



Congaree National Park Visitor Study

Summer 2011

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR—2012/565



ON THE COVER

Canoe on Cedar Creek in Congaree National Park
Photograph courtesy of Congaree National Park

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Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR— 2012/565

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Executive Summary

This visitor study report profiles a systematic random sample of Congaree National Park (NP) visitors during July 27- August 19, 2011. A total of 448 questionnaires was distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 274 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 61.2% response rate.

Group size and type	Forty-one percent of visitor groups consisted of two people. Sixty-three percent of visitor groups consisted of family groups.
State or country of residence	United States visitors were from 36 states and Washington, DC and comprised 92% of total visitation during the survey period, with 44% from South Carolina. International visitors were from 13 countries and comprised 8% of total visitation during the survey period.
Frequency of visits	Eighty-three percent of visitors visited the park once in the past 12 months and 76% were visiting the park for the first time in their lives. Eleven percent had visited 4 or more times in their lifetime.
Age, ethnicity, race, and educational level	Thirty-four percent of visitors were ages 46-65 years, 21% were 21-35 years old, 12% were ages 10 years or younger, and 4% were 71 or older. Three percent were Hispanic or Latino. Most visitors (90%) were White and 5% were Asian. Forty-two percent of respondents had completed a graduate degree and 31% had a bachelor's degree.
Physical conditions	Seven percent of visitor groups had members with physical conditions affecting their ability to access or participate in activities and services.
Awareness of park programs	Forty-seven percent of visitor groups were aware, prior to their visit, of the various programs offered at the park.
Knowledge of wilderness	Forty-eight percent of the respondents said they were aware of congressionally designated wilderness before their visit to the park. Fifty-six percent of visitor groups said they learned about wilderness while at the park.
Non-native species management	Forty-five percent of the respondents were aware of the policy regarding removal of non-native species. Most visitor groups (88%) were in support of removal of non-native plants and 75% were supportive of removal of non-native animals.
Scientific research and education in the park	Thirty-nine percent of visitor groups noticed scientists working or scientific markers or equipment being used in the park. Through programs or products, 33% of the visitors learned about the results of scientific studies conducted at the park.
Information sources	Most visitors (95%) obtained information about the park prior to their visit. Of those visitors, 53% used the park website and 23% obtained their information from friends/relatives/word of mouth.
Park as destination	Fifty-nine percent of visitor groups said the park was their primary destination and 37% said it was one of several destinations.
Primary reason for visiting the area	Twenty-five percent of visitor groups were residents of the area (within 1-hour drive of the park). The most common primary reason for visiting the park area among nonresident visitor groups was to visit the park (48%).

Executive Summary (continued)

Overnight stays	Thirty-eight percent of visitor groups stayed overnight away from home either in the park or the area. Of those visitors that stayed outside the park (within 1-hour drive), 41% stayed 1 night and 23% stayed 4 or more nights.
Accommodations	Of those visitor groups that stayed outside the park (within 1-hour drive), 72% stayed in a lodge, hotel, motel, vacation rental, or B&B.
Time spent at park and in the area	The average length of stay in the park was 6.3 hours. The average length of stay in the area was 34.6 hours, or 1.4 days.
Activities	The most common visitor activities within the park were walking/hiking (82%), visiting the visitor center (79%), birdwatching (13%).
Use of park trails	The Elevated Boardwalk Trail was used by 80% of visitor groups and the Low Boardwalk Trail was used by 58%.
Information services and facilities	The information services and facilities most commonly used by visitor groups were assistance from park staff (91%), park brochure/map (85%), and visitor center exhibits (79%).
Visitor services and facilities	The visitor services and facilities most commonly used by visitor groups were restrooms (90%), parking areas (86%), and boardwalks (85%).
Protecting park attributes, resources, and experiences	The highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park attributes, resources, and experiences included clean water (95%), native wildlife (91%), clean air (91%), and natural quiet/sounds of nature (89%).
Elements affecting park experience	Twenty-seven percent of visitor groups reported that encountering small numbers of visitors on trails added to their park experience. Airplane noise detracted from 9% of the visitor groups’ experiences.
Expenditures	The average visitor group expenditure (inside and outside the park within a 1-hour drive) was \$221. The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$50. The average total expenditure per capita was \$98.
Future visit	Sixty-eight percent of visitor groups were interested in canoeing/kayaking on future visits and 48% were interested in owl prowls. Seventy-seven percent of visitor groups were interested in learning more about plants and animals on future visits and 64% were interested in learning more about history.
Overall quality	Most visitor groups (95%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Congaree NP as “very good” or “good.” No visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor.”

For more information about the Visitor Services Project, please contact the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho at (208) 885-7863 or the following website <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.

Acknowledgements

We thank Colleen Kulesza and Mystera Samuelson for compiling the report, Corinne Fenner for overseeing the fieldwork, Lauren Gurniewicz and the staff and volunteers of Congaree NP for assisting with the survey, and David Vollmer and Matthew Strawn for data processing.

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Introduction

This report describes the results of a visitor study at Congaree National Park (NP) in Hopkins, SC, conducted July 27–August 19, 2011 by the National Park Service (NPS) Visitor Services Project (VSP), part of the Park Studies Unit (PSU) at the University of Idaho.

As described in the National Park Service website for Congaree National Park: “Welcome to the largest remnant of old-growth floodplain forest remaining on the continent! Experience champion trees, towering to record size amidst astonishing biodiversity...Congaree National Park houses a museum quality exhibit area within the Harry Hampton Visitor Center, a 2.4 mile boardwalk loop trail, over 20 miles of backwoods hiking trails, canoeing, kayaking, fishing and more...As a designated Wilderness area, International Biosphere Reserve, Globally Important Bird Area, and the largest intact tract of old-growth floodplain forest in North America, Congaree National Park is home to a variety of ongoing research and education projects.” (<http://www.nps.gov/cong/index.htm>, retrieved October, 2011).

Organization of the Report

This report is organized into three sections.

Section 1: Methods

This section discusses the procedures, limitations, and special conditions that may affect the study results.

Section 2: Results

This section provides a summary for each question in the questionnaire and includes visitor comments to open-ended questions. The presentation of the results of this study does not follow the order of questions in the questionnaire.

Section 3: Appendices

Appendix 1: *The Questionnaire*. A copy of the questionnaire distributed to visitor groups.

Appendix 2: *Additional Analysis*. A list of sample questions for cross-references and cross comparisons. Comparisons can be analyzed within a park or between parks. Results of additional analyses are not included in this report.

Appendix 3: *Decision Rules for Checking Nonresponse Bias*. An explanation of how the nonresponse bias was determined.

Presentation of the Results

Results are represented in the form of graphs (see example below), scatter plots, pie charts, tables, and text.

SAMPLE

1. The figure title describes the graph's information.

2. Listed above the graph, the "N" shows the number of individuals or visitor groups responding to the question. If "N" is less than 30, "**CAUTION!**" is shown on the graph to indicate the results may be unreliable.

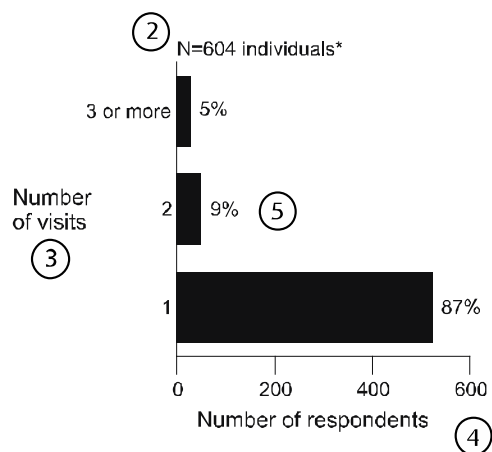
* appears when the total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding.

** appears when total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer choice.

3. Vertical information describes the response categories.

4. Horizontal information shows the number or proportion of responses in each category.

5. In most graphs, percentages provide additional information.



① **Figure 14.** Number of visits to the park in past 12 months

Methods

Survey Design and Procedures

Sample size and sampling plan

All VSP questionnaires follow design principles outlined in Don A. Dillman's book *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (2007). Using this method, the sample size was calculated based on park visitation statistics of previous years.

Brief interviews were conducted with a systematic, random sample of visitor groups that arrived at the visitor center during July 27–August 19, 2011. Visitors were surveyed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. During this survey, 466 visitor groups were contacted and 448 of these groups (96.1%) accepted questionnaires. (The average acceptance rate for 250 VSP visitor studies conducted from 1988 through 2011 is 91.5%.) Questionnaires were completed and returned by 274 respondents, resulting in a 61.2% response rate for this study. (The average response rate for the 250 VSP visitor studies is 72.3%.)

Questionnaire design

The Congaree NP questionnaire was developed at a workshop held with park staff to design and prioritize questions. Some of the questions were comparable with VSP studies conducted at other parks while others were customized for Congaree NP. Many questions asked visitors to choose answers from a list of responses, often with an open-ended option, while others were completely open-ended.

No pilot study was conducted to test the Congaree NP questionnaire. However, all questions followed Office Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines and/or were used in previous surveys; thus, the clarity and consistency of the survey instrument have been tested and supported.

Survey procedure

Visitor groups were greeted, briefly introduced to the purpose of the study, and asked to participate. If visitors agreed, they were asked which member (at least 16 years old) had the next birthday. The individual with the next birthday was selected to complete the questionnaire for the group. An interview, lasting approximately two minutes, was conducted with that person to determine group size, group type, age of the member completing the questionnaire, and how this visit to the park fit into their group's travel plans. These individuals were asked their names, addresses, and telephone numbers or email addresses in order to mail a reminder/thank-you postcard and follow-ups. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire after their visit, and return it in the Business Reply Mail envelope provided.

Two weeks following the survey, a reminder/thank-you postcard was mailed to all participants who provided a valid mailing address (see Table 1). Replacement questionnaires were mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires four weeks after the survey. Seven weeks after the survey, a second round of replacement questionnaires was mailed to participants who had not returned their questionnaires.

Table 1. Follow-up mailing distribution

Round 1 Mailing	Date	U.S.	International	Total
Postcards	August 24, 2011	263	9	272
1 st replacement	September 8, 2011	157	6	163
2 nd replacement	September 28, 2011	140	1	141

Round 2 Mailing	Date	U.S.	International	Total
Postcards	September 6, 2011	162	8	170
1 st replacement	September 20, 2011	88	4	92
2 nd replacement	October 10, 2011	65	0	65

Data analysis

Returned questionnaires were coded and the responses were processed using custom and standard statistical software applications—Statistical Analysis Software® (SAS), and a custom designed FileMaker Pro® application. Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were calculated for the coded data; responses to open-ended questions were categorized and summarized. Double-key data entry validation was performed on numeric and text entry variables and the remaining checkbox (bubble) variables were read by optical mark recognition (OMR) software.

Limitations

As with all surveys, this study has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results.

1. This was a self-administered survey. Respondents completed the questionnaire after the visit, which may have resulted in poor recall. Thus, it is not possible to know whether visitor responses reflected actual behavior.
2. The data reflect visitor use patterns at the selected sites during the study period of July 27–August 19, 2011. The results present a ‘snapshot in time’ and do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year.
3. Caution is advised when interpreting any 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, table, or text.
4. Occasionally, there may be inconsistencies in the results. Inconsistencies arise from missing data or incorrect answers (due to misunderstood directions, carelessness, or poor recall of information). Therefore, refer to both the percentage and N (number of individuals or visitor groups) when interpreting the results.

Special conditions

The weather during the survey period was very hot with heat advisories for at least 10 days. There were only a couple days with significant cloud cover and brief storms. No special events occurred in the area that would have affected the type and amount of visitation to the park.

Checking nonresponse bias

Five variables were used to check nonresponse bias: participant age, group size, group type, park as destination, and participant proximity from home to the park. All variables were found to be significantly different between respondents and nonrespondents (see Tables 2 - 5). The results indicate some biases occurred due to nonresponse. Visitors at younger age ranges (especially 35 and younger), visitors traveling with friends, visitors who indicated park was the primary reason to visit the area, and visitors came from local area (within 1-hour drive) were underrepresented in the survey results. See Appendix 3 for more details of the nonresponse bias checking procedures.

Table 2. Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents by average age and group size

Variable	Respondents	Nonrespondents	p-value (t-test)
Age (years)	47.40 (N=274)	37.83 (N=174)	<0.001
Group size	2.87 (N=272)	2.69 (N=167)	0.271

Table 3. Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents by group type

Group type	Respondents	Nonrespondents	p-value (chi-square)
Alone	41 (15%)	29 (17%)	0.002
Family	170 (63%)	96 (52%)	
Friends	32 (12%)	38 (22%)	
Family and friends	27 (9%)	6 (3%)	
Other	2 (1%)	5 (3%)	

Table 4. Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents by primary destination

Destination	Respondents	Nonrespondents	p-value (chi-square)
Park as primary destination	142 (53%)	116 (67%)	0.006
Park as one of several destinations	111 (13%)	52 (30%)	
Unplanned visit	16 (6%)	4 (2%)	

Table 5. Comparison of respondents and nonrespondents by distance from home to park

Distance	Respondents	Nonrespondents	p-value (chi-square)
Within 50 miles	90 (33%)	83 (49%)	0.006
51-100 miles	29 (11%)	14 (8%)	
101-200 miles	13 (5%)	9 (5%)	
201 miles or more	129 (48%)	55 (32%)	
International visitors	9 (3%)	10 (6%)	

Results

Group and Visitor Characteristics

Visitor group size

Question 19b

On this visit, how many people were in your personal group, including yourself?

Results

- 41% of visitor groups consisted of 2 people (see Figure 1).
- 32% were in groups of 3 or 4.

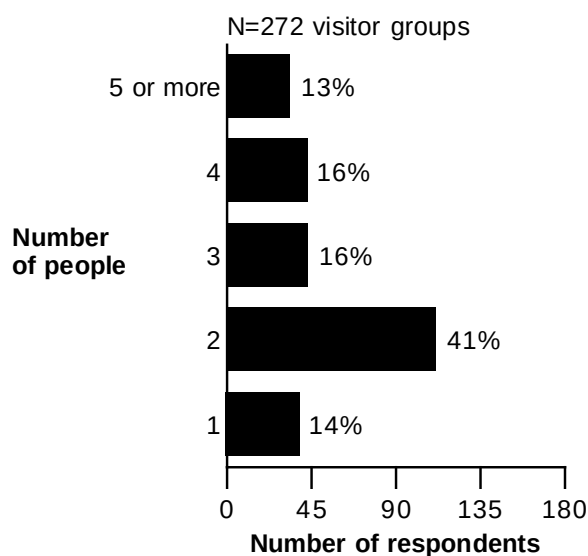


Figure 1. Visitor group size

Visitor group type

Question 19a

On this visit, what kind of personal group (not guided tour/school/other organized group) were you with?

Results

- 63% of visitor groups consisted of family members (see Figure 2).
- “Other” group type (1%) was:
Hiking group

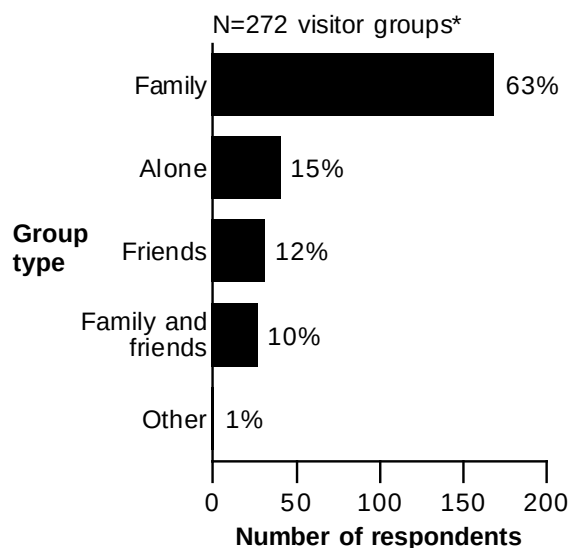


Figure 2. Visitor group type

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitors with organized groups

Question 18a

On this visit, were you and your personal group with a commercial guided tour group?

Results

- 1% of visitor groups were with a commercial guided tour group (see Figure 3).

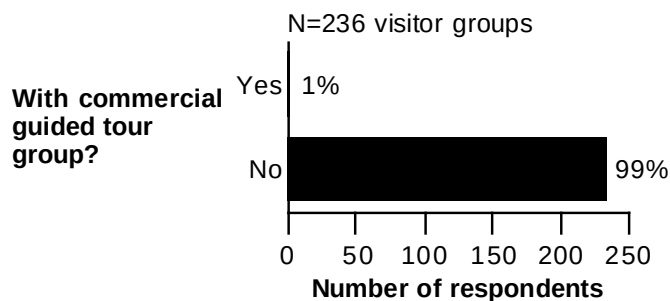


Figure 3. Visitors with a commercial guided tour group

Question 18b

On this visit, were you and your personal group with a school/educational group?

Results

- 3% of visitor groups were with a school/educational group (see Figure 4).

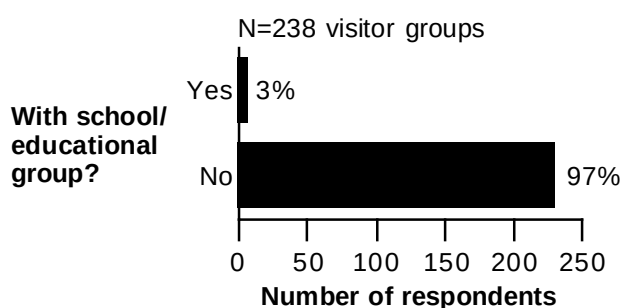


Figure 4. Visitors with a school/educational group

Question 18c

On this visit, were you and your personal group with an "other" organized group (scouts, work, church, etc.)?

Results

- 7% of visitor groups were with an "other" organized group (see Figure 5).

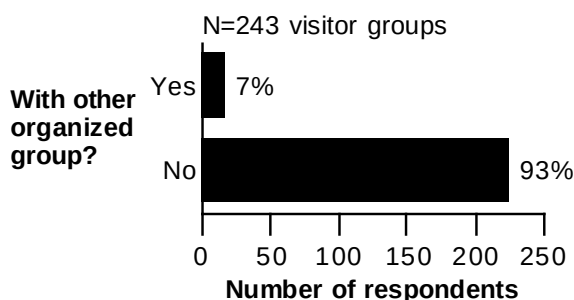


Figure 5. Visitors with an "other" organized group

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Question 18d

If you were with one of these organized groups, how many people, including yourself, were in this group?

Results – Interpret with CAUTION!

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Figure 6).

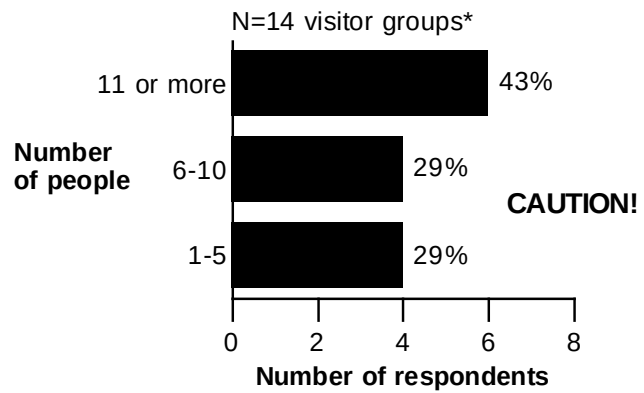


Figure 6. Organized group size

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

United States visitors by state of residence**Question 20b**

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is your state of residence?

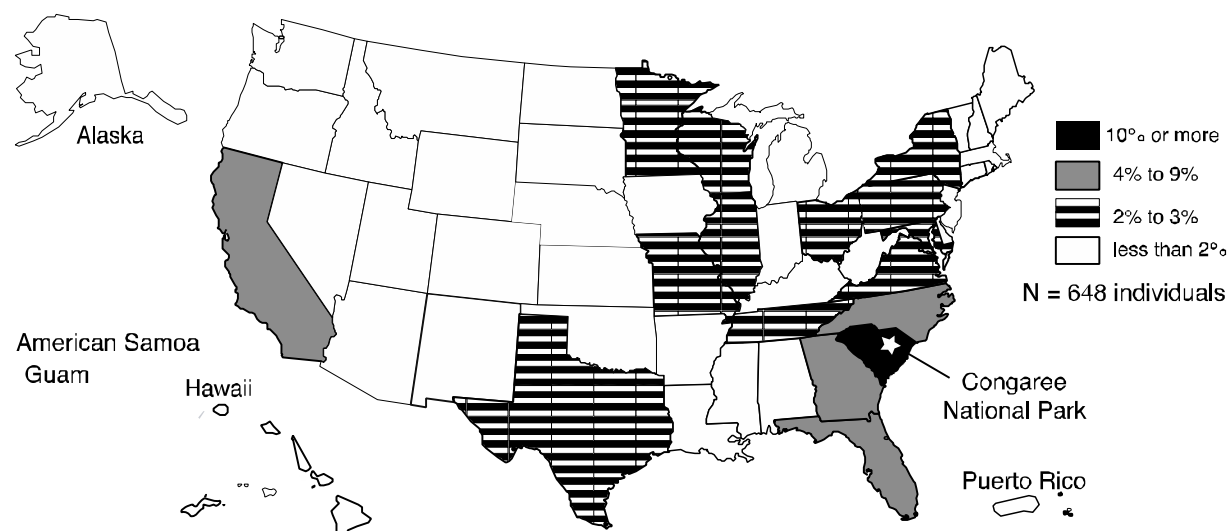
Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- U.S. visitors were from 36 states and Washington, DC and comprised 92% of total visitation to the park during the survey period.
- 44% of U.S. visitors came from South Carolina (see Table 6 and Figure 7).
- 7% came from Florida and 5% were from California.
- Smaller proportions came from 33 other states and Washington, DC.

Table 6. United States visitors by state of residence

State	Number of visitors	Percent of U.S. visitors N=648 Individuals*	Percent of total visitors N=706 Individuals
South Carolina	285	44	40
Florida	45	7	6
California	34	5	5
North Carolina	27	4	4
Georgia	24	4	3
Maryland	21	3	3
Texas	19	3	3
Ohio	17	3	2
Illinois	16	2	2
Pennsylvania	15	2	2
Virginia	13	2	2
New York	12	2	2
Wisconsin	12	2	2
Missouri	11	2	2
Minnesota	10	2	1
Tennessee	10	2	1
20 other states and Washington, DC	77	12	11

**Figure 7.** United States visitors by state of residence

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitors from South Carolina and adjacent states by county of residence

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Table 7. Visitors from South Carolina and adjacent states by county of residence

Results	County, State	Number of visitors	
		N=336 individuals	Percent*
- Visitors from South Carolina and adjacent states were from 41 counties and comprised 52% of the total U.S. visitation to the park during the survey period. 37% came from Richland County, SC (see Table 7). 19% Came from Lexington County, SC. - Small proportions of visitors came from 39 other counties in South Carolina and adjacent states.	Richland, SC	123	37
	Lexington, SC	63	19
	Sumter, SC	14	4
	Spartanburg, SC	13	4
	Mecklenburg, NC	12	4
	Fulton, GA	9	3
	Orangeburg, SC	8	2
	Florence, SC	7	2
	Horry, SC	7	2
	Charleston, SC	6	2
	Dorchester, SC	6	2
	Kershaw, SC	6	2
	Berkeley, SC	4	1
	Cobb, GA	4	1
	Greenville, SC	4	1
	Pickens, SC	4	1
	Wake, NC	4	1
	Aiken, SC	3	1
	Carroll, GA	3	1
	Cherokee, SC	3	1
	21 other counties	33	10

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

International visitors by country of residence**Question 20b**

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is your country of residence?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- International visitors were from 13 countries and comprised 8% of total visitation to the park during the survey period.
- 21% of international visitors came from Germany (see Table 8).
- 14% were from France.
- Smaller proportions of international visitors came from 11 other countries.

Table 8. International visitors by country of residence

Country	Number of visitors	Percent of international visitors N=58 Individuals*	Percent of total visitors N=706 individuals
Germany	12	21	2
France	8	14	1
Bangladesh	7	12	1
Denmark	7	12	1
Switzerland	5	9	1
Canada	4	7	1
Estonia	4	7	1
Italy	3	5	<1
United Kingdom	3	5	<1
United Arab Emirates	2	3	<1
Czech Republic	1	2	<1
Israel	1	2	<1
Ukraine	1	2	<1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Number of visits to Congaree NP in past 12 months

Question 20c

For you and your personal group on this visit, how many times have you visited Congaree NP in the past 12 months (including this visit)?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- 83% of visitors visited the park once in the past 12 months (see Figure 8).
- 8% of visitors visited 2 times.

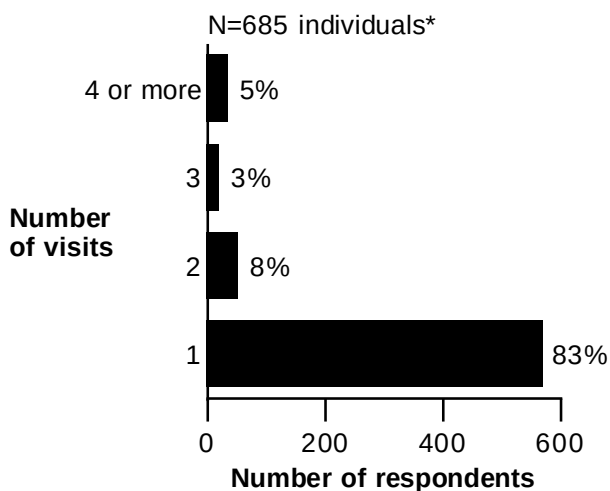


Figure 8. Number of visits to park in past 12 months

Number of lifetime visits to Congaree NP

Question 20d

For you and your personal group on this visit, how many times have you visited Congaree NP in your lifetime (including this visit)?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- 76% of visitors were visiting the park for the first time (see Figure 9).
- 11% had visited 4 or more times in their lifetime.

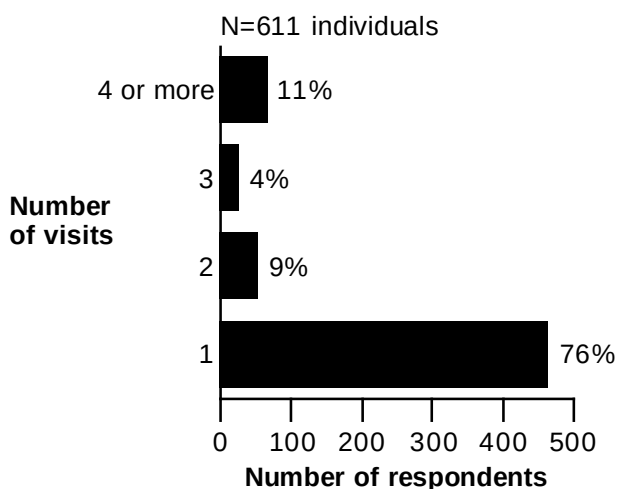


Figure 9. Number of visits to park in lifetime

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Number of visits to other national parks in past 12 months

Question 20e

For you and your personal group on this visit, how many times have you visited other national parks in the past 12 months (including this visit)?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- 35% of visitors had visited other national parks once in the past 12 months (see Figure 10).
- 25% had visited other national parks 5 or more times.

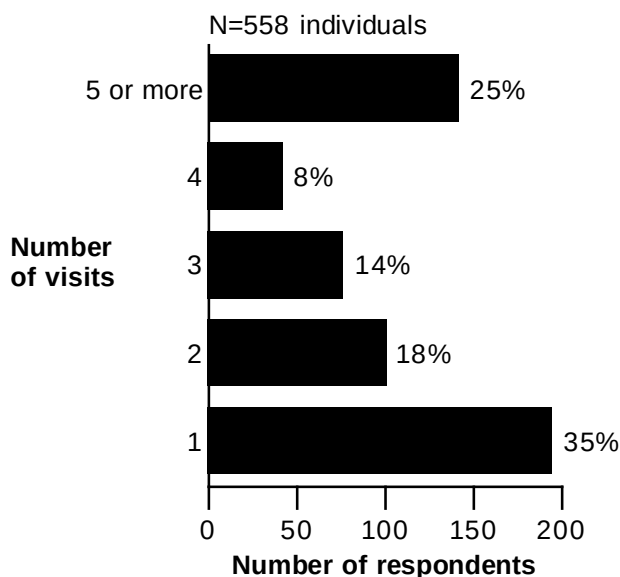


Figure 10. Number of visits to other national parks in past 12 months

Number of lifetime visits to other national parks

Question 20f

For you and your personal group on this visit, how many times have you visited other national parks in your lifetime (including this visit)?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- 39% of visitors had visited other national parks between 1 and 5 times in their lifetime (see Figure 11).
- 21% had visited other national parks 26 or more times.
- For 15% of visitors, this was their first visit to any national park.

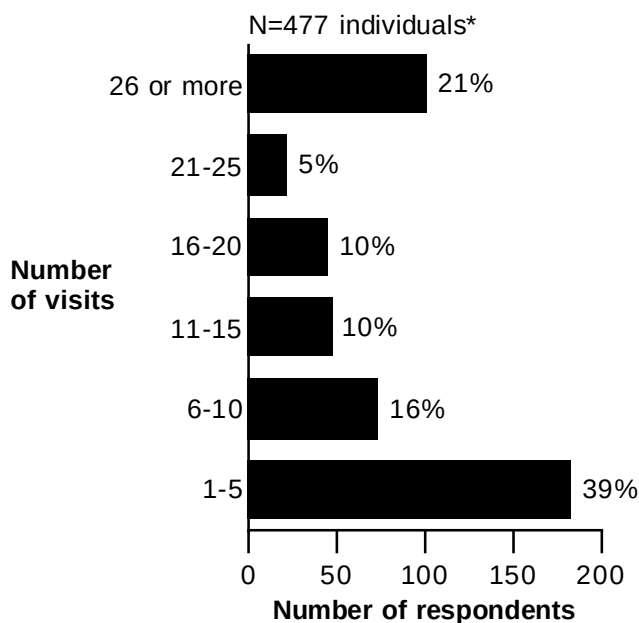


Figure 11. Number of visits to other national parks in lifetime

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor age

Question 20a

For you and your personal group on this visit, what is your current age?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- Visitor ages ranged from 1 to 86 years.
- 34% of visitors were 46 to 65 years old (see Figure 12).
- 21% were 21-35 years old.
- 20% were 15 years old or younger.
- 4% were 71 years or older.

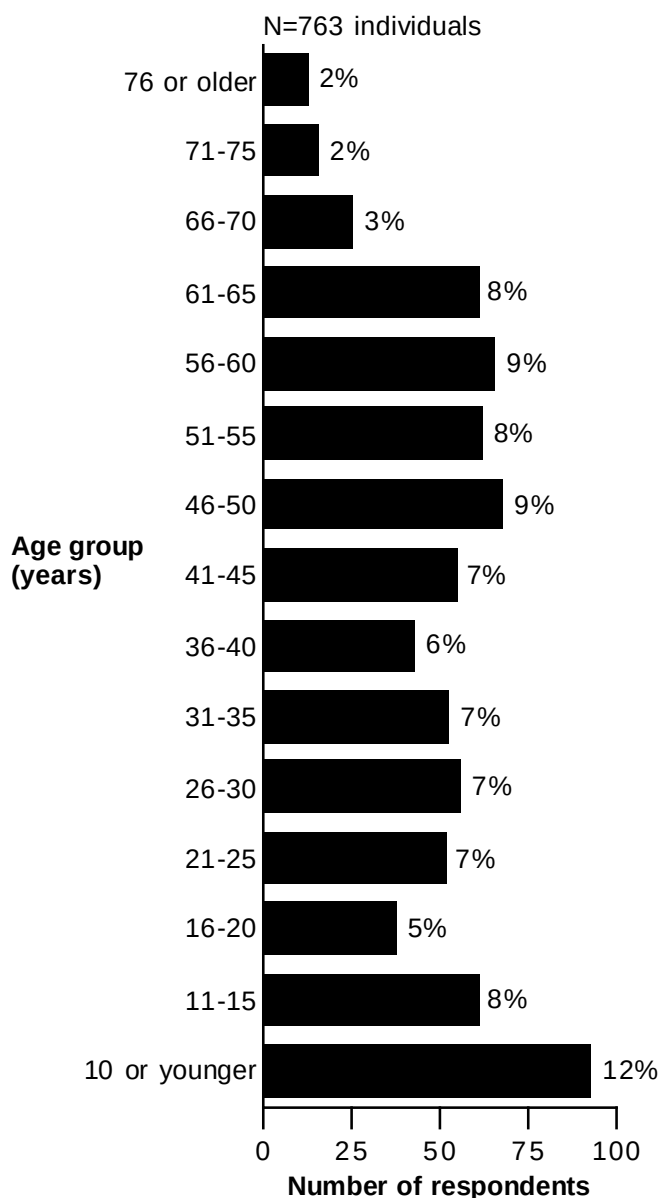


Figure 12. Visitor age

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor ethnicity

Question 23a

Are you or members of your personal group Hispanic or Latino?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- 3% of visitors were Hispanic or Latino (see Figure 13).

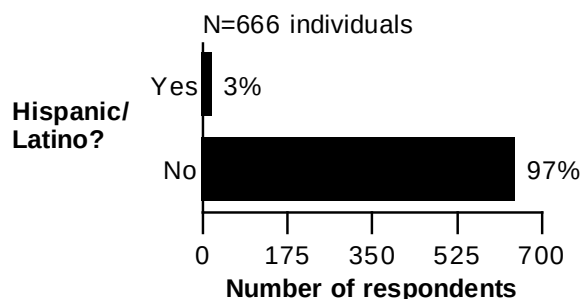


Figure 13. Visitors who were Hispanic or Latino

Visitor race

Question 23b

What is your race? What is the race of each member of your personal group?

Note: Response was limited to 7 members from each visitor group.

Results

- 90% of visitors were White (see Figure 14).
- 5% were Asian.

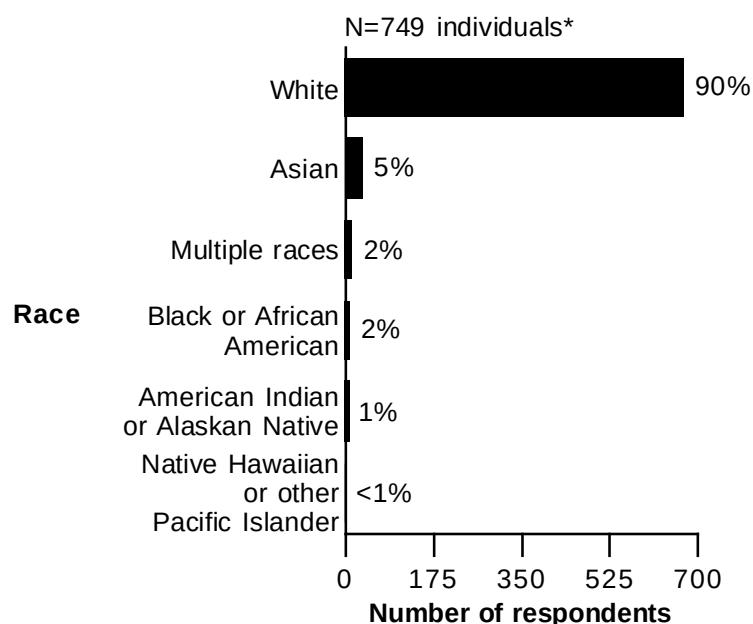


Figure 14. Visitor race

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitors with physical conditions affecting access/participation

Question 22a

Does anyone in your personal group have mobility or other physical impairments?

Results

- 7% of visitor groups had members with mobility or other physical conditions (see Figure 15).

Have mobility or other physical conditions?

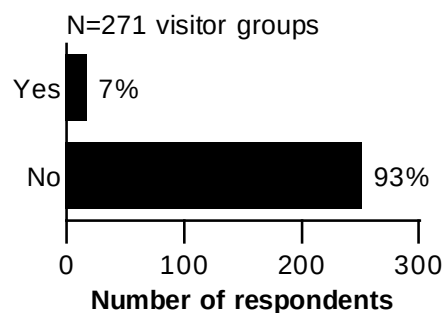


Figure 15. Visitor groups that had members with mobility or other physical conditions

Question 22b

If YES, did anyone in your personal group have a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services?

Results – Interpret with CAUTION!

- Not enough visitor groups responded to provide reliable results (see Figure 16).

Have difficulty accessing services/ participating in activities?

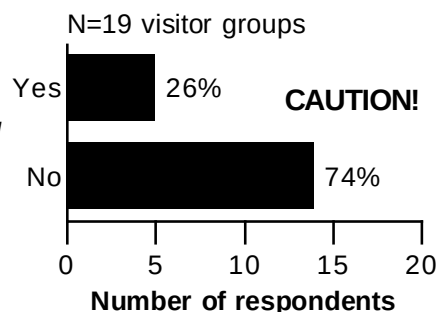


Figure 16. Visitor groups that had a member with physical conditions affecting access to services or participation in park activities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Respondent level of education

Question 21

For you only, what is the highest level of education you have completed?

Results

- 42% of respondents had a graduate degree (see Figure 17).
- 31% of respondents had a bachelor's degree.

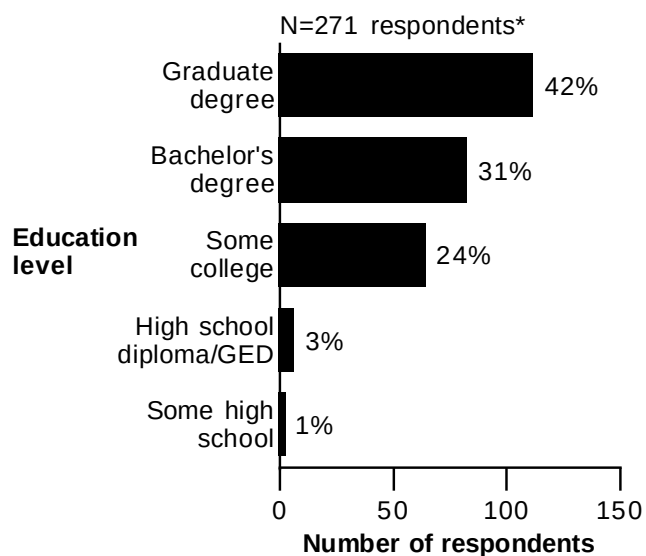


Figure 17. Respondent level of education

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Respondent household income

Question 25a

Which category best represents your annual household income?

Results

- 53% had an income between \$50,000 and \$149,999 (see Figure 18).



Figure 18. Respondent household income

Respondent household size

Question 25b

How many people are in your household?

Results

- 37% of respondents had 2 people in their household (see Figure 19).
- 21% had 4 people.
- 21% had 4 people.

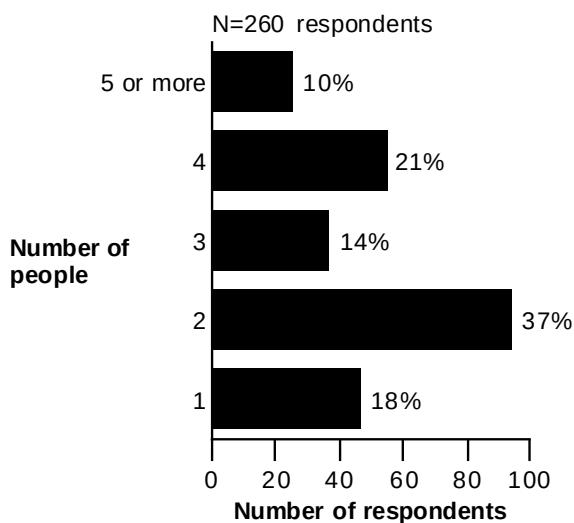


Figure 19. Number of people in household

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Awareness of park programs

Question 2

Prior to your visit, were you and your personal group aware of programs (ranger-led walks, canoe trips, presentations, school group tours, etc.) offered in Congaree NP?

Results

- 47% of visitor groups were aware of programs offered at the park (see Figure 20).

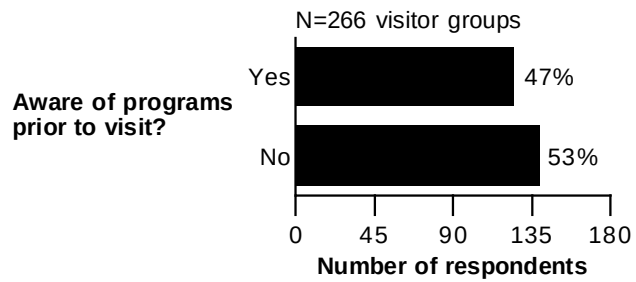


Figure 20. Visitor groups that were aware of programs in Congaree NP

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Park name change and decision to visit

Question 3a

In 2003, Congaree Swamp National Monument became Congaree NP. Did this name change have any effect on your decision to visit?

Results

- 18% of respondents said their decision to visit was affected by the name change (see Figure 21).

Question 3b

If YES, what effect did it have?
(Open-ended)

- 46 respondents commented on the effect of the park's name change (see Table 9.)

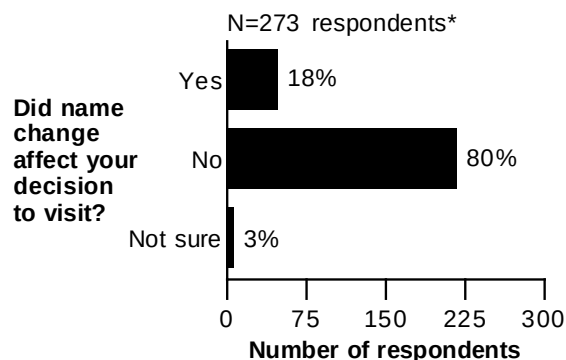


Figure 21. Respondents for whom the name change affected decision to visit

Table 9. Effect of name change on decision to visit
(N=47 comments)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Trying to visit all national parks	16
Being a national park encouraged/influenced us to visit	6
More likely to visit a national park than a national monument	4
Always visit a national park if in the area	2
Greater interest if designated as a national park	2
I love national parks	2
National park prestige	2
Visit prompted by name change	2
Did not want to visit a swamp	1
Didn't know there was a national park in South Carolina	1
Excited to hear about a new national park	1
Fact that it is a national park	1
Found it in list of national parks	1
Greater importance if designated as a national park	1
Had never heard of it	1
Looked for national parks near our route	1
More likely to visit	1
Sounds like more to do	1
Sounds more official	1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Knowledge of congressionally designated wilderness

Question 4a

Prior to your visit, were you aware of what congressionally designated wilderness is?

Results

- 48% of respondents were familiar with congressionally designated wilderness (see Figure 22).

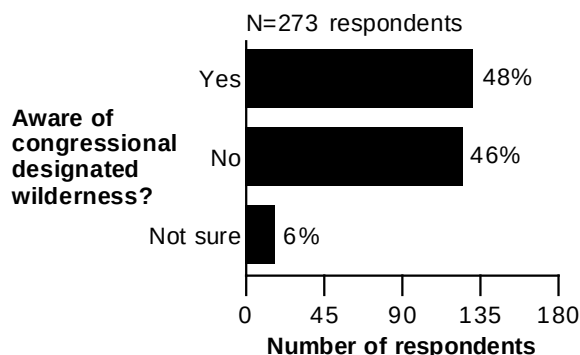


Figure 22. Respondents who were aware of what congressionally designated wilderness is

Question 4b

If NO, did you and your personal group learn about congressionally designated wilderness during your visit?

Results

- 56% of visitor groups said they learned about congressionally designated wilderness at Congaree NP during their visit (see Figure 23).

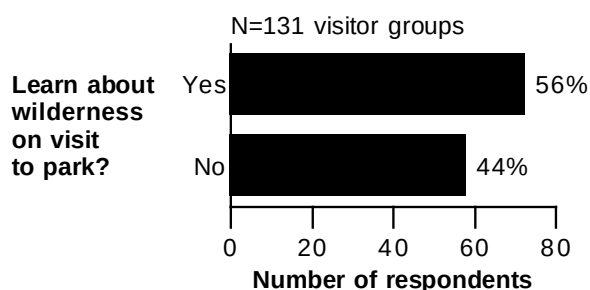


Figure 23. Visitor groups that learned about congressionally designated wilderness at park

Park policy to remove non-native species

Question 5

The National Park Service has a policy to control or remove non-native plants and animals from within park boundaries. Non-native species occupy an area that is not part of their natural, historic range, and often originated from another continent or region. Many of these species are invasive and damage park resources. Were you aware of this policy prior to your visit to Congaree NP?

Results

- 45% of respondents were aware of the policy to remove non-native species (see Figure 24).

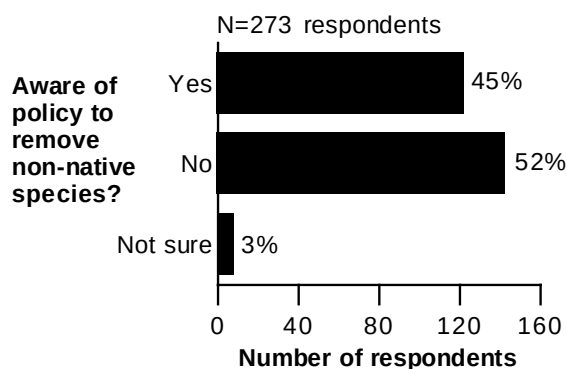


Figure 24. Respondents aware of park policy regarding non-native species

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Support for policy to remove non-native species

Question 6

Would you and your personal group be supportive of the control and removal of non-native species at Congaree NP?

Results

- 88% of visitor groups were supportive of the removal of non-native plants (see Figure 25).
- 75% were supportive of the removal of non-native animals (see Figure 26).

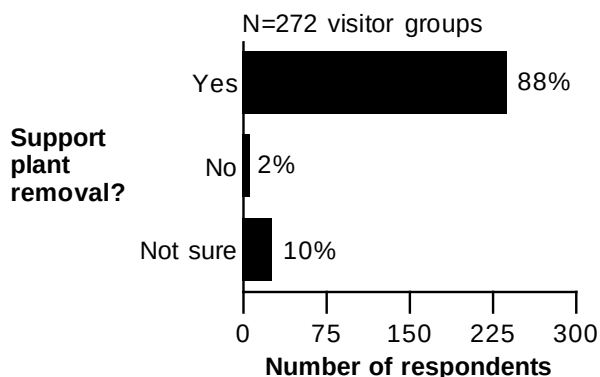


Figure 25. Visitor groups supporting the removal of non-native plants

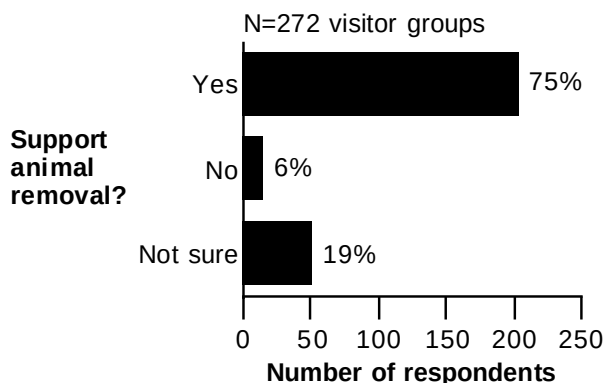


Figure 26. Visitor groups supporting the removal of non-native animals

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

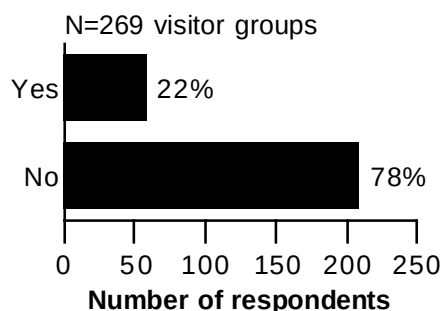
**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Awareness of research and education in the park

Question 15a

Prior to this visit, were you and your personal group aware that Congaree NP is the home to the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center, one of 21 centers nationwide?

Aware of research & education center before visit?



Results

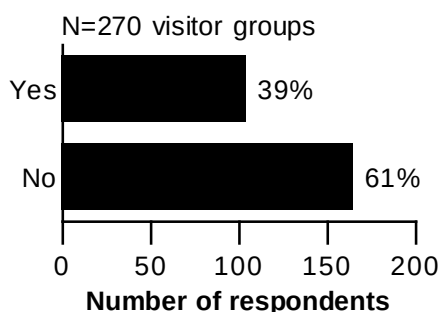
- 22% of visitor groups were aware of the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center before visit (see Figure 27).

Figure 27. Visitor groups that were aware of the Old-Growth Bottomland Forest Research and Education Center before visit

Question 15b

Did you and your personal group notice any scientists, scientific markers, or scientific equipment at work while you were in the park?

Notice scientists or scientific equipment?



Results

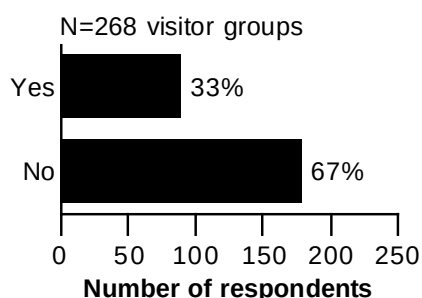
- 39% of visitor groups noticed scientists, scientific markers, or scientific equipment at work in the park (see Figure 28).

Figure 28. Visitor groups that noticed scientists, scientific markers, or scientific equipment at work during this visit

Question 15c

Did you and your personal group – through programs and products – learn about actual results of scientific studies at the park?

Learn about study results?



Results

- 33% of visitor groups learned about research results through programs and products while in the park (see Figure 29).

Figure 29. Visitor groups that learned about current scientific results in the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Trip/Visit Characteristics and Preferences

Information sources prior to visit

Question 1

Prior to your visit, how did you and your personal group obtain information about Congaree NP?

Results

- 95% of visitor groups obtained information about Congaree NP prior to their visit (see Figure 30).

- As shown in Figure 31, among those visitor groups that obtained information about Congaree NP prior to their visit, the most common sources were:

53% Park website
23% Friends/relatives/word of mouth
20% Previous visits

- Other websites used (7%) were:

Google
Google maps
Friends of Congaree Swamp
Los Angeles Times
Mapquest
National Geographic
Noca.org
Parkstamps.org
Wikipedia
www.lincon.com/nps/nps_sites.htm

- Other sources (8%) were:

Book
Boy scouts
Big T's Barbecue
GPS system
Junior Ranger program
National Parks by National Geographic
National park passport program
Outfitters

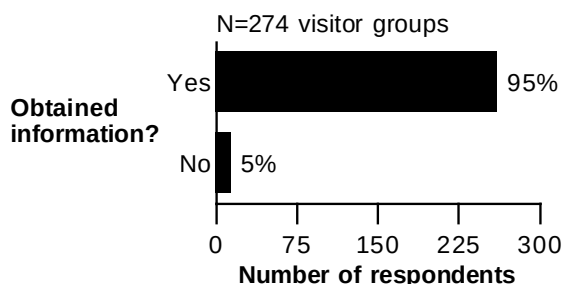


Figure 30. Visitor groups that obtained information prior to visit

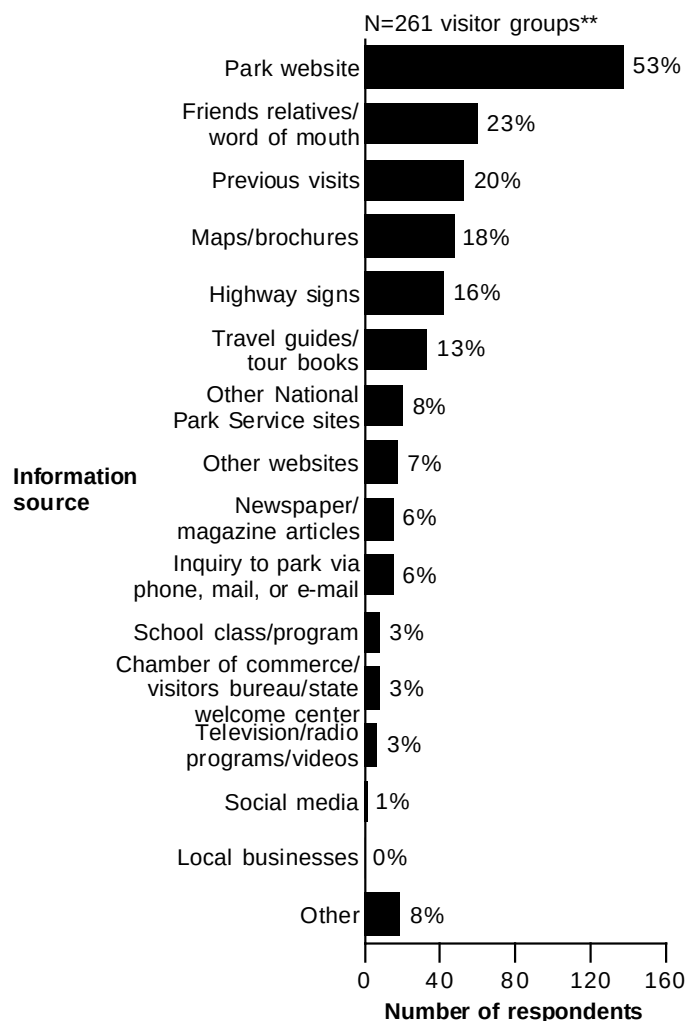


Figure 31. Sources of information

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Park as destination

Question from on-site interview

A two-minute interview was conducted with each individual selected to complete the questionnaire. During the interview, the question was asked: “How did this visit to Congaree NP fit into your personal group’s travel plans?”

Results

- 59% of visitor groups indicated that the park was their primary destination (see Figure 32).
- 37% said the visit to Congaree NP was one of several destinations.

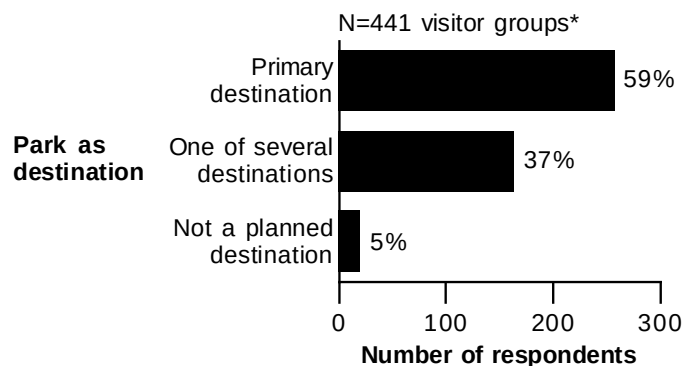


Figure 32. How visit to park fit into visitor groups’ travel plans

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Alternate recreation site**Question 24a**

On this trip, if you and your personal group had not chosen to visit Congaree NP, what other recreation site would you have visited instead? (Open-ended)

Results

- 62% of visitor groups (N=170) responded to this question.
- Table 10 lists the places that visitor groups indicated as potential alternate sites they would have visited instead of Congaree NP.

Table 10. Alternate recreation sites (N=191 comments)

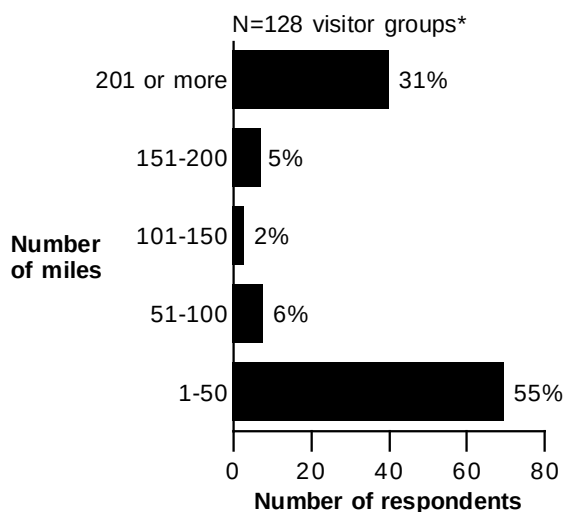
Site	Number of times mentioned
None	43
A South Carolina state park	12
Lake Murray	10
Not sure/don't know	9
Riverbanks Zoo	9
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	6
Harbison State Forest	5
Sesquicentennial State Park, SC	5
Another park	4
Charleston	4
Fort Sumter	4
Riverfront Walk	4
State park	4
Zoo	4
Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve	3
Ninety-Six National Historic Site	3
Plantation (within SC)	3
Poinsett State Park, SC	3
City parks	2
Francis Beidler Forest	2
Museum	2
Other national parks	2
Saluda Shoals Park	2
State Capitol	2
State Museum in Columbia	2
Other locations	42

Question 24b

How far is this alternative site from your home?

Results

- 55% of the visitor groups indicated that they would travel up to 50 miles from their home to visit the alternate site (see Figure 33).
- 31% would travel 201 or more miles.

**Figure 33.** Number of miles to alternate recreation site

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Primary reason for visiting the park area

Question 7

On this trip, what was the primary reason that you and your personal group came to the Congaree NP area (within 1-hour drive of the park)?

Results

- 25% of visitor groups were residents of the area (see Figure 34).
- As shown in Figure 35, the primary reasons for visiting the area (within a 1-hour drive of the park) among nonresident visitor groups were:

48% Visit the park
16% Traveling through – unplanned visit
16% Visit friends/relatives in the area

- Other primary reasons (9%) were:

Attend a MeetUp hike
Basic training graduation
Bringing son to college at USC
Canoe trip
Expose students to research topics
Five Points
On our vacation itinerary
Resident - 1.5 hours away
Traveling through - planned visit

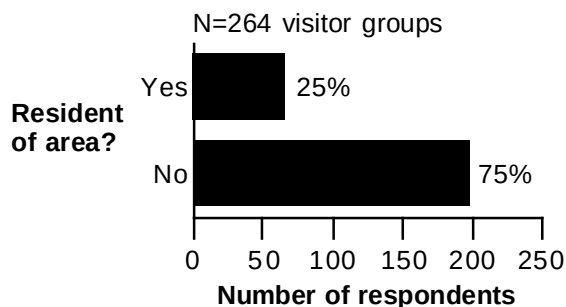


Figure 34. Residents of the area (within a 1-hour drive of the park)

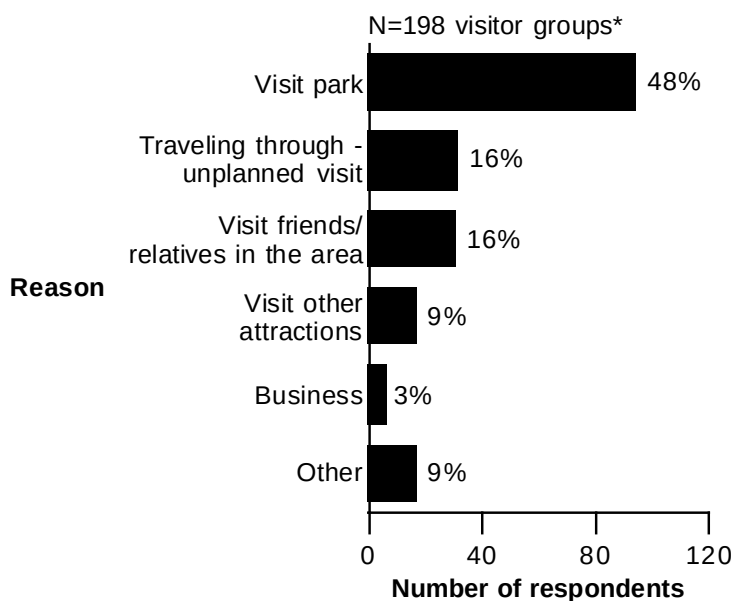


Figure 35. Primary reason for visiting the park area (within a 1-hour drive of the park)

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Number of vehicles

Question 12

On this visit, how many vehicles did you and your personal group use to arrive at the park?

Results

- 93% of visitor groups used 1 vehicle to arrive at the park (see Figure 36).

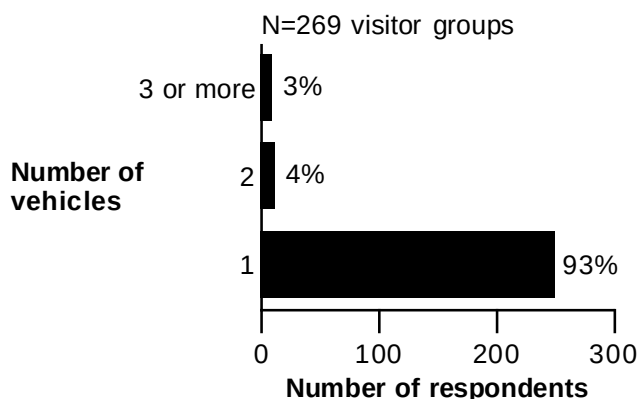


Figure 36. Number of vehicles used to arrive at the park

Overnight stays

Question 9a

On this trip, did you and your personal group stay overnight away from your permanent residence either inside Congaree NP or within the nearby area (within 1-hour drive of the park)?

Results

- 38% of visitor groups stayed overnight away from home either in the park or the area (see Figure 37).

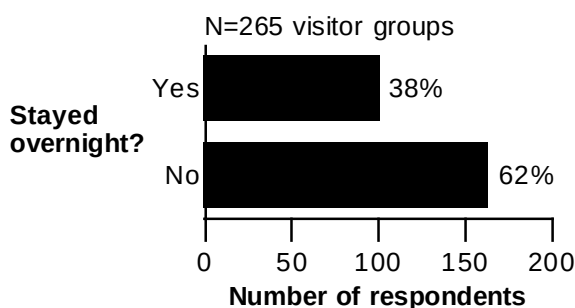


Figure 37. Visitor groups that stayed overnight in the park or within a 1-hour drive of the park

Question 9b

If YES, how many nights did you and your personal group spend inside the park?

Results – Interpret with **CAUTION!**

- Not enough visitor groups responded to provide reliable results (see Figure 38).

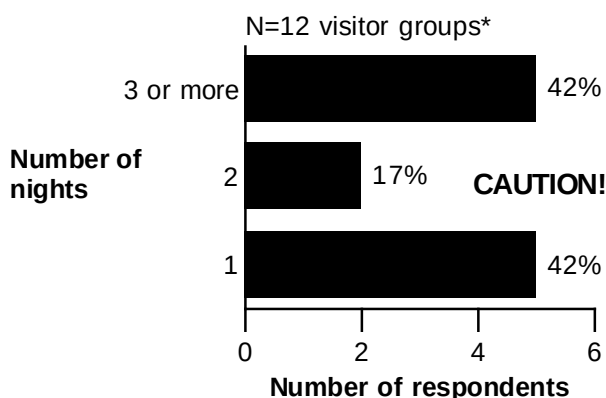


Figure 38. Number of nights spent inside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Question 9c

If YES, how many nights did you and your personal group spend outside the park within a 1-hour drive?

Results

- 41% of visitor groups stayed 1 night outside the park within a 1-hour drive of the park (see Figure 39).
- 36% stayed 2 or 3 nights.

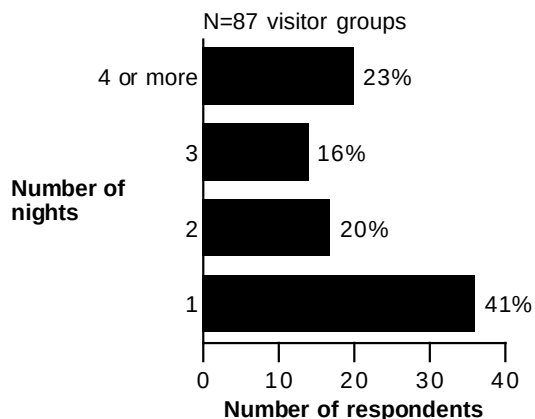


Figure 39. Number of nights spent in the area outside the park (within a 1-hour drive of the park).

Accommodations used inside the park

Question 9b

In which types of accommodations did you and your personal group spend the night(s) inside the park?

Results - Interpret with CAUTION!

- Not enough visitor groups responded to this question to provide reliable results (see Figure 40).
- Table 11 shows the number of nights spent in accommodations inside the park.

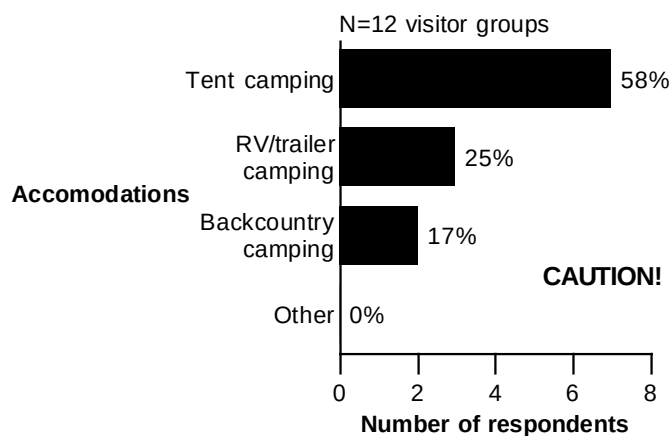


Figure 40. Accommodations used inside the park

Note: Some visitor groups indicated they used an accommodation without specifying the number of nights; therefore, the N in Figure 40 and in Table 11 is different.

Table 11. Number of nights spent in accommodations inside the park – **CAUTION!**
(N=number of visitor groups that specified the number of nights in each type of accommodation)

Accommodation	N	Number of nights (%)*			
		1	2	3	4 or more
RV/trailer camping	3	0	33	0	66
Tent camping	7	43	14	29	14
Backcountry camping	2	100	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Accommodations used outside the park

Question 9c

In which types of accommodations did you and your personal group spend the night(s) outside park within 1-hour drive?

Results

- 72% of visitor groups stayed overnight in a lodge, hotel, motel, cabin, rented condo/home, or bed & breakfast (see Figure 41).
- Table 12 shows the number of nights spent in accommodations outside the park within a 1-hour drive of the park.
- “Other” accommodations (1%) were not specified.

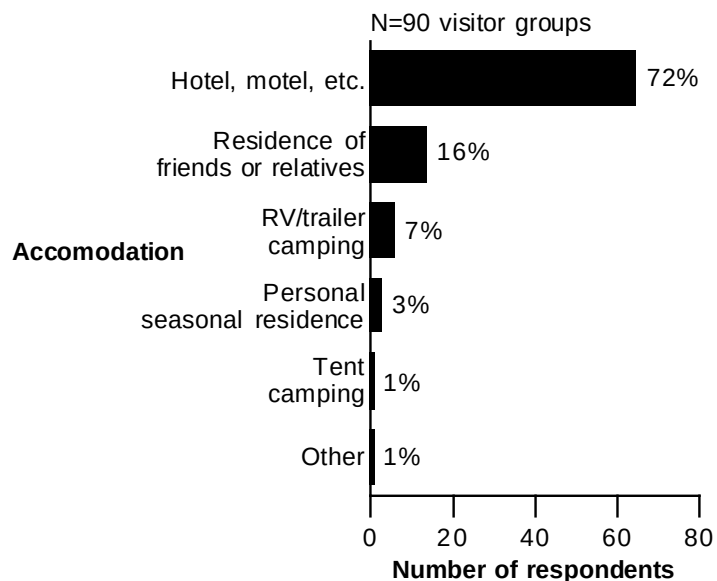


Figure 41. Accommodations used outside the park within a 1-hour drive

Note: Some visitor groups indicated they used an accommodation without specifying the number of nights; therefore, the N in Figure 41 and in Table 12 is different.

Table 12. Number of nights spent in accommodations outside the park within a 1-hour drive (N=number of visitor groups that specified the number of nights spent in each type of accommodation)

Accommodation	N	Number of nights (%) *			
		1	2	3	4 or more
Lodge, hotel, motel, cabin, rented condo/home, or bed & breakfast	63	48	19	16	17
RV/trailer camping – CAUTION!	6	50	17	17	17
Tent camping – CAUTION!	1	100	0	0	0
Backcountry camping – CAUTION!	0	0	0	0	0
Personal seasonal residence – CAUTION!	3	33	0	0	67
Residence of friends or relatives – CAUTION!	13	0	31	23	46
Other – CAUTION!	1	100	0	0	0

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Length of stay in the park

Question 13b

On this visit, how long did you and your personal group spend visiting Congaree NP?

Results

Number of hours if less than 24

- 53% spent 3-4 hours in the park (see Figure 42).
- 33% of visitor groups spent up to 2 hours.
- The average length of stay for visitor groups who spent less than 24 hours was 3.2 hours.

Number of days if 24 hours or more

- Interpret with **CAUTION!** Not enough visitor groups responded to provide reliable results (see Figure 43).

Average length of stay for all visitors

- The average length of stay in the park for all visitor groups was 6.3 hours.

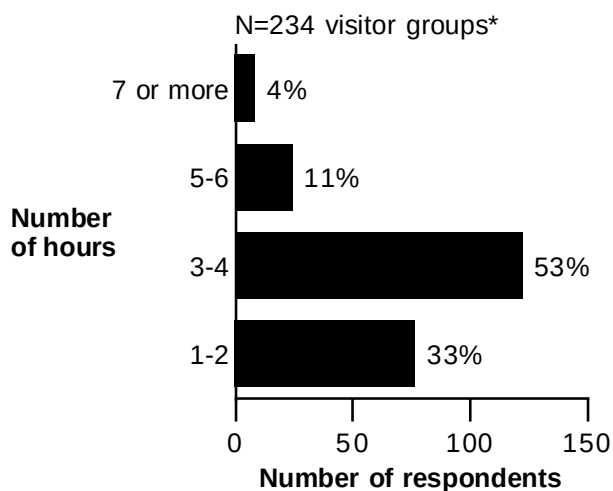


Figure 42. Number of hours spent in the park

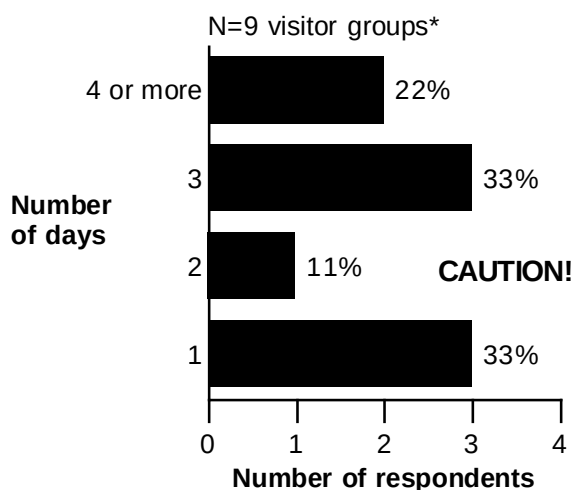


Figure 43. Number of days spent in the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Length of stay in the park area

Question 13a

How long did you and your personal group stay in the Congaree NP area (within 1-hour drive of the park)?

Results

- 25% of visitor groups were residents of the area within a 1-hour drive of the park (see Figure 44).

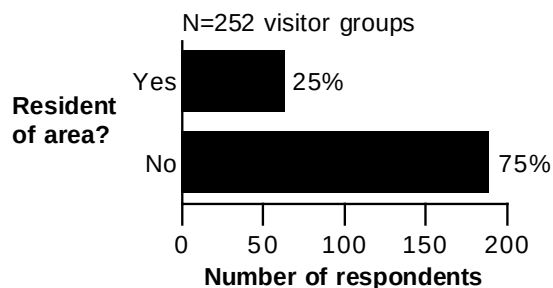


Figure 44. Residents of the area (within 1-hour drive of the park)

Number of hours if less than 24

- 44% spent 3-4 hours in the park area (see Figure 45).
- 31% of visitor groups spent 1-2 hours.
- 14% spent 5-6 hours.
- 11% spent 7-8 hours.
- 2% spent 9 or more hours.
- The average length of stay in the area for visitor groups who spent less than 24 hours was 4.7 hours.

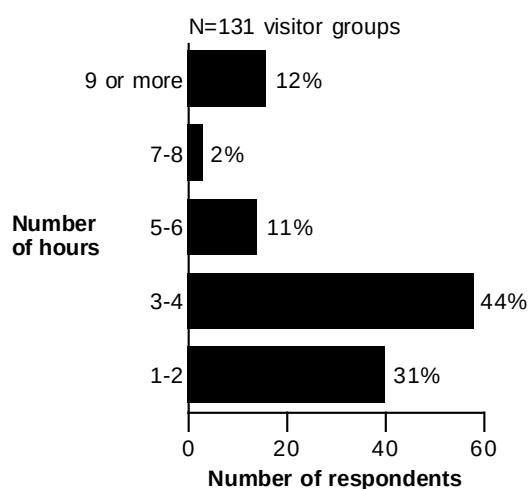


Figure 45. Number of hours spent in the park area (within a 1-hour drive of the park)

Number of days if 24 hours or more

- 48% of visitor groups spent 1-2 days in the park area (see Figure 46).
- 29% spent 3-4 days.
- 22% spent 5-6 days.
- 10% spent 7 or more days.
- The average length of stay for visitor groups that spent 24 hours or more was 4.3 days.

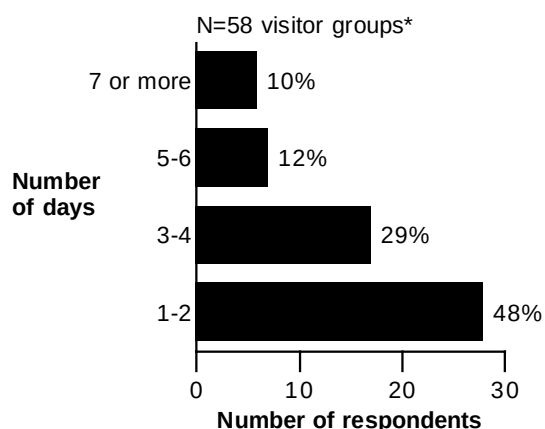


Figure 46. Number of days spent in the park area (within a 1-hour drive of the park)

Average length of stay for all visitors

- The average length of stay for all visitor groups was 34.6 hours, or 1.4 days.

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Sites visited in the Congaree NP area

Question 8

On this visit, which sites did you and your personal group visit in the Congaree NP area (within 1-hour drive of the park)?

- As shown in Figure 47, the sites most commonly visited in the Congaree NP area were:

26% University of South Carolina
25% State Capitol
18% Riverbanks Zoo

- The least visited site was:

2% National Advocacy Center

- “Other” sites (25%) visited are shown in Table 13.

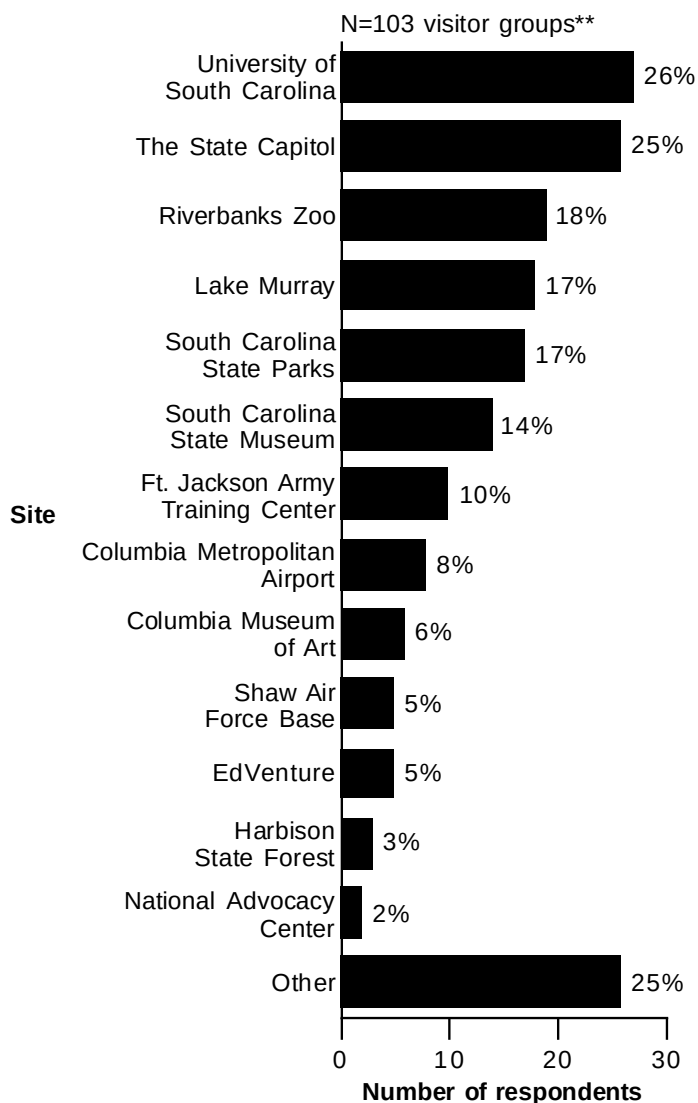


Figure 47. Sites visited in the park area (within a 1-hour drive of the park)

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 13. “Other” sites visited in the park area
(N=46 comments)

Site	Number of times mentioned
Charleston	2
Columbia Canal Park	2
Columbia Riverfront Park	2
Camden	1
Chapin	1
Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center	1
Columbia	1
Darlington Raceway	1
Edisto River	1
Five Point	1
Fort Sumter	1
Greenway Riverwalk	1
Historical churches in Columbia	1
Hunley	1
Kayaking on trail	1
Lake Marion	1
Miyabi Restaurant	1
Myrtle Beach	1
National Guard Museum	1
Nickelodeon	1
Ninety-Six National Historic Site	1
Orangeburg	1
Santee National Wildlife Refuge	1
South Carolina farmers market	1
Tony's Restaurant	1

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Activities within the park

Question 11

On this visit, in which activities did you and your personal group participate within Congaree NP?

Results

- As shown in Figure 48, the most common activities in which visitor groups participated were:

82% Walking/hiking
79% Visiting the visitor center
13% Birdwatching
13% Nature study

- “Other” activities (11%) were:

Drawing
Eating pawpaws
Four-hour guided tour
Junior Ranger program
National park passport stamp
Photography
Plan future trip
View park film
View plants
View wildlife

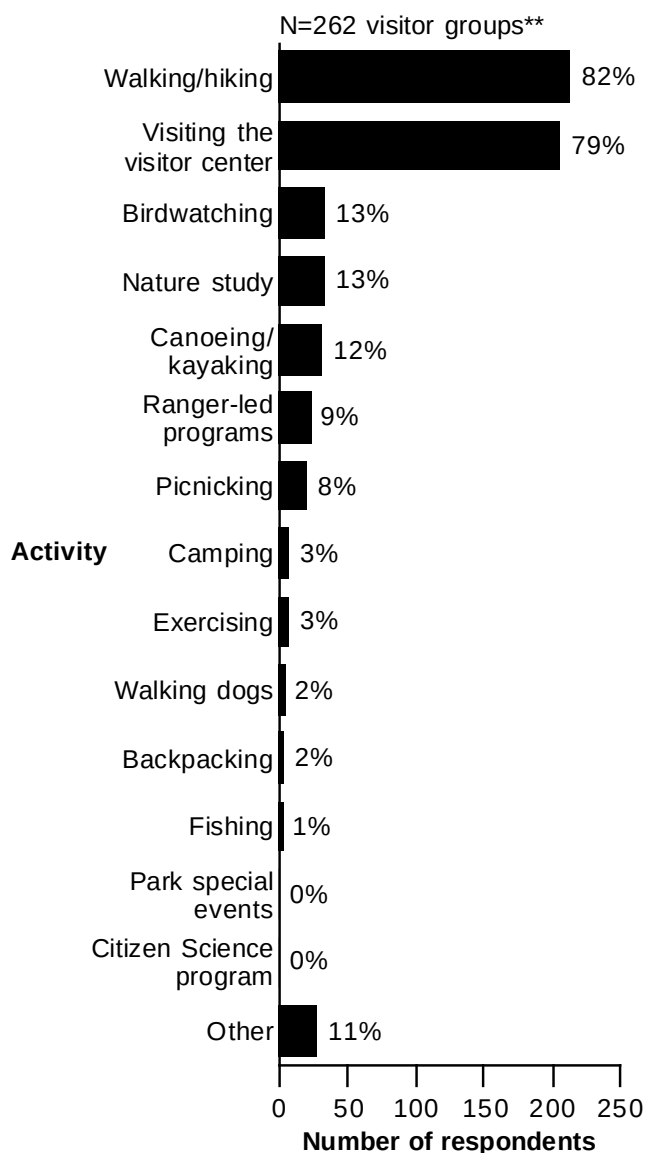


Figure 48. Activities on this visit

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Use of park trails

Question 10a

On this visit to Congaree NP, did you and your personal group walk/canoe/kayak any park trails?

Results

- 93% of visitor groups used a trail in Congaree NP (see Figure 49).

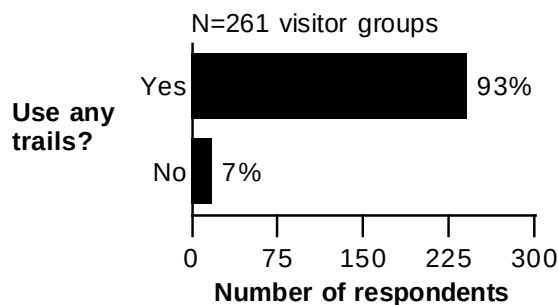


Figure 49. Visitor groups that used park trails

Question 10b

If YES, which of the following trails did you and your personal group walk/canoe/kayak on this visit?

Results

- As shown in Figure 50, of those visitor groups that used park trails, the most commonly used trails were:

80% Elevated Boardwalk Trail
58% Low Boardwalk Trail
23% Weston Lake Loop Trail

- The least used trail was the Kingsnake Trail (2%).

- Other trails (2%) were:

Champion tree trail
Wise Lake

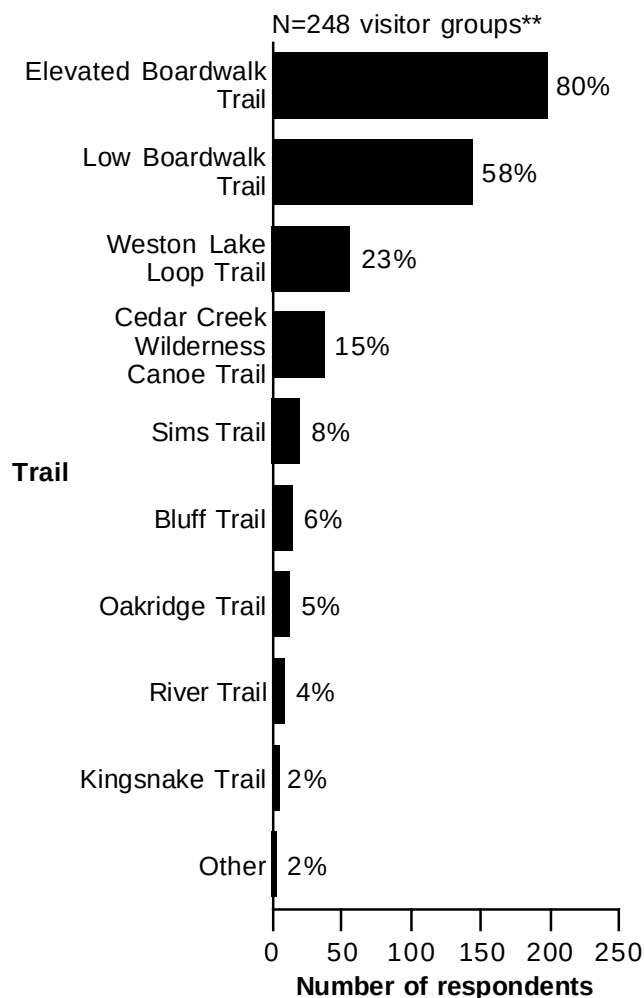


Figure 50. Trails used in Congaree NP

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Ratings of Services, Facilities, Attributes, Resources, and Elements

Information services and facilities used

Question 16a

Please indicate all of the information services and facilities that you or your personal group used at Congaree NP during this visit.

Results

- As shown in Figure 51, the most common information services and facilities used by visitor groups were:

91% Assistance from park staff
85% Park brochure/map
79% Visitor center exhibits

- The least used service/facility was ranger-led talks/programs/walks (10%).

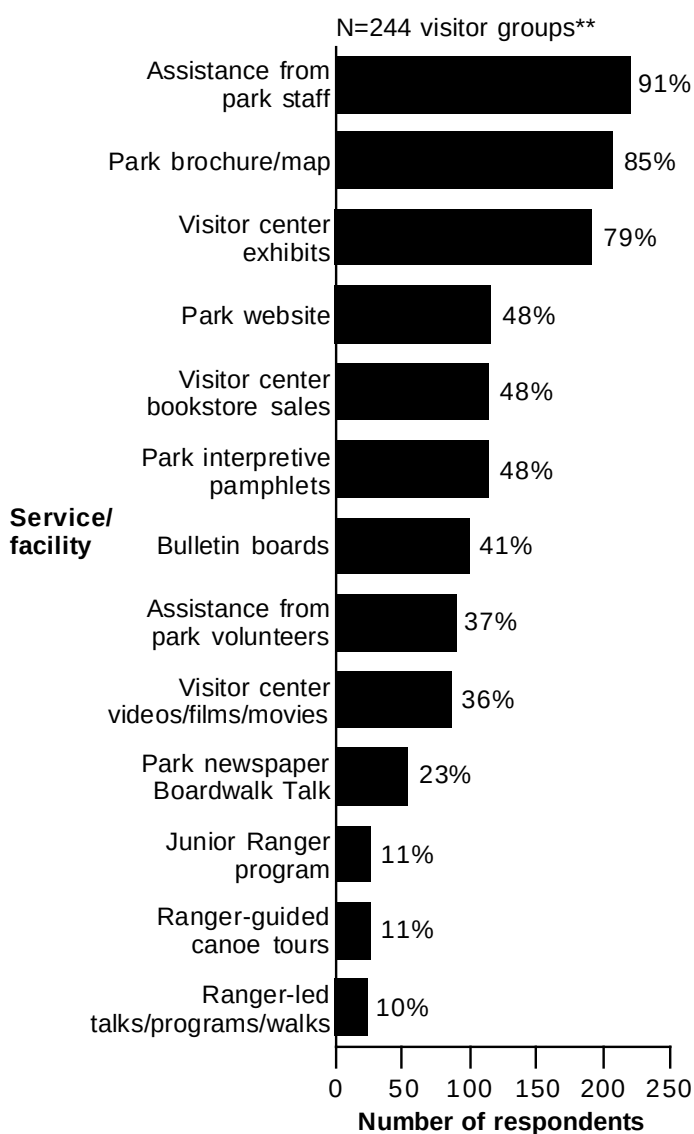


Figure 51. Information services and facilities used

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Importance ratings of information services and facilities

Question 16b

For only those services and facilities that you or your personal group used, please rate their importance to your visit from 1-5.

- 1=Not important
2=Somewhat important
3=Moderately important
4=Very important
5=Extremely important

Results

- Figure 52 shows the combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of information services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.

- The services and facilities receiving the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings were:

90% Park brochure/map
87% Park interpretive pamphlets
85% Assistance from park staff

- Table 14 shows the importance ratings of each service and facility.
- The service/facility receiving the highest “not important” rating that was rated by 30 or more visitor groups was:

3% Visitor center bookstore sales items

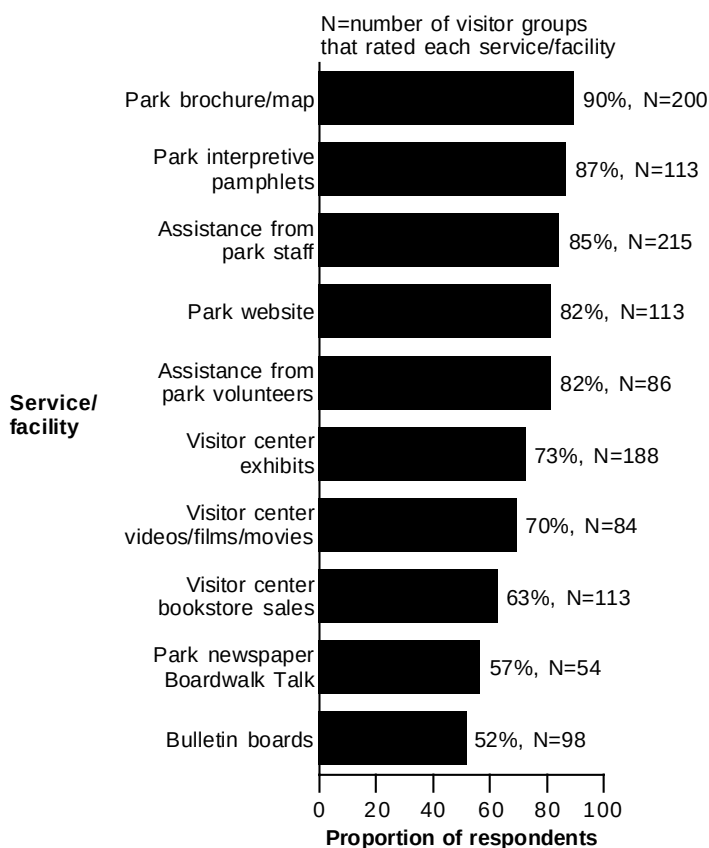


Figure 52. Combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of information services and facilities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 14. Importance ratings of information services and facilities
(N=number of visitor groups that rated each service and facility)

Service/facility	N	Rating (%)*				
		Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Assistance from park staff	215	1	4	10	41	44
Assistance from park volunteers	86	1	8	9	40	42
Bulletin boards	98	0	10	38	41	11
Junior Ranger program - CAUTION!	26	8	12	8	31	42
Park brochure/map	200	1	3	7	31	59
Park interpretive pamphlets	113	1	1	12	40	47
Park newspaper <i>Boardwalk Talk</i>	54	2	11	30	35	22
Park website (nps.gov/cong)	113	0	2	17	33	49
Ranger-led talks/ programs/walks - CAUTION!	21	0	0	14	33	52
Ranger-guided canoe tours - CAUTION!	26	0	0	0	12	88
Visitor center bookstore sales items	113	3	12	22	38	25
Visitor center videos/films/movies	84	0	6	24	32	38
Visitor center exhibits	188	1	5	21	37	36

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Quality ratings of information services and facilities

Question 16c

For only those services and facilities that you or your personal group used, please rate their quality from 1-5.

- 1=Very poor
- 2=Poor
- 3=Average
- 4=Good
- 5=Very good

Results

- Figure 53 shows the combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings of information services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.

- The services and facilities receiving the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings were:

- 99% Assistance from park staff
- 97% Assistance from park volunteers
- 93% Park interpretive pamphlets
- 91% Visitor center exhibits

- Table 15 shows the quality ratings of each service and facility.
- No visitor groups rated any information services or facilities as “very poor.”

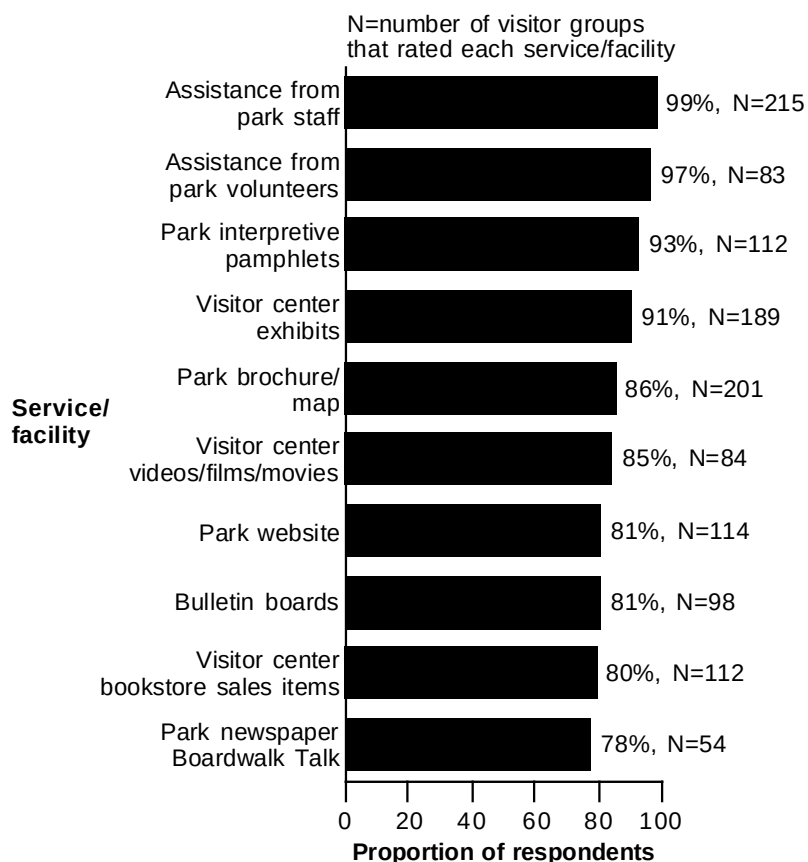


Figure 53. Combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings of information services and facilities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 15. Quality ratings of information services and facilities
(N=number of visitor groups that rated each service and facility)

Service/facility	N	Rating (%)*				
		Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
Assistance from park staff	215	0	0	1	13	86
Assistance from park volunteers	83	0	1	2	17	80
Bulletin boards	98	0	1	18	47	34
Junior Ranger program - CAUTION!	24	0	0	17	17	67
Park brochure/map	201	0	2	12	25	61
Park interpretive pamphlets	112	0	0	7	34	59
Park newspaper <i>Boardwalk Talk</i>	54	0	0	22	30	48
Park website (nps.gov/cong)	114	0	0	18	39	42
Ranger-led talks/ programs/walks - CAUTION!	23	0	0	4	26	70
Ranger-guided canoe tours - CAUTION!	27	0	0	0	7	93
Visitor center bookstore sales items	112	0	3	17	33	47
Visitor center videos/films/movies	84	0	4	12	36	49
Visitor center exhibits	189	0	1	8	34	57

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Mean scores of importance and quality ratings of information services and facilities

- Figures 54 and 55 show the mean scores of importance and quality ratings of information and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.
- All information services and facilities were rated above average.

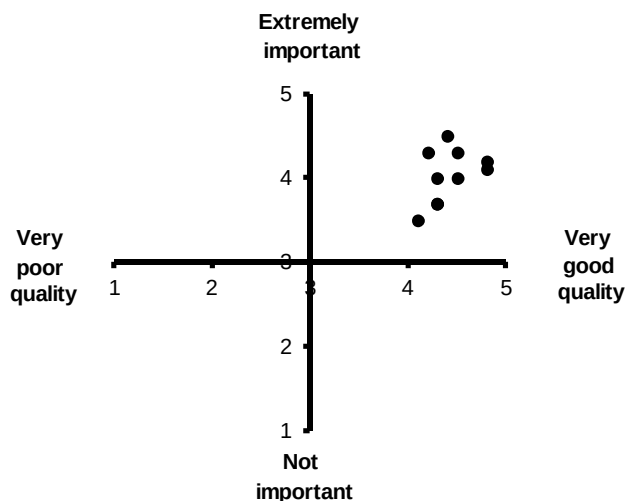


Figure 54. Mean scores of importance and quality ratings of information services and facilities

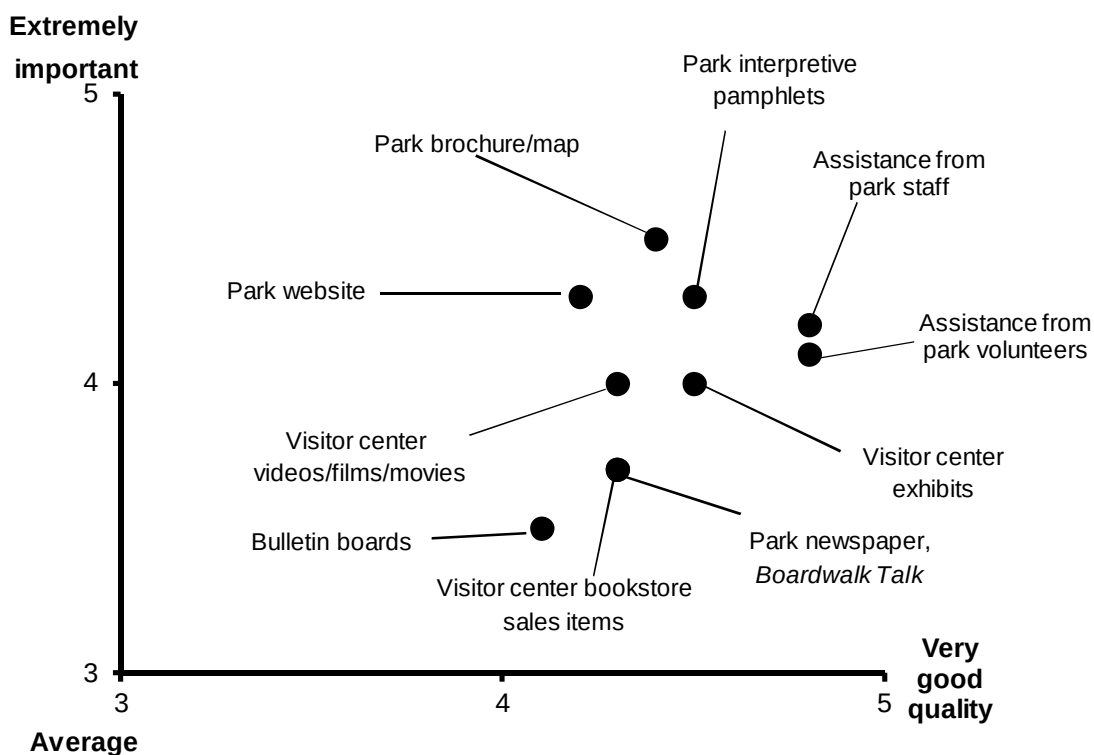


Figure 55. Detail of Figure 54

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor services and facilities used

Question 17a

Please indicate all of the visitor services and facilities that you or your personal group used at Congaree NP during this visit.

Results

- As shown in Figure 56, the most common visitor services and facilities used by visitor groups were:

90% Restrooms
86% Parking areas
85% Boardwalks

- The least used service/facility was:

1% Backcountry camping

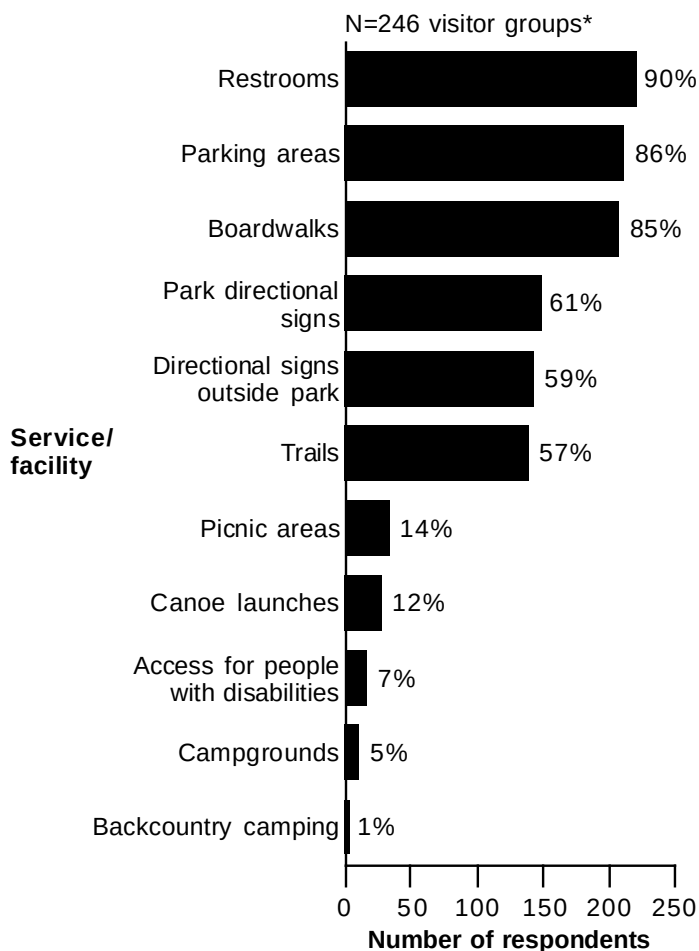


Figure 56. Visitor services and facilities used

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Importance ratings of visitor services and facilities

Question 17b

For only those services and facilities that you or your personal group used, please rate their importance to your visit from 1-5.

- 1=Not important
- 2=Somewhat important
- 3=Moderately important
- 4=Very important
- 5=Extremely important

Results

- Figure 57 shows the combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of visitor services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.

- The visitor services and facilities receiving the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings were:

- 96% Trails
- 90% Restrooms
- 87% Park directional signs
- 86% Boardwalks

- Table 16 shows the importance ratings of each service and facility.

- The services/facilities receiving the highest “not important” ratings that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups were:

- 2% Boardwalks
- 2% Parking areas

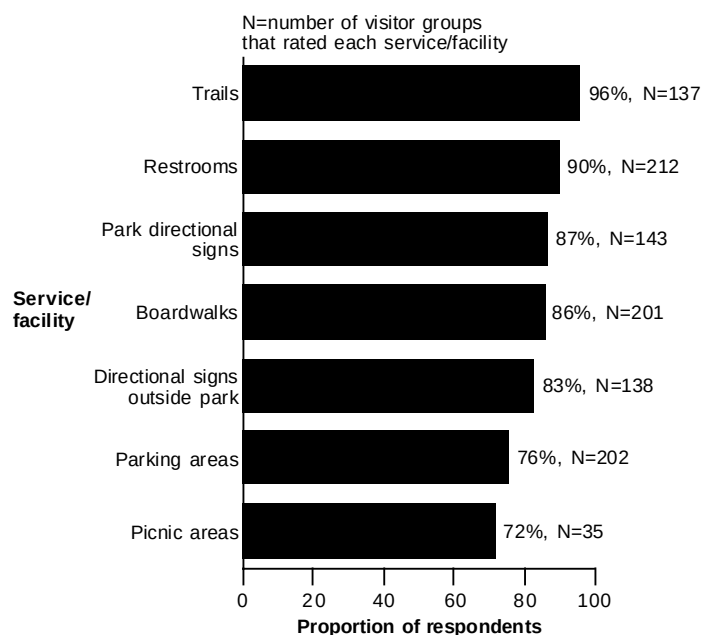


Figure 57. Combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of visitor services and facilities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 16. Importance ratings of visitor services and facilities
(N=number of visitor groups that rated each service and facility)

Service/facility	N	Rating (%)*				
		Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Access for people with disabilities - CAUTION!	17	0	0	6	24	71
Backcountry camping - CAUTION!	3	0	0	0	100	0
Boardwalks	201	2	1	11	30	56
Campgrounds - CAUTION!	12	0	8	17	25	50
Canoe launches - CAUTION!	29	0	0	14	41	45
Directional signs outside of park	138	1	4	13	24	59
Park directional signs	143	0	1	12	32	55
Parking areas	202	2	3	19	38	38
Picnic areas	35	0	3	26	43	29
Restrooms	212	0	1	8	22	68
Trails	137	0	1	3	28	68

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Quality ratings of visitor services and facilities

Question 17c

For only those services and facilities that you or your personal group used, please rate their quality from 1-5.

- 1=Very poor
- 2=Poor
- 3=Average
- 4=Good
- 5=Very good

Results

- Figure 58 shows the combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings of visitor services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.
- The services and facilities receiving the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings were:

- 97% Boardwalks
- 96% Trails
- 96% Restrooms

- Table 17 shows the quality ratings of each service and facility.
- The service/facility receiving the highest “very poor” rating that was rated by 30 or more visitor groups was:

- 4% Directional signs outside park

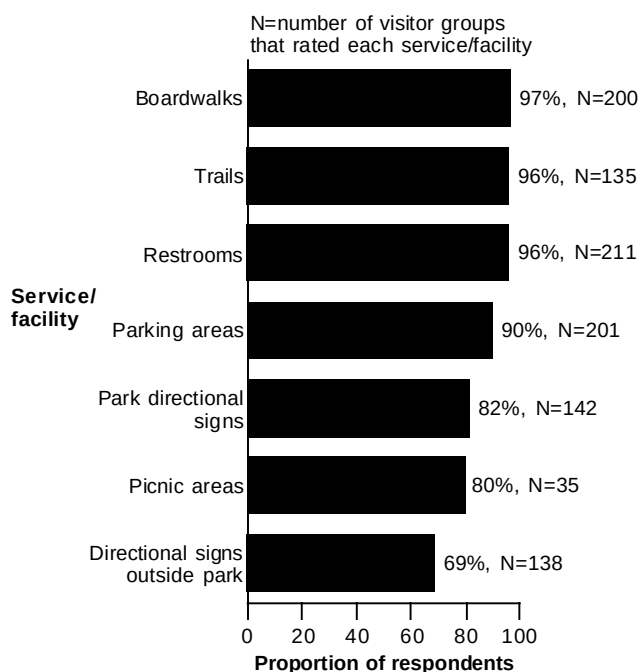


Figure 58. Combined proportions of “very good” and “good” ratings of visitor services and facilities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 17. Quality ratings of visitor services and facilities
(N=number of visitor groups that rated each service and facility)

Service/facility	N	Rating (%)*				
		Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very good
Access for people with disabilities - CAUTION!	17	0	0	6	24	71
Backcountry camping - CAUTION!	3	0	0	0	100	0
Boardwalks	200	0	0	4	22	75
Campgrounds - CAUTION!	11	0	9	18	36	36
Canoe launches - CAUTION!	28	0	14	32	14	39
Directional signs outside of park	138	4	8	19	33	36
Park directional signs	142	1	3	15	35	47
Parking areas	201	0	1	8	26	64
Picnic areas	35	0	3	17	29	51
Restrooms	211	0	<1	4	24	72
Trails	135	0	1	3	30	66

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Mean scores of importance and quality ratings of visitor services and facilities

- Figures 59 and 60 show the mean scores of importance and quality ratings of visitor services and facilities that were rated by 30 or more visitor groups.
- All visitor services and facilities were rated above average.

