

**Visitor Services Project  
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park  
Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (NHP) during July 22-31, 2005. A total of 605 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 367 questionnaires were returned resulting in a 61% response rate.
- This report profiles a random sample of Harpers Ferry NHP visitors. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments to open-ended questions are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
- Thirty-five percent of visitor groups were in groups of two and 36% were in groups of three or four. Sixty-seven percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-seven percent of visitors were ages 36-60 years and 20% were ages 15 or younger. Fifty-eight percent of visitors went to Harpers Ferry NHP for the first time in their life.
- United States visitors were from Maryland (22%), Virginia (15%), Washington, D.C. (10%), and 38 other states. International visitors comprised 4% of the total visitation and were from England (31%), Canada (19%), and 10 other countries.
- Most visitor groups (79%) stayed at the park three or more hours. Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups stayed overnight away from home in the Harpers Ferry NHP area (within 60-miles of park).
- Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about Harpers Ferry NHP through previous visits (51%) and friends/relatives/word of mouth (42%). Fifteen percent of visitor groups did not obtain any information before their visit. Most groups (92%) received the information they needed about the park.
- The person making the decision to visit Harpers Ferry NHP was most often the male head of household (53%), followed by the female head of household (42%). The decision to visit was most often made one to six months prior to visiting (29%). Twenty-four percent of groups made the decision less than one week prior to visiting and 21% decided on the day they received the questionnaire.
- Forty-nine percent of visitor groups' primary reason for traveling to the West Virginia Eastern Panhandle area was to visit Harpers Ferry NHP. On this visit, the most common activities were walking/hiking (82%) and viewing exhibits/museums (74%).
- Regarding use, importance, and quality of visitor services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups that responded to each question. The most used services/facilities by the 334 visitor groups included park brochure/map (82%), restrooms (80%), and visitor center (78%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of "extremely important" and "very important" ratings included restrooms (90%, N=243), trails (84%, N=123), and exhibits/museums (82%, N=219). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of "very good" and "good" quality ratings included assistance from park staff (96%, N=108), exhibits/museums (90%, N=213), restrooms (90%, N=40), and park brochure/map (90%, N=243).
- The average total expenditure in and outside the park (within 60-minute drive of park) per visitor group was \$216. The median visitor group expenditure (50% of groups spent more, 50% of group spent less) was \$90. The average per capita expenditure was \$61.
- Most visitor groups (91%) rated the overall quality of services, facilities, and recreational opportunities at Harpers Ferry NHP as "very good" or "good." One percent of groups rated the overall quality as "very poor" or "poor."

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit  
at the University of Idaho or at the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>