
**Visitor Services Project
Mammoth Cave National Park
Report Summary**

- This report describes the results of a visitor study at Mammoth Cave National Park (NP) during July 23-29, 2006. A total of 660 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 435 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 65.9% response rate.
- This report profiles a random sample of Mammoth Cave NP visitors. Most results are presented in graphs and frequency tables. Summaries of visitor comments are included in the report and complete comments are included in the Visitor Comments Appendix.
- Thirty-one percent of visitor groups were in groups of five or more, 38% were in groups of three or four, and 28% were groups of two. Seventy-three percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty percent of visitors were ages 36-55 years and 31% were ages 15 years or younger.
- United States visitors were from Kentucky (21%), Ohio (14%), Indiana (13%), and 34 other states. International visitors, comprising 3% of the total visitation, were from Canada (26%), the Netherlands (15%), China (11%), Poland (11%), and 9 other countries.
- Ninety-five percent of visitors were visiting Mammoth Cave NP for the first time during the six months prior to the survey. Eighty-five percent of visitors were first time visitors during the past five years. Many groups (63%) spent less than 24 hours at the park; 37% spent more than 24 hours at the park.
- Prior to this visit, visitor groups most often obtained information about Mammoth Cave NP through the NPS park website (57%), previous visits (41%), and friends/relatives/word of mouth (35%). Six percent of visitor groups did not obtain any information about the park before their visit.
- For 51% percent of visitor groups, Mammoth Cave NP was their primary destination. Most visitor groups (76%) cited visiting Mammoth Cave NP as their reason for visiting the Mammoth Cave NP area (within 30 miles of the park).
- Most visitor groups (84%) used services in the “gateway” communities of Cave City, Park City, Brownsville, Horse Cave, Munfordville, and Bowling Green. The most common services used included eating a meal (81%) and buying gasoline (66%). Many visitor groups (63%) stayed overnight away from home in the park or in the area. Most visitor groups stayed one or two nights in the park (74%) or in the area (75%). In the park, 65% of groups stayed in the hotel, while outside the park 79% stayed in lodges, motels, hotels, cabins, etc.
- Prior to their visit, 57% of visitor groups were aware of the cave tour reservation system. Eighty-six percent rated the quality of the cave tour reservation system as “very good” or “good.” Most visitor groups (91%) took a cave tour, with the Frozen Niagara (40%) and Historic Tours (37%) being the most popular. Visitor groups provided much additional information about their cave tour experiences.
- 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 visitor groups included the cave tour (88%), restrooms (82%), and park brochure/map (80%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings included cave tour (94%, N=359), restrooms (93%, N=337), and campground (88%, N=41). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings included cave tour (94%, N=355), assistance from park staff (93%, N=248), and assistance from visitor center information desk (92%, N=268).
- Most visitor groups (93%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Mammoth Cave NP as “very good” or “good.” Less than 2% of visitor 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, phone (208) 885-7863 or at the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>