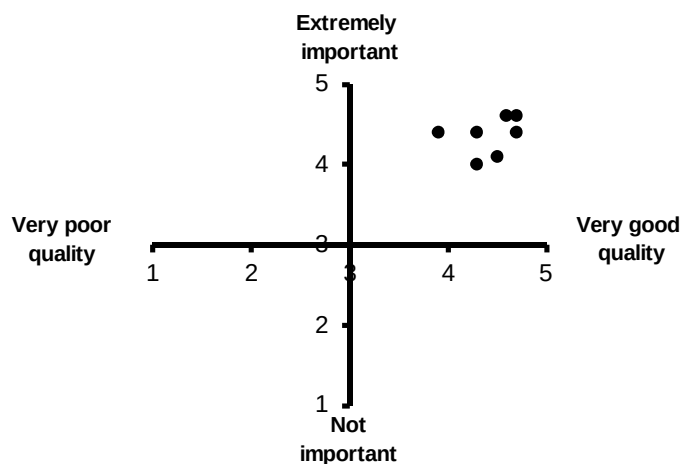


Figure 59. Mean scores of importance and quality of visitor services and facilities

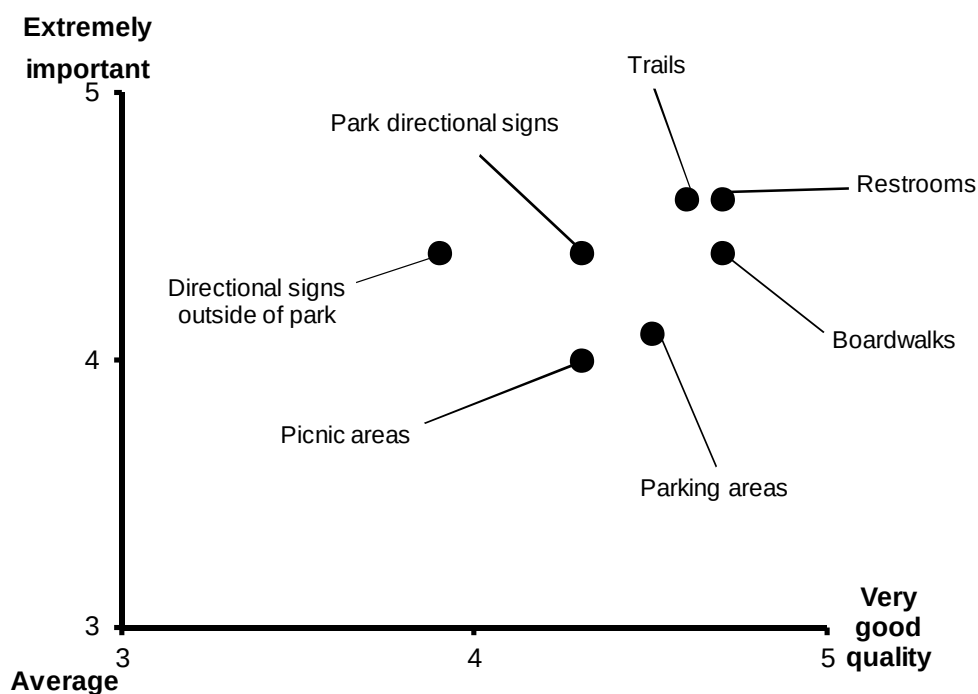


Figure 60. Detail of Figure 59

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Importance of protecting park resources and attributes

Question 14

It is the National Park Service's responsibility to protect Congaree NP natural, scenic, and cultural resources while at the same time providing for public enjoyment. How important is protection of the following resources/attributes in the park to you and your personal group?

- 1=Not important
- 2=Somewhat important
- 3=Moderately important
- 4=Very important
- 5=Extremely important

Results

- As shown in Figure 61, the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park resources and attributes included:

95% Clean water
91% Native wildlife
91% Clean air

- Table 18 shows the importance ratings of each resource/attribute
- The resource/attribute receiving the highest “not important” rating was:
7% Clear night sky

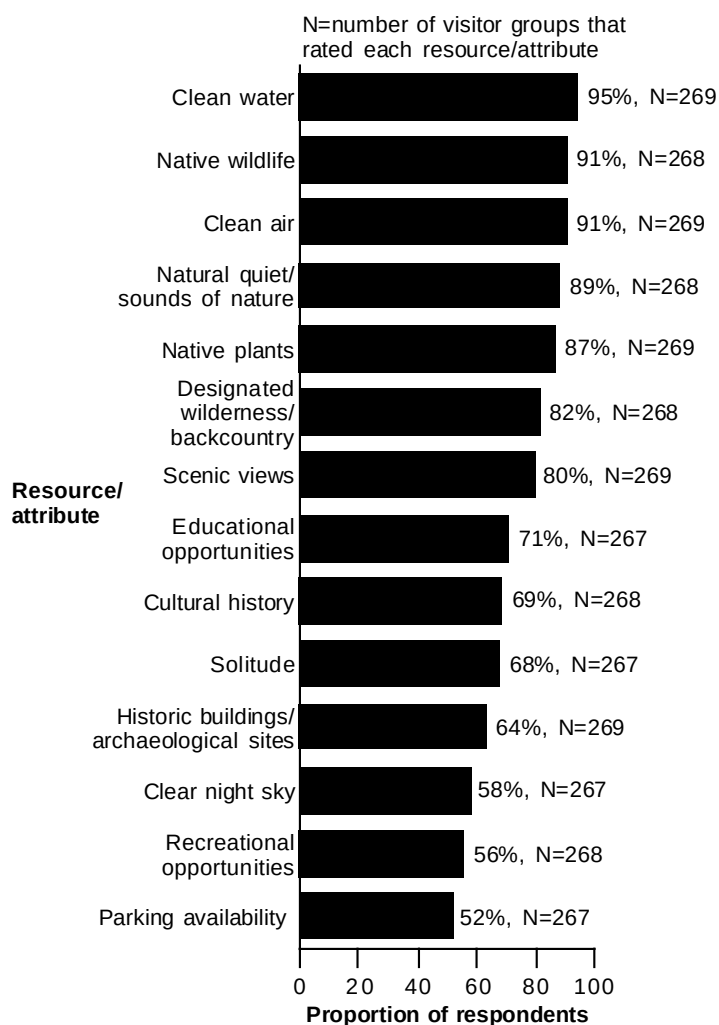


Figure 61. Combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings of protecting park resources and attributes

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Table 18. Visitor rating of importance of protecting park resources and attributes
(N=number of visitors that rated each resource/attribute)

Resource/attribute	N	Rating (%)*				
		Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Clean air (visibility)	269	1	1	6	39	52
Clean water	269	0	1	4	35	60
Clear night sky (star gazing)	267	7	9	26	30	28
Cultural history (photographs/artifacts/oral histories)	268	1	4	27	41	28
Designated wilderness/backcountry	268	1	5	12	36	46
Educational opportunities	267	1	8	20	40	31
Historic buildings/archeological sites	269	2	6	28	35	29
Native plants	269	0	3	11	39	48
Native wildlife	268	0	1	8	37	54
Natural quiet/sounds of nature	268	0	1	10	35	54
Parking availability	267	3	13	31	39	13
Recreational opportunities	268	2	15	27	36	20
Scenic views	269	1	3	16	45	35
Solitude	267	2	9	22	36	32

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Elements that affected park experience

Question 29

Please indicate how the following elements may have affected you and your personal group's park experience during this visit to Congaree NP?

Results

- 32% of visitor groups experienced airplane noise, and of those, 28% felt it detracted from their park experience.
- 78% of visitor groups experienced small numbers of visitors on trails, of which 34% felt this added to their park experience.

- Other elements that detracted from visitors' experiences included:

Chiggers
Exotic plants/fire ants
Extremely hot weather
Litter on boardwalks
Unspecific signage about dogs on trails
Slippery boardwalks
Spiders and spider webs on trail
Storm that canceled canoe trip
Trail numbering - boardwalk

Table 19. Effects of different elements on the park experience

(N=number of visitors that rated each element)

n_1 = number of visitor groups that rated each element

n_2 = number of visitor groups that did not experience each element)

Element	Total N	Rating (%)*				Did not experience	
		n_1	Detracted from	No effect	Added to	n_2	% of total
Airplane noise	266	85	28	68	4	181	68
Automobile noise	265	65	8	90	<1	200	75
Gunshots from neighboring lands	265	42	12	86	2	223	84
Noise from park staff activities	265	58	9	90	2	207	78
Train noise	266	43	7	91	2	223	84
Other visitors' activities	268	178	12	78	10	90	34
Small number of visitors on trails	268	210	3	63	34	58	22
Large number of visitors on trails	263	59	14	85	<1	204	78
Small number of visitors canoeing/kayaking	262	56	4	75	5	206	79
Large number of visitors canoeing/kayaking	262	35	17	80	3	227	87
Impact of wild pigs	262	66	18	47	35	196	75
Other	98	34	32	21	47	64	65

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Expenditures

Total expenditures inside and outside the park

Question 26

For you and your personal group, please estimate all expenditures for the items listed below for this visit to Congaree NP and the surrounding area (within 1-hour drive of the park).

Results

- 65% of visitor groups spent \$1-\$200 (see Figure 62).
- 12% spent \$201-\$400.
- The average visitor group expenditure was \$221.
- The median group expenditure (50% of groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$50.
- The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$98.
- As shown in Figure 63, the largest proportions of total expenditures inside and outside the park were:
 - 32% Lodges, hotels, motels, cabins, B&B, etc.
 - 20% Gas and oil
 - 20% Restaurants and bars
 - 10% All other purchases

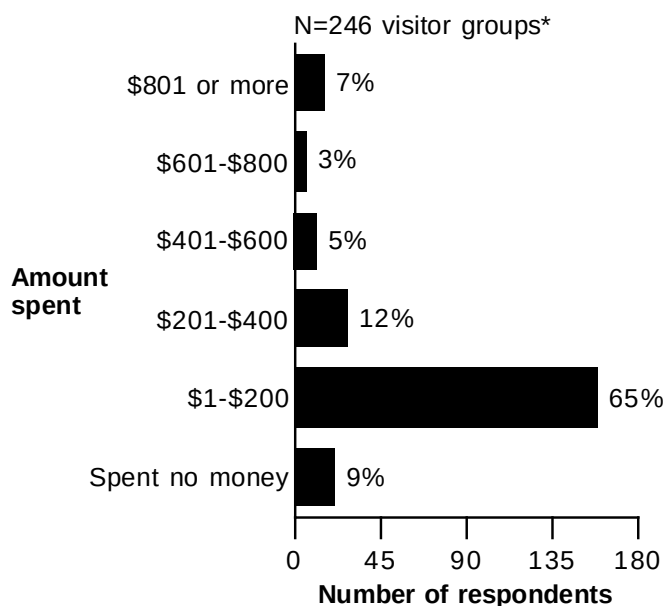


Figure 62. Total expenditures inside and outside the park

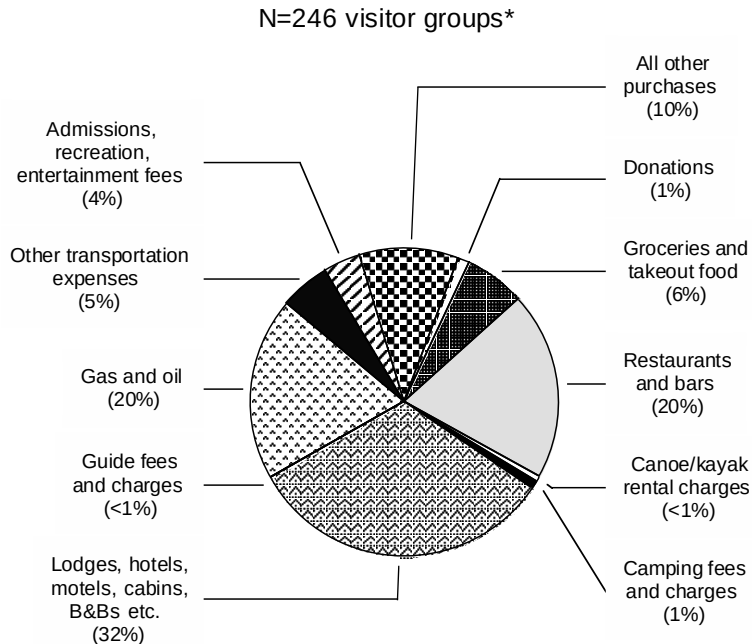


Figure 63. Proportions of total expenditures inside and outside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Number of adults covered by expenditures

Question 26c

How many adults (18 years or older) do these expenses cover?

Results

- 56% of visitor groups had 2 adults covered by expenditures (see Figure 64).
- 22% had 1 adult covered by expenditures.

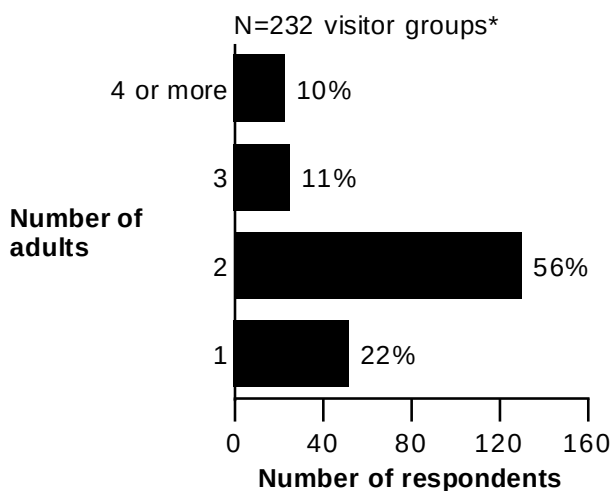


Figure 64. Number of adults covered by expenditures

Number of children covered by expenditures

Question 26c

How many children (under 18 years) do these expenses cover?

Results

- 61% of visitor groups had no children covered by expenditures (see Figure 65).

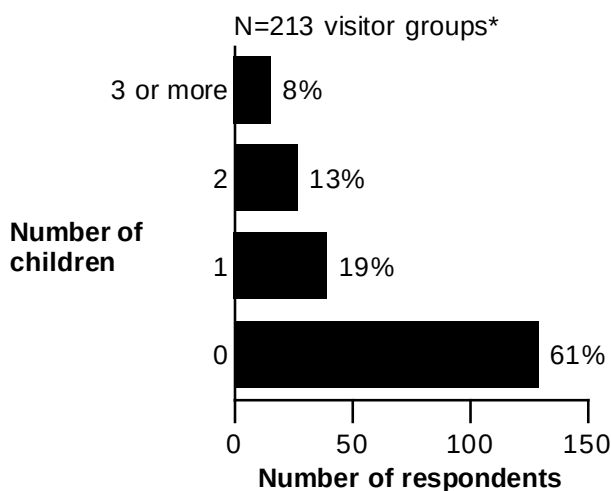


Figure 65. Number of children covered by expenditures

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Expenditures inside the park

Question 26a

Please list your personal group's total expenditures inside Congaree NP.

Results

- 49% of visitor groups spent \$1-\$25 (see Figure 66).
- 36% spent no money inside the park.
- The average visitor group expenditure inside the park was \$14.
- The median group expenditure (50% groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$5.
- The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$10.
- As shown in Figure 67, the largest proportion of total expenditures inside the park was:

81% All other purchases

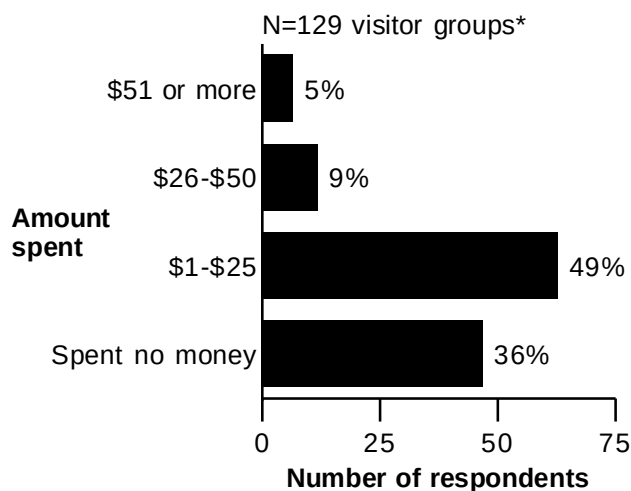


Figure 66. Total expenditures inside the park

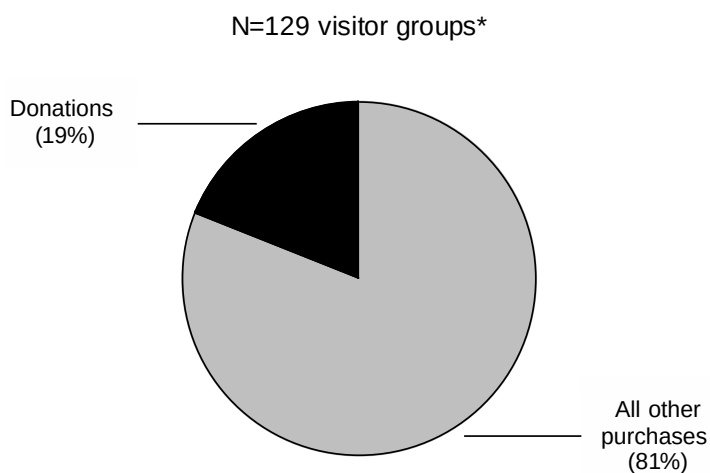


Figure 67. Proportions of total expenditures inside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

All other purchases (souvenirs, film, books, sporting goods, clothing, etc.)

- 44% of visitor groups spent no money on other purchases inside the park (see Figure 68).
- 25% spent \$1-\$10.

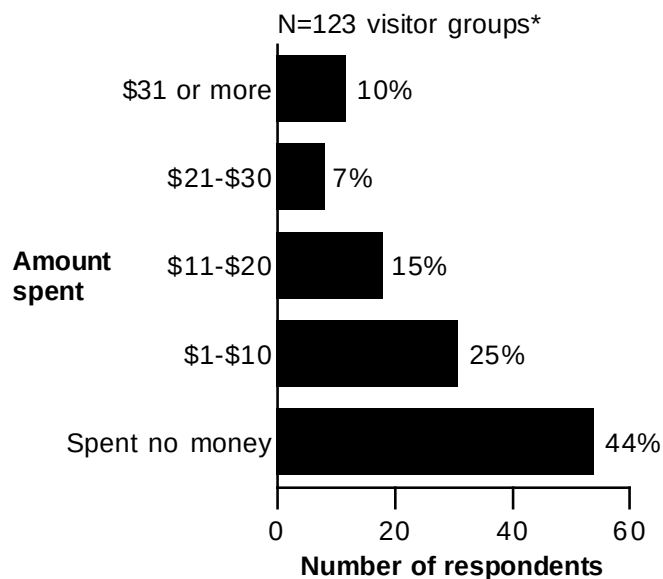


Figure 68. Expenditures for all other purchases inside the park

Donations

- 74% of visitor groups spent no money on donations inside the park (see Figure 69).
- 23% spent \$1-\$10.

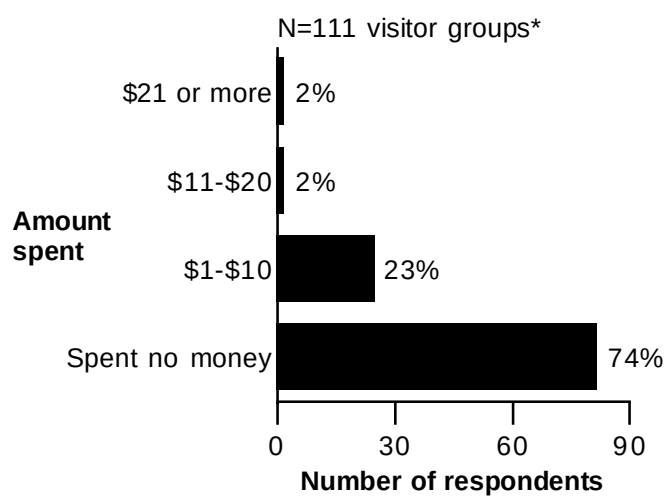


Figure 69. Expenditures for donations inside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Expenditures outside the park

Question 26b

Please list your group's total expenditures in the surrounding area outside the park (within 1-hour drive of park).

Results

- 61% of visitor groups spent \$1-\$200 (see Figure 70).
- 15% spent \$401 or more.
- The average visitor group expenditure outside the park was \$220.
- The median group expenditure (50% groups spent more and 50% of groups spent less) was \$48.
- The average total expenditure per person (per capita) was \$110.
- As shown in Figure 71, the largest proportions of total expenditures outside the park were:

33% Lodges, hotels, motels, cabins, B&B, etc.
20% Gas and oil
20% Restaurants and bars

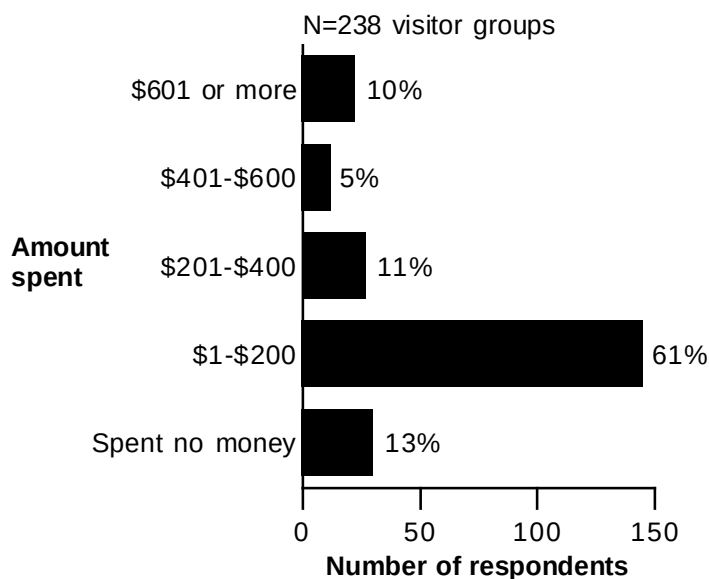


Figure 70. Total expenditures outside the park within a 1-hour drive

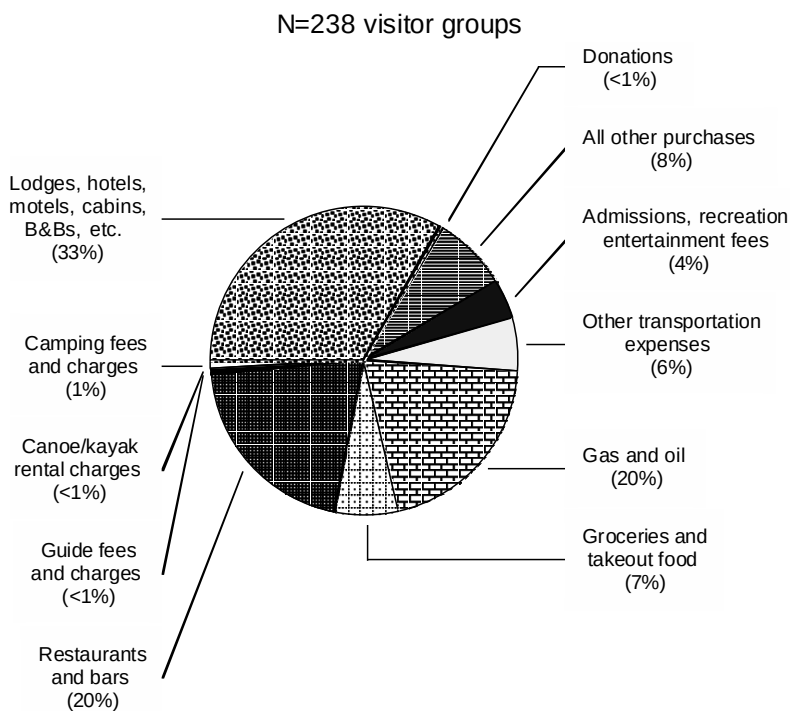


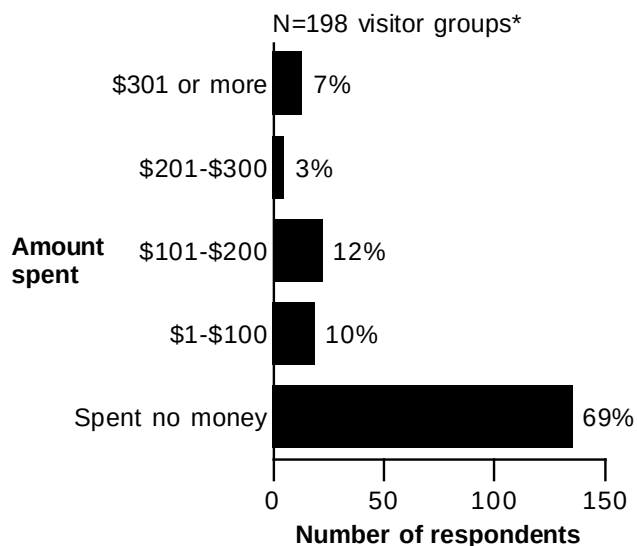
Figure 71. Proportions of total expenditures outside the park within a 1-hour drive

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

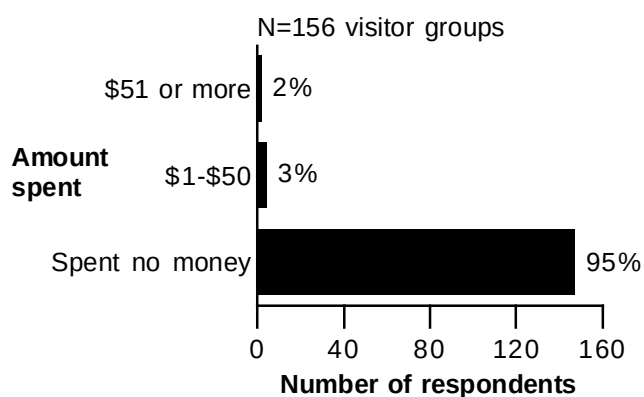
**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Lodges, hotels, motels, cabins, B&B, etc.

- 69% of visitor groups spent no money on lodging outside the park (see Figure 72).
- 22% spent \$1-\$200.

**Figure 72.** Expenditures for lodging outside the parkCamping fees and charges

- 95% of visitor groups spent no money on camping fees and charges outside the park (see Figure 73).

**Figure 73.** Expenditures for camping fees and charges outside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Canoe/kayak rental charges

- 98% of visitor groups spent no money on canoe/kayak rental charges outside the park (see Figure 74).

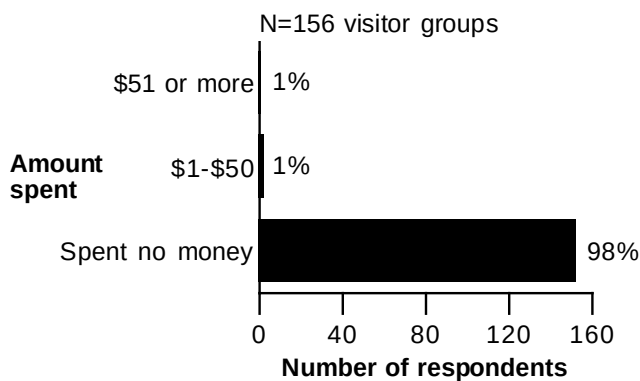


Figure 74. Expenditures for canoe/kayak rental charges outside the park

Guide fees and charges

- 99% of visitor groups spent no money on guide fees and charges outside the park (see Figure 75).

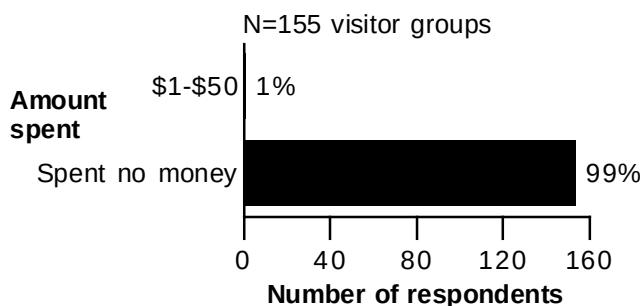


Figure 75. Expenditures for guide fees and charges outside the park

Restaurants and bars

- 45% of visitor groups spent no money on restaurants and bars outside the park (see Figure 76).
- 34% spent \$1-\$50.

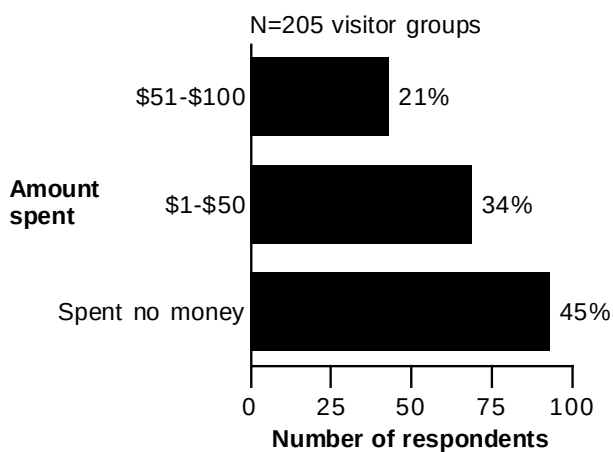


Figure 76. Expenditures for restaurants and bars outside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Groceries and takeout food

- 57% of visitor groups spent no money on groceries and takeout food outside the park (see Figure 77).
- 33% spent \$1-\$50.

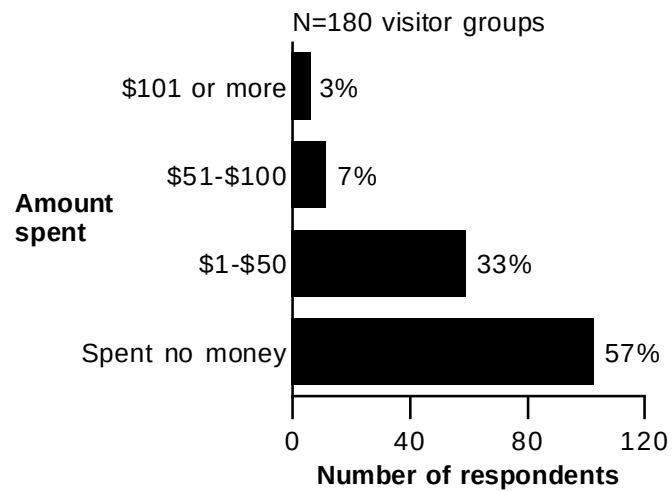


Figure 77. Expenditures for groceries and takeout food outside the park

Gas and oil (auto, RV, boat, etc.)

- 59% of visitor groups spent \$1-\$50 on gas and oil outside the park (see Figure 78).
- 20% spent no money.

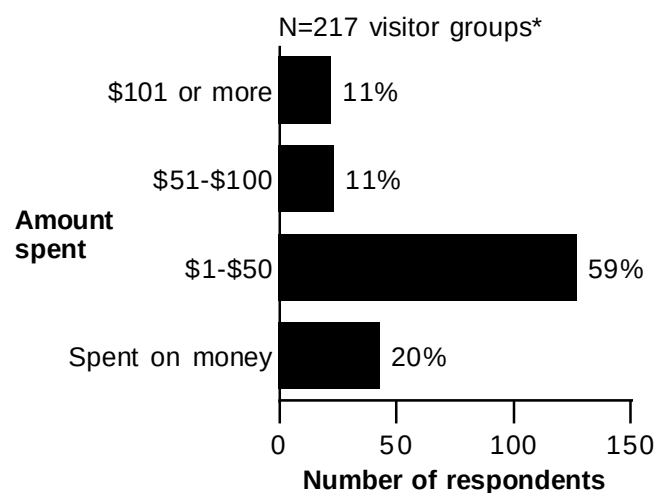


Figure 78. Expenditures for gas and oil outside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Other transportation (rental cars, taxis, auto repairs, but NOT airfare)

- 90% of visitor groups spent no money on other transportation outside the park (see Figure 79).

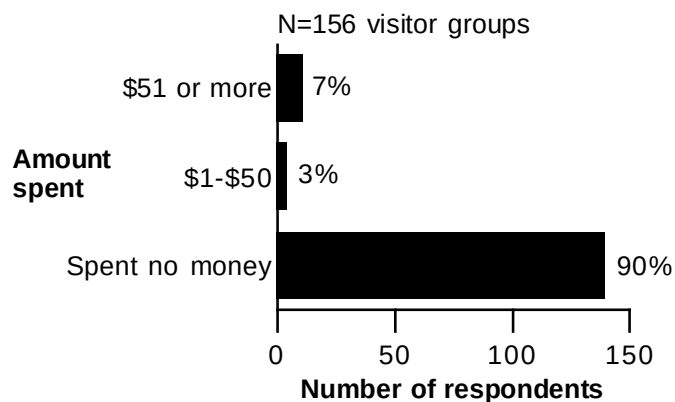


Figure 79. Expenditures for other transportation outside the park

Admission, recreation and entertainment fees

- 86% of visitor groups spent no money on admission, recreation and entertainment fees outside the park (see Figure 80).
- 8% spent \$1-\$50.

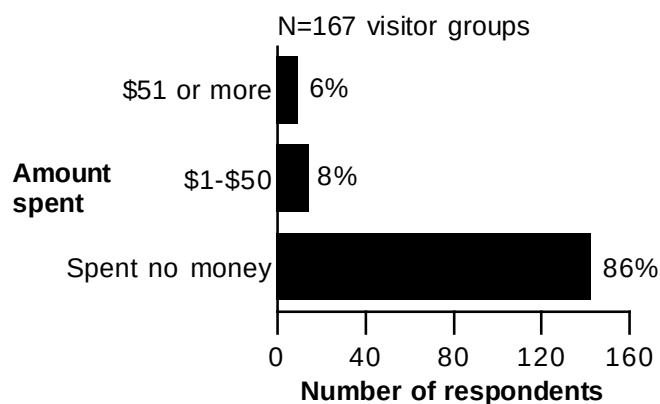


Figure 80. Expenditures for admission, recreation, and entertainment fees outside the park

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

All other purchases (souvenirs, film, books, sporting goods, clothing, etc.)

- 73% of visitor groups spent no money on all other purchases outside the park (see Figure 81).
- 18% spent \$1-\$50.

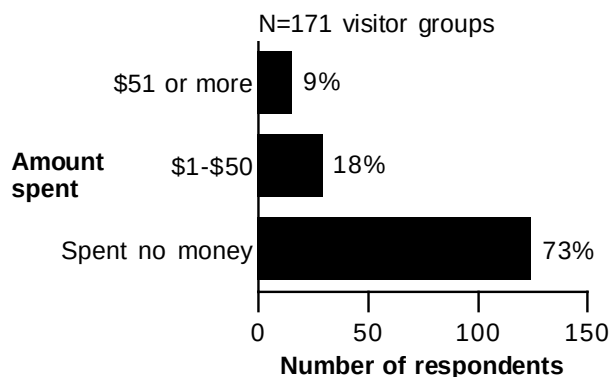


Figure 81. Expenditures for all other purchases outside the park

Donations

- 94% of visitor groups spent no money on donations outside the park (see Figure 82).

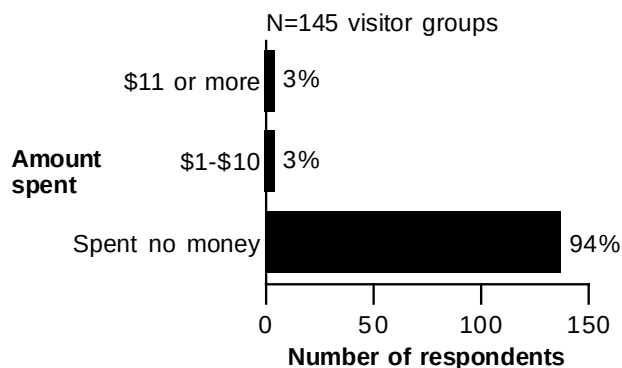


Figure 82. Expenditures for donations outside the park

Unpaid vacation/unpaid time off**Question 25c**

Did your household take any unpaid vacation or take unpaid time off of work to come on this trip?

Results

- 19% of visitor groups took unpaid vacation or unpaid time off work to come on this trip (see Figure 83).

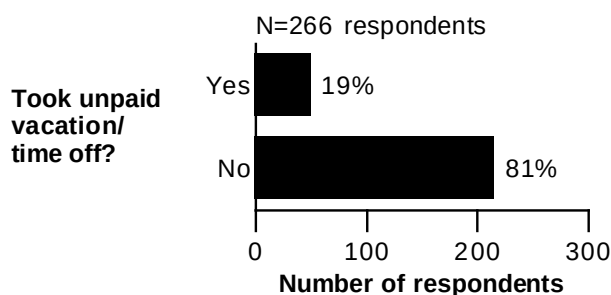


Figure 83. Respondents that took unpaid vacation/time off to make trip

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Preferences for Future Visits

Likelihood of future visit

Question 28

Would you and your group be likely to visit Congaree NP again in the future?

Results

- 79% of visitor groups indicated that they would be likely to visit Congaree again in the future (see Figure 84).
- 15% of visitor groups were not sure about visiting the park in the future.

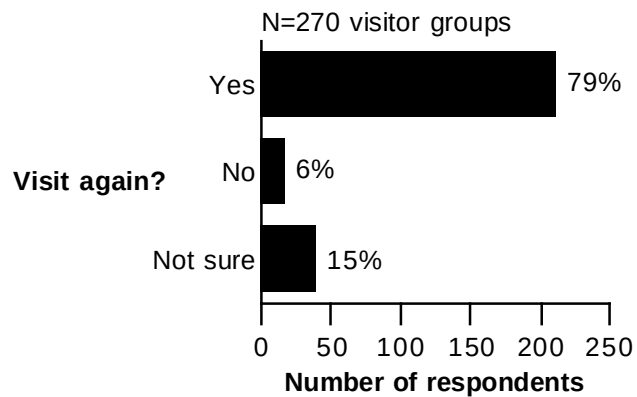


Figure 84. Visitor groups that would likely visit Congaree NP in the future

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Preferred activities and programs on future visits

Question 30

If you were to visit Congaree NP in the future, which types of organized activities and programs would you and your personal group like to have available?

Results

- 83% of visitor groups were interested in attending organized activities or programs on a future visit to the park (see Figure 85).
- As shown in Figure 86, of those visitor groups that wanted organized activities/programs, the most preferred were:

68% Canoeing/ kayaking
48% Owl prowls
45% Night walk/night sky program

- “Other” activities/programs (4%) were:

Backpacking
Cub scouts
Fishing
Hunting license
Interpretive hikes
Science tours
Snake tour
Study of wildlife - snakes
Tree identification

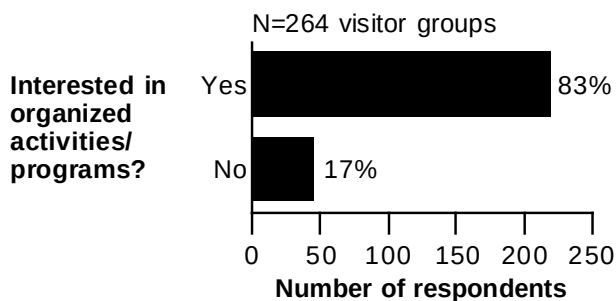


Figure 85. Visitor groups interested in activities and programs

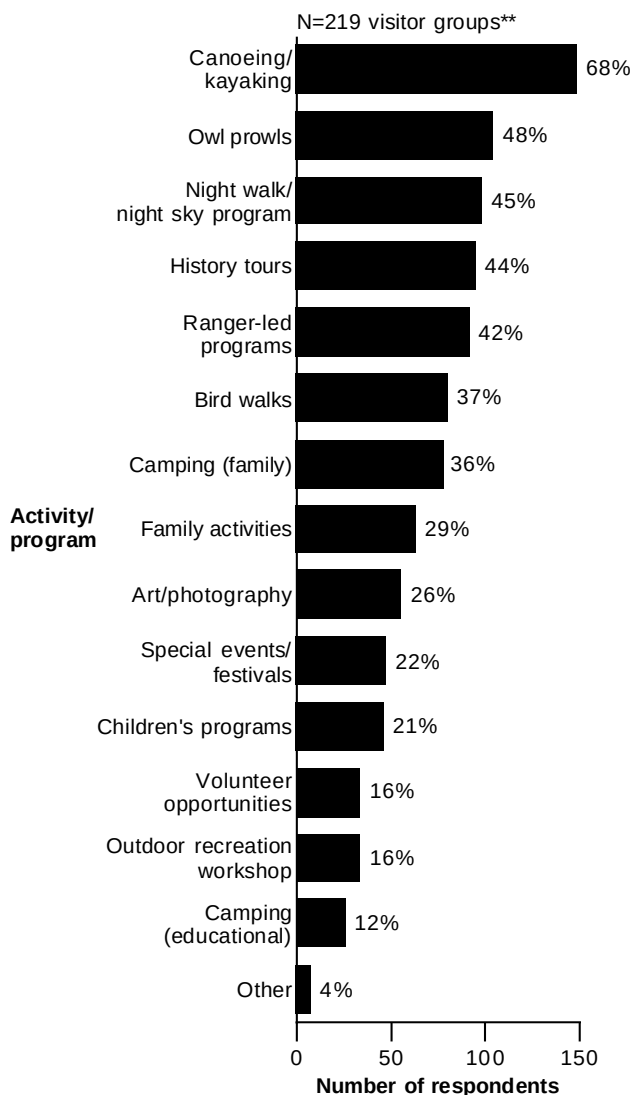


Figure 86. Preferred activities and programs

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Preferred topics to learn on future visits

Question 31

If you were to visit Congaree NP in the future, which subjects would you and your personal group like to learn about?

