide roving interpreters/guides at key interest points	3
More magazine/ TV advertisements	3
Promote activities for family groups	2
Create petting zoo	2
Other comments	3
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
More frequent grooming of snowmobile trails	39
Provide more areas / trails for snowmobiling	37
Better grooming of snowmobile trails	20
Open more roads in winter season	12
Better maintenance of roads	11
Improve restrooms	11
Open more groomed snowmobile trails	11
Open more warming huts	11
Better marked trails	10
Open more cross-country ski trails	9
Improve warming huts	9
More restrooms	7
Open more park facilities in winter	6
Create ski trails away from snowmobile areas	6
Improve condition of ski trails	5
Provide more off-trail snowmobile riding	5

Better directional signs on roads	4
Maintain upkeep of park	4
Provide emergency phones	4
Provide more pullout areas	3
Use Denali NP shuttle bus system as example	2
Make trails one-way	2
More trash cans	2
Post weather warnings on roads	2
Clear walkways to attractions	2
Keep all roads closed	2
Provide better access to thermal features	2
Other comments	16

CONCESSIONS

More food/ restaurants	18
Improve food quality/service	14
Open more lodging	14
Offer less expensive snowcoach tours	6
More gas along snowmobile routes	5
Open Old Faithful Inn	5
More snowcoach shuttles	4
Open lodging in Grand Teton in winter	3
Add food services in warming huts	2
Offer overnight lodging in backcountry	2
Other comments	13

POLICIES

Limit snowmobile use/ numbers	121
Limit winter visitors	49
Reduce noise level from snowmobiles	43
Adopt reservation system	40
Reduce pollution from snowmobiles/pass emissions test	39
Charge higher entrance fees	29
Encourage mass transportation (snowcoaches/ shuttle bus)	29
Ban snowmobiles	26
Limit commercial development in park	19
Preserve snowmobile access	16
Restrict snowmobiles to major roads	16
Increase enforcement of snowmobilers	16
Enforce speed limits	16
Preserve access for all activities	12
Reduce snowmobile speed limit	9
Allow guided snowmobile tours only	9
Do not limit visitors in winter	7
Encourage non-motorized use of park	7
Stricter enforcement of rules and regulations	7
Allow snowcoach tours only	6
Adopt first-come, first-served policy	5
Raise snowmobile speed limits in some areas	5
Ban alcohol	4
Limit group sizes	4
Require 4 cycle engines on snowmobiles	4
Get money from general fund and put it back into the park	4
Limit guided tour groups	4
Open additional Grand Teton road in winter	4

Alternate times of use for different winter users	3
Provide better system for moving people through the park	3
Provide safe areas for snowmobiling	3
Limit snowmobile access	3
Let youths with safety certificates ride snowmobiles	3
Adopt snowmobile user tax	3
Set fees appropriate to use	3
Open the park to as many people as possible in winter	3
Use lottery system	3
Extend winter season	3
Adjust fees until income covers expenses of winter activities	2
Enlarge parks whenever possible	2
Higher entrance fees for snowmobiles	2
Offer fast lane entrance for visitors with passes/ locals	2
Limit snowmobile access from West Yellowstone to Old Faithful	2
Rotate areas open to snowmobiles	2
Require governor device on snowmobiles to control speed	2
Require instruction/certification to operate snowmobiles	2
Provide snowmobile rentals in park	2
Impose heavy fines for littering	2
Prohibit smoking	2
Emphasize day use of park	2
Ban cars	2
Retain fees in park	2
Limit snowcoach pollution	2
Limit summer traffic	2
Other comments	32

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Preserve natural environment of the park	24
Protect wildlife first	18
Animals impacted by snowmobiles	15
Limit number of people to preserve environment	12
Eliminate wolves	6
Determine if snowmobiles impact animals/environment	6
Allow bison/elk hunt	5
Control bison population	5
Improve wildlife management practices	5
Conduct more research on visitors and environment	5
Feed wildlife in winter	3
Control elk population	3
Do not kill bison	3
Protect wolves	3
Impose heavy fines for molesting wildlife	2
Restrict motorized use in winter game areas	2
Preserve air quality	2
Selectively cut burned trees	2
Put out all unplanned fires	2
Other comments	11

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Don't change anything	37
Everything was great	22
Park is owned by all Americans	4
Winter visits more enjoyable than summer	2
Need more snow	2
Will return	2
Other comments	7

Many visitors wrote additional comments, which are included in the separate appendix of this report. Their comments about Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and the surrounding area 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 about their visit.

