
Visitor Services Project
Rock Creek Park
Report Summary

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Rock Creek Park during July 8-14, 1999. A total of 888 questionnaires were distributed to visitors. Visitors returned 564 questionnaires for a 63.5% response rate.
- This report profiles Rock Creek Park visitors. A separate appendix contains visitors' comments about their visit. This report and the appendix include summaries of those comments.
- Forty percent of the visitors were alone; 25% were with friends and 25% were with family. Forty-three percent of visitor groups were groups of one; 33% were in groups of two. Over one-half of visitors (56%) were aged 26-50; 13% were aged 15 years or younger.
- Most visitors (93%) said English is their primary language. Most visitors (94%) said their ethnicity was "not Hispanic or Latino." When asked about their race, visitors responded as follows: White (74%), Black or African American (24%), Asian (3%), Hispanic or Latino (2%), American Indian/Alaska Native (1%) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (<1%).
- United States visitors were from Washington, D.C. (64%), Maryland (18%), Virginia (7%), 26 other states and Puerto Rico. There were not enough international visitors to provide reliable information.
- Seventy-five percent of visitors were making a repeat visit to Rock Creek Park. Forty-two percent visit between one and six times per week. Over one-half of the visitor groups (59%) spent one or two hours. Over one-half of the visitors have visited in each season: summer (100%), spring (80%), fall (77%) and winter (60%).
- On this visit, the most common activity was jogging, walking, or hiking (44%). Most visitors (58%) used a private vehicle to arrive at the park, while 32% walked.
- Previous visits (51%) and word of mouth/friends and relatives (33%) were the most used sources of information by visitor groups. Twenty percent had not received information prior to their visit.
- Exercise (61%), escaping the city environment (47%), time with family and/or friends (37%) and solitude (30%) were the most common reasons for visiting Rock Creek Park. The most commonly visited sites in the park were the Carter Barron Amphitheater (21%), nature center/planetarium (16%) and Pierce Mill (13%).
- 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 information services that were most used by 151 respondents were assistance from park staff (49%) and park brochure/map (38%). According to visitors, the most important services were the nature center information desk (87% of 39 respondents), assistance from park staff (85% of 72 respondents) and park brochure/map (85% of 58 respondents). The highest quality services were nature center information desk (92% of 37 respondents) and assistance from park staff (90% of 70 respondents).
- The facilities that were most used by 486 respondents were trails (60%), roads (49%), restrooms (44%) and parking (42%). According to visitors, the most important facilities were garbage collection/recycling (93% of 76 respondents), Carter Barron Amphitheater (92% of 90 respondents) and trails (92% of 275 respondents). The highest quality facilities were the Carter Barron Amphitheater (88% of 89 respondents), parking (83% of 189 respondents) and roads (79% of 224 respondents).
- Eighty-seven percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality of visitor services at Rock Creek Park as "very good" or "good." Less than one percent of groups rated services as "very poor."

-
- The features/qualities which received the highest importance ratings from visitors were scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, clean air and clean water. 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.