Results

- 91% of visitor groups were interested in learning about the park on future visits (see Figure 87).

- As shown in Figure 88, of those visitor groups that were interested in learning about the park, the most common subjects were:

77% Plants/animals
64% History
60% Old growth floodplain forest
57% Champion trees

- “Other” subjects (2%) were:

Invasive species
Number of annual visitors
Politics of management
Science of management

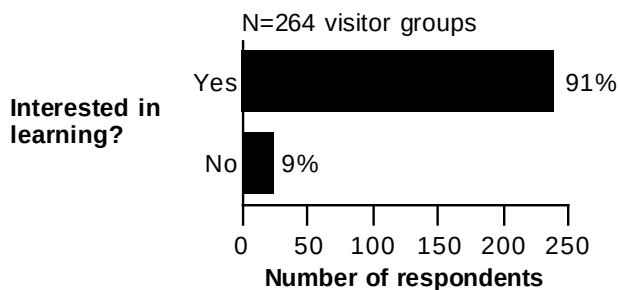


Figure 87. Visitor groups that were interested in learning about the park

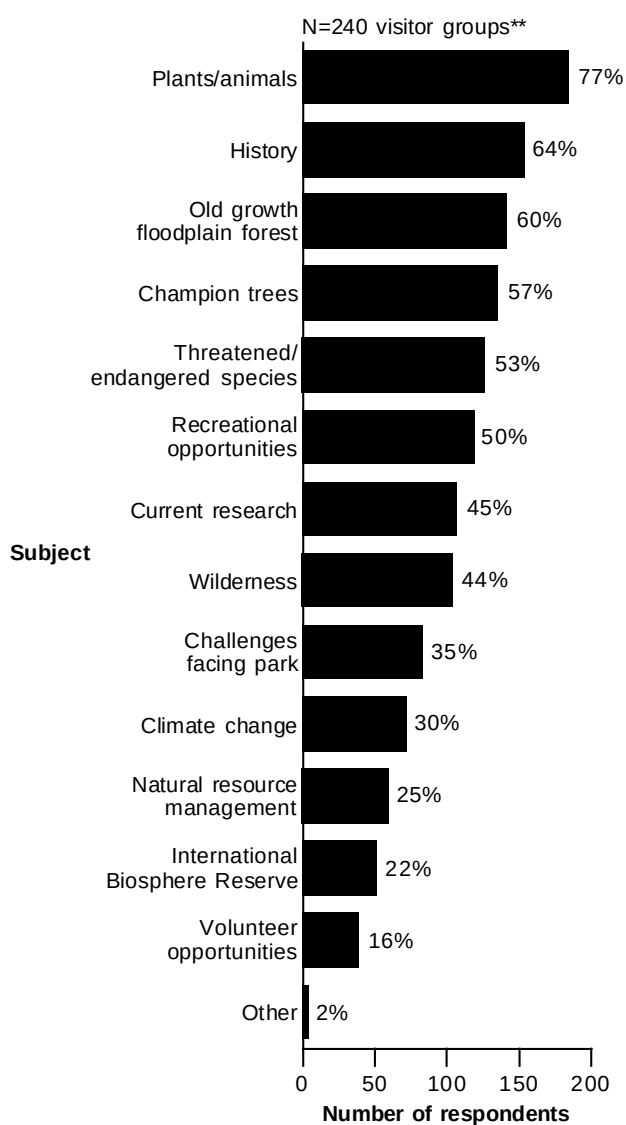


Figure 88. Subjects to learn on future visit

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Overall Quality

Quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities

Question 27

Overall, how would you rate the quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities provided to you and your personal group at Congaree NP during this visit?

Results

- 95% of visitor groups rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities as “very good” or “good” (see Figure 89).
- Less than 1% rated the quality as “poor.”
- No visitor groups rated the quality as “very poor.”

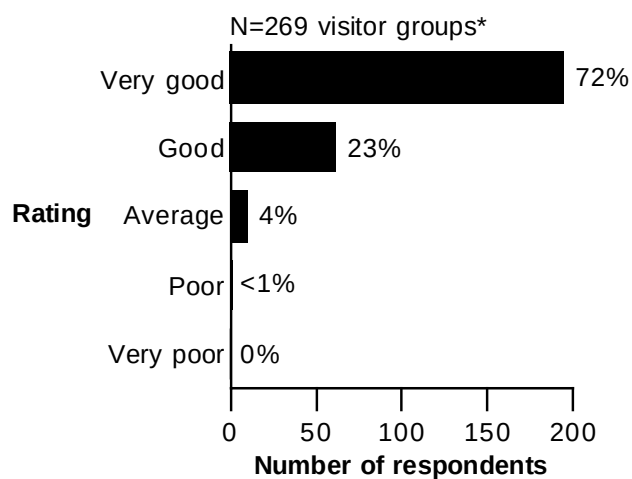


Figure 89. Overall quality rating of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities

*total percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding

**total percentages do not equal 100 because visitors could select more than one answer

Visitor Comment Summaries

What visitors liked most

Question 32a

What did you and your personal group like most about your visit to Congaree NP? (Open-ended)

Results

- 88% of visitor groups (N=240) responded to this question.
- Table 20 shows a summary of visitor comments. The transcribed open-ended comments can be found in the Visitor Comments section.

Table 20. What visitors liked most
(N=383 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL (8%)	
Helpful park staff	9
Knowledgeable/informative park staff	8
Park staff	7
Courteous/friendly park staff	3
Ranger on guided canoe trip	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (10%)	
Guided canoe trip	11
Self-guided boardwalk tour	9
Visitor center	6
Educational value/experience	3
History of park/area	3
Interpretive signs/pamphlet	3
Learning about trees/ecosystem	2
Other comments	3
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (19%)	
Boardwalk	47
Trails	9
Cleanliness	8
Good trails	3
Clean restrooms	2
Other comments	2
POLICY/MANAGEMENT (4%)	
Wilderness	5
Free admission	3
Lack of other people/uncrowded	3
Park is well organized/laid out	2
Other comments	2

Table 20. What visitors liked most (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (27%)	
Giant/tall trees	12
Spiders	11
Trees	9
Wildlife	9
Snakes/lizards	7
Birds	6
Different/interesting types of vegetation	6
Turtles	6
Biodiversity	4
Old growth forest	4
Unaltered nature	4
Environment/ecosystem	3
Unique forest/landscape	3
Wild pigs	3
Cypress trees	2
Diverse ecosystem	2
Natural habitat/surroundings	2
Owls	2
Woodpecker sighting	2
Other comments	5
GENERAL (33%)	
Solitude	22
Quiet	19
Nature	14
Peaceful	11
Beauty	9
Canoeing	7
Hiking	6
Exposure to new/unique ecosystem	4
Family experience	3
Remoteness	3
Scenery	3
Unique place	3
Discovering the park existed	2
Getting away from people/civilization	2
Kayaking	2
Proximity to city/home	2
Other comments	14

What visitors liked least**Question 32b**

What did you and your personal group like least about your visit to Congaree NP? (Open-ended)

Results

- 62% of visitor groups (N=169) responded to this question.
- Table 21 shows a summary of visitor comments. The transcribed open-ended comments can be found in the Visitor Comments section.

Table 21. What visitors liked least
(N=186 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL (3%)	
Intrusive park rangers/police	3
Other comments	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (13%)	
Self-guiding markers hard to see	5
Unable to take guided canoe trip	3
Hauling canoes to launch	2
Poor map	2
Other comments	13
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (12%)	
Slippery boardwalk	3
Fallen trees/debris on trail	2
Kayak/canoe launch site	2
Litter	2
Trail was obscure	2
Other comments	11
POLICY/MANAGEMENT (6%)	
Park is difficult to locate	6
Limited food/drink options	2
Other comments	3
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (16%)	
Did not see much wildlife/animals	8
Mosquitoes/bugs	7
Spiders	5
Chiggers	2
Impact of wild pigs	2
Snakes	2
Other comments	4

Table 21. What visitors liked least (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
GENERAL (50%)	
Hot weather	26
Nothing to dislike	24
Humid weather	12
Lack of time	7
Other visitors' noise/loud talking	7
Hot weather canceled ranger program	3
Spider webs across trail	3
Other comments	11

Significance of the park

Question 33

Congaree NP was established because of its significance to the nation. In your opinion, what is the national significance of this park? (Open-ended)

Results

- 76% of visitor groups (N=207) responded to this question.
- Table 22 shows a summary of visitor comments. The transcribed comments can be found in the Visitor Comments section.

Table 22. Significance of the park
(N=260 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Protection/preservation of old growth forest	23
Old growth forest	21
Unique habitat/ecosystem	18
Champion trees	11
Extremely significant	10
Preservation of natural resources/nature	10
Tall/old trees	10
Protection of floodplain	9
Wildlife	9
Preservation/protection	8
Rare environment/ecosystem	7
Biodiversity	6
Educational value	6
Preservation of a unique forest/ecosystem	6
For future generations	5
Great old swamp	5
Habitat protection	5
Historical significance	5
Largest old growth bottomland forest in North America	4
Old growth bottomland floodplain	4
The forest	4
Uniqueness	4
Untouched nature/land	4
Flood plain forest/ecosystem	3
Francis Marion/Revolutionary War history	3
One of the few remaining bottomlands/old growth forests	3
Preservation/protection of wildlife	3
Protection of wilderness	3
Cypress trees/knees	2
Example of undisturbed nature/wilderness	2
Keep it undeveloped/untouched	2
Large variety of trees/vegetation	2
Need more parks	2
Recreational opportunity	2
Aiding climate change research	1
An area to enjoy that is pure nature	1
Best example of remnant of native ecosystem	1

Table 22. Significance of the park (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
Bird habitat	1
Can teach us how to restore forests	1
Don't know/not sure	1
Ecological significance	1
Ecological studies	1
Ecosystem we are unfamiliar with	1
Exceptional	1
Gnomes	1
International bird habitat	1
Last contiguous wild section of old growth flood plain forest	1
Mangrove forest	1
NPS got it right	1
Old timber for future generations	1
Only national park in South Carolina	1
Opportunity to observe nature	1
Opportunity to view landscape without disturbing it	1
People need to see it	1
Plants	1
Preservation success story near a large urban area	1
Preserve local charms	1
Preserve what others take for granted and destroy	1
Preserves the largest trees east of the Rockies	1
Provides natural absorption of water to prevent flooding	1
Proximity to urban area	1
Refreshing	1
Reminder of the natural gifts we have largely lost	1
Shows delicate balance between trees and marsh	1
So all can experience God's great creation	1
Solitude	1
South Carolina wildlife and history	1
To have been able to save 24,000 acres out of 52 million	1
Unique history and habitat	1
Unique opportunity to walk through a swamp	1
Untouched jewel in the middle of the state	1
Unusual climate	1
Wilderness area with one of the largest forests in the US	1

Planning for the future

Question 34

If you were a manager planning for the future of Congaree National Park, what would you and personal group propose? (Open-ended)

Results

- 61% of visitor groups (N=167) responded to this question.
- Table 23 shows a summary of visitor comments. The transcribed comments can be found in the Visitor Comments section.

Table 23. Planning for the future
(N=217 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL (2%)	
Other comments	4
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (26%)	
More interpretive programs/educational activities	5
Additional guided canoe trips	4
Increase educational opportunities in local communities	3
More cultural/historical interpretation	3
More exhibits	3
Expand gift shop/book selection	2
Expand/improve visitor center	2
More children's educational programs	2
New/updated park movie	2
Other comments	31
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (25%)	
Additional trails	9
Extend the boardwalk	5
Improve/add signage to park	4
RV campground with full hookups	4
Expand/improve campground	3
Improve campground	3
Additional RV sites	2
Clear debris from trails/boardwalk	2
Continue trail maintenance	2
Improve hiking trails	2
Observation/canopy tower	2
Repair/maintain boardwalk	2
Other comments	14

Table 23. Planning for the future (continued)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
POLICY/MANAGEMENT (31%)	
Acquire adjacent buffer areas/expand park boundary	14
Increase awareness of park - advertise	11
Advertise to the local/regional community	6
Advertise/promote the park	4
Canoe/kayak rental and shuttles	3
Continue protection/preservation	3
Keep industry/development away from park	3
Lodging in the park	3
Engage the community to build awareness and support	2
Maintain the wilderness	2
Protect the park	2
Other comments	15
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (6%)	
Remove/control non-native plant/animal species	8
Protect from invasive/non-native plant/animal species	2
Other comments	2
GENERAL (10%)	
Keep it the way it is	6
Keep up the good work	6
Canoeing	4
Canopy/zip line tour	2
Other comments	4

Additional comments**Question 35**

Is there anything else you and your personal group would like to tell us about your visit to Congaree National Park? (Open-ended)

Results

- 57% of visitor groups (N=155) responded to this question.
- Table 24 shows a summary of visitor comments. The transcribed comments can be found in the Visitor Comments section.

Table 24. Additional comments

(N=207 comments; some visitor groups made more than one comment.)

Comment	Number of times mentioned
PERSONNEL (19%)	
Staff is helpful	14
Staff is friendly	10
Enjoyed the staff	9
Staff is knowledgeable/informative	4
Other comments	2
INTERPRETIVE SERVICES (11%)	
Educational experience	6
Enjoyed visitor center exhibits	3
Other comments	13
FACILITIES/MAINTENANCE (9%)	
Enjoyed the boardwalks	2
Improve signage to and from the park	2
Park/facilities are clean	2
Other comments	13
POLICY/MANAGEMENT (4%)	
Glad that the park is free	2
Good use of tax dollars	2
Other comments	5
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (3%)	
Other comments	7
GENERAL (54%)	
Enjoyed visit	58
Will return	13
Love the park	7
Park is a gem/treasure	5
Beautiful park	4
Great job	4
Keep up the good work	4
Thank you	4
Other comments	12

Visitor Comments

This section contains visitor responses to open-ended questions.

Question 32a

What did you and your personal group like most about your visit to Congaree NP? (Open-ended)

- ☐ As always, the uniqueness of it - the bird life, massive trees, otters
- ☐ Awesome spiders
- ☐ Beautiful spot
- ☐ Beautiful, peaceful, clean
- ☐ Beauty of a diverse ecosystem, biodiversity
- ☐ Beauty, quiet, canoeing opportunity
- ☐ Being outdoors in a really unique forest
- ☐ Biodiversity and the interpretive guide for the boardwalk to help explain what we saw
- ☐ Birds and turtle activity
- ☐ Boardwalk
- ☐ Boardwalk
- ☐ Boardwalk
- ☐ Boardwalk
- ☐ Boardwalk
- ☐ Boardwalk
- ☐ Boardwalk and staff assistance
- ☐ Boardwalk and visitor center
- ☐ Boardwalk hike
- ☐ Boardwalk through the swamp/forest
- ☐ Boardwalk trail
- ☐ Boardwalk trail
- ☐ Boardwalk trail
- ☐ Boardwalk trail
- ☐ Boardwalk trail, very quiet and peaceful
- ☐ Boardwalk trails - elevated and low
- ☐ Boardwalk walk
- ☐ Boardwalk with explanation map
- ☐ Boardwalk, bookstore
- ☐ Boardwalk, giant trees
- ☐ Camping, hiking, everything
- ☐ Canoe experience
- ☐ Canoe trail
- ☐ Canoe trip
- ☐ Canoe trip
- ☐ Canoe trip except for having to offload and carry canoes down hill to put in area
- ☐ Canoe trip, talks with ranger greeter
- ☐ Canoeing
- ☐ Canoeing
- ☐ Canoeing

- o Canoeing, kayaking
- o Chance to visit protected wilderness area
- o Clean
- o Cleanliness
- o Close to major city. Total unaltered nature. Excellent ranger/volunteer.
- o Congaree is unique in its narrow focus
- o Connecting with nature
- o Corrine was great as a guide
- o Courteous staff, very knowledgeable. Tried to accommodate and wait out rain.
- o Desolation
- o Different types of vegetation
- o Discovering it existed
- o Diversity of species on trails
- o Diversity of the walk and park, the solitude
- o Elevated boardwalk, ease of use with stroller. We saw a woodpecker - beautiful.
- o Enthusiastic, knowledgeable staff
- o Environment
- o Everything, especially the big spiders
- o Experiencing pristine, old growth forest
- o Exposure to a new ecosystem
- o Extremely clean restrooms
- o Fantastic nature, the beauty of the park, the silence
- o Finding lizards, turtles, a humming bird and an owl along the boardwalk
- o Free access
- o Free admission, beautiful, educational and fun family experience
- o Friendliness of staff. Cleanliness.
- o Friendly
- o Getting away from people
- o Good hiking trails and scenery
- o Great experience overall
- o Great trails
- o Guided tour, natural canopy we paddled through
- o Helpful national park ranger
- o Helpful staff, neat ecosystem - glad I stopped. Very clean restrooms.
- o Hiking on boardwalk
- o Hiking through this unique environment on well marked trails and meeting enthusiastic park rangers
- o Hiking, bird watchers
- o History of the park/area, trails
- o How nice the lady working was and how clean everything was
- o How safe the boardwalk was for my three year old
- o I enjoyed being out in nature in a natural habitat in the way it should be and away from civilization for a while
- o I enjoyed hiking through the unique environment of the park and even a brush with a cottonmouth was enjoyable
- o I liked being in the park early and experiencing a lot of wildlife without a lot of people

- o Information building
- o Information from the ranger
- o Interesting trees and plants, colorful, large spiders, skinks, hiking
- o Introduction video was very informative. Raised boardwalk was very nice.
- o It is magical
- o It was a fun and inexpensive way to spend time with my family
- o It was a surprise. Did not know it was there. Boardwalks nice.
- o It was clean, the possibility of sighting snakes, lizards
- o It was like no place I've ever been before
- o It's beauty, instructional value, solitude, and wonderfully helpful staff
- o It's close to home, I visit frequently
- o Junior Ranger
- o Kayaking was great, but I am a biologist so I loved seeing the snakes, spiders and life everywhere
- o Knowledgeable and professional guide
- o Landscape unlike any other we have experienced
- o Learning about the age of the trees and the natural flooding cycles
- o Learning about the local environment
- o Loop boardwalk
- o Loved the canoe ride tour
- o Majestic trees
- o Mostly solitude and change from upland pine hammock to bottomlands. Also, birds and butterflies.
- o Natural beauty
- o Natural landscape
- o Natural surroundings
- o Nature
- o Nature
- o Nature
- o Nature
- o Nature
- o Nature, walking, cane trip with ranger
- o Nice boardwalk trail and benches
- o Nice, quiet, clean
- o No camping fees, the peace
- o No noise
- o Old growth forest, competent and friendly staff
- o Openness
- o Opportunity to hike the natural area
- o Opportunity to see park a different way; fulfill school work project at no cost
- o Overall layout and presentation of park
- o Park ranger, solitude, views of the plant and animal life, time shared with family
- o Park was kept and personnel were great
- o Peaceful
- o Peaceful solitude, the opportunity to walk through wetlands without disturbing them
- o Peaceful way of the park, fresh air, amazing trees, spiders

- o Personal attention, self-guided tour
- o Pine Tree how tall they are, wildlife
- o Quiet
- o Quiet trails
- o Quietness
- o Quietness, boardwalk, trees
- o Quite beautiful nature/wildlife
- o Ranger answered questions from our group while we were waiting for storm to pass over. Very knowledgeable, very interesting information. Impressed by their knowledge.
- o Ranger-led canoe trip
- o Ranger-led kayaking
- o Rangers and volunteers very helpful
- o Rangers were so happy we came
- o Rangers were very nice and helpful, especially Kathleen
- o Relaxing near the lake
- o Remote, quiet, beautiful
- o Scenery
- o Seeing a different ecosystem from Denmark
- o Seeing a pileated woodpecker and turtles and skinks
- o Seeing lizards on the boardwalk
- o Seeing plants and trees and birds
- o Seeing the giant trees
- o Seeing the large trees
- o Seeing the woodpecker
- o Seeing turtles and spider
- o Seeing undisturbed nature
- o Seeing wildlife, large trees, learning from staff
- o Self-guided boardwalk tour
- o Serenity
- o Sidewalk
- o Signage and trees and guided walks
- o Silence
- o Solitude
- o Solitude
- o Solitude
- o Solitