

Visitor Services Project
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway during June 25 to July 3, 1999. A total of 747 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 499 questionnaires for a 66.8% response rate. It was decided to remove a random sample of the questionnaires returned from the Lower River Visitor Center, where, based on park visitation statistics, too many questionnaires were distributed. The results which follow do not include data from the questionnaires which were removed.
- This report profiles St. Croix National Scenic Riverway visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Sixty percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Thirty-three percent of visitor groups were groups of two and 20% were in groups of four. About one-third (32%) of visitors were aged 36-50 and 21% were aged 15 and younger. Fifty-one percent were female and 49% were male.
- United States visitors were from Minnesota (50%), Wisconsin (33%), Illinois (6%), and 27 other states. There were not enough international visitors to provide reliable information.
- Thirty-nine percent of visitors were making their first visit to St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Most of the visitor groups (75%) spent less than a day at the park and 22% spent one to four days. Of those groups that spent less than a day at the park, 34% spent three or four hours. Visitors had visited the riverway in summer (97%), fall (43%), spring (36%) and winter (17%).
- On this visit, the most common activities were sightseeing (62%), visiting the visitor centers (51%) and viewing wildlife (51%). The most common activities reported for past visits included: canoeing (64%), sightseeing (64%), and viewing wildlife (62%).
- Some type of watercraft was used by 62% of the visitor groups. The most common types of watercraft used were canoes (64%) and tour boats (19%). About one-third of visitors (33%) who used canoes, kayaks or tubes rented them. Of those, 94% were rented from a local outfitter.
- The most used sources of information by visitor groups were previous visits (56%), friends and relatives (36%) and area signs (23%). Fifteen percent of visitors had received no information prior to their visit.
- Over one-half of visitors (55%) reported that St. Croix National Scenic Riverway was their primary destination for this trip. On this visit, the most commonly visited sites along the riverway were the St. Croix Falls Visitor Center (26%), Taylors Falls to Stillwater (24%) and Namekagon Visitor Center (18%). The most often listed reason for visiting was viewing scenery and wildlife (72%).
- When asked about the number of people they had seen on the riverway, 78% of the visitors said they had seen "neither too many, nor too few."
- In regard to the use, importance and quality of services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The services that were most used by 343 respondents were parking (60%), NPS visitor centers (55%) and restrooms (50%). The most important services were campsites (91% of 81 respondents) and private canoe/rentals (84% of 96 respondents). The best quality services were NPS visitor centers (88% of 179 respondents), highway directional signs (85% of 86 respondents) and restrooms (85% of 152 respondents).
- Thirty-five percent of visitors said they would be willing to pay a \$15.00 yearly user fee. Of those who were willing to pay the fee, 38% wanted it charged by vehicle and 27% by watercraft.
- Most visitor groups (92%) rated the overall quality of visitor services at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway as "very good" or "good." Visitors made many other comments.

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the
University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit; phone (208) 885-7129 or 885-7863.