Comment Summary

Visitor Comment Summary

N=1081 comments;
many visitors made more than one comment.

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL	
Staff/rangers helpful, friendly	48
Friendly concession staff/ service	11
Rude rangers/ park staff	7
Snowcoach drivers helpful, friendly	4
Rude concession staff	3
Need more staff	2
Other comments	4
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES	
Offer more information/education	16
Educate visitors about encounters with wildlife	7
Enjoyed ranger presentation	7
Improve/update maps	3
Other comments	3
FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE	
Good quality trail grooming	10
Improve trail grooming	9
Park clean/well kept	8
Mark trails better	7
Groom more trails outside Yellowstone	4
More warming huts	4
Need road for bikes	4
Well maintained roads	3
Bad road conditions	3
Well maintained buildings	2
Beautiful drive to Cooke City	2
Preserve historic buildings	2
Other comments	12
CONCESSIONS	
Enjoyed restaurant/ food	10
Enjoyed snowcoach tour	7
Make contracts more competitive	7
Enjoyed Mammoth Lodge	3
Open Old Faithful Lodge in winter	3
Good lodging	2

Enjoyed warming huts	2
Other comments	9

POLICIES

Limit snowmobiles	15
Limit visitor use	12
Preserve snowmobile access	10
Increase entrance fees	6
Ban snowmobiles	5
Do not over regulate	5
Enforce speed limit	5
Too much is closed to public	4
Enforce emission controls for snowmobiles	4
Adopt reservation system	4
Limit access to park	4
Do not allow special interest groups to make decisions	4
Entrance fee too expensive	4
Limit snowmobile party size	2
Continue current management of snowmobiles	2
Allow licensed drivers only on snowmobiles	2
Do not limit number of visitors	2
Separate ski and snowmobile trails	2
Open more areas to snowmobiles	2
Comments	9

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Preserve the park	39
Enjoyed wildlife	27
Control bison population	14
Support wolf reintroduction	13
Against wolf reintroduction	11
Control elk population	5
Against letting forest fires burn	4
Support work with American Indian tribes	3
Burn area looks bad	3
Protect wildlife	3
Limit commercialism	2
Other comments	3

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Enjoyed visit	174
Will return	65
Beautiful	58
Enjoyed park in winter	42
Thank you	39
NPS is doing good job	34
We visit often	26
Enjoyed snowmobiling	17
Snowmobiles noisy/ smelly	15
Live near the park	12
Everyone has a right to use park	10
Crowded	8
Educational/interesting	8
Enjoyed scenery	8
Did not seem crowded	8

Park is a special place	8
Encourage winter use	6
First visit in winter	6
Thanks for asking	6
Enjoyed skiing	5
Do not change anything	5
Oppose New World Mine	4
Park expensive	4
Snowmobiles disturbing	4
Will not return	4
Rude visitors	3
Good luck	3
Willing to pay for services	3
Like visiting during off-season	2
Encourage non-motorized activities	2
Not enough funding	2
Wish we had more time	2
Use monorail system	2
Night life is not good	2
Great place for family	2
Do not close to winter use	2
Other comments	22

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 snowmobilers, request a comparison of site visited by activity (snowmobile); to learn about the ages of various activity participants, request a comparison of age group by activity.

2) Three-way comparisons compare a two-way comparison to a third characteristic. For example, to learn about the group sizes and group types of groomed snowmobile trail users, request a comparison of groomed snowmobile trail users by group type by group size; to learn about the sites used and activities of first time visitors, request a comparison of number of visits (once) by site visited by activity.

Consult the list of characteristics for Grand Teton/Yellowstone 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
Grand Teton/Yellowstone National Parks
Report 74

Date of request _____

Person requesting analysis _____

Phone number contact _____

The following list has the variables available for comparison from the visitor survey conducted in your park. 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/activity instead of all that were listed in the questionnaire.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| • NP information sources | • Service importance | • Rental equip. expenditures in parks |
| • Sources influencing visit | • Service quality | • Comm. guide serv. expenditures in parks |
| • Length of stay | • Visitor service used | • "Other" expenditures in parks |
| • Activities | • Visitor service importance | • Total expenditures outside parks |
| • Winter rec. outside park? | • Visitor service quality | • Lodging expenditures outside parks |
| • Group size | • Park quality importance | • Travel expenditures outside parks |
| • Group type | • Park activity importance | • Food expenditures outside parks |
| • Guided tour group | • Number of winter visits | • Rental equip. expenditures outside parks |
| • Age | • Total expenditures in and outside parks | • Comm. guide serv. expenditures outside parks |
| • State of residence | • Total expenditures in parks | • "Other" expenditures outside parks |
| • Country of residence | • Lodging expenditures in parks | • First winter visitor use? |
| • Sites visited | • Travel expenditures in parks | • Ways to time winter use |
| • Interp. services used | • Food expenditures in parks | |

Two-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list). Be sure to designate Grand Teton, Yellowstone or all visitors.

Site visited by activity

Three-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list). Be sure to designate Grand Teton, Yellowstone or all visitors.

snowmobile trail user by group type or group size

Send me: Tell us the reason you need the information, what you are trying to find out, etc.

Mailed 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
Grand Teton/ Yellowstone National Parks
Report 75

Date of request: ____/____/____

Person requesting analysis/ title: _____

Phone number (commercial): _____

The following list has the variables available for comparison from the visitor survey conducted in your parks. 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 that were listed in the questionnaire.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| • NP information sources | • Service importance | • Rental equip. expenditures in parks |
| • Sources influencing visit | • Service quality | • Comm. guide serv. expenditures in parks |
| • Length of stay | • Visitor service used | • "Other" expenditures in parks |
| • Activities | • Visitor service importance | • Total expenditures outside parks |
| • Winter rec. outside park? | • Visitor service quality | • Lodging expenditures outside parks |
| • Group size | • Park quality importance | • Travel expenditures outside parks |
| • Group type | • Park activity importance | • Food expenditures outside parks |
| • Guided tour group | • Number of winter visits | • Rental equip. expenditures outside parks |
| • Age | • Total expenditures in and outside parks | • Comm. guide serv. expenditures outside parks |
| • State of residence | • Total expenditures in parks | • "Other" expenditures outside parks |
| • Country of residence | • Lodging expenditures in parks | • Limit winter visitor use? |
| • Sites visited | • Travel expenditures in parks | • Ways to limit winter use |
| • Interp. services used | • Food expenditures in parks | |

Two-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list). Be sure to designate Grand Teton, Yellowstone or all visitors.

_____ by _____
 _____ by _____
 _____ by _____

Three-way comparisons (write in the appropriate variables from the above list). Be sure to designate Grand Teton, Yellowstone or all visitors.

_____ 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

NPS D-593

January 1996



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Visitor Services Project Yellowstone National Park Visitor Study

Appendix

Visitor Services Project Yellowstone National Park

Appendix

Margaret Littlejohn

Report 75

January 1996

This volume contains summaries of festival and general visitors' comments for Questions 14 and 15. Each summary is followed by their unedited comments.

Margaret Littlejohn is VSP Coordinator, National Park Service based at the Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Idaho. I thank Mark Patterson and the staff of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks for their assistance. The VSP acknowledges the Public Opinion Lab of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, Washington State University, for its technical assistance.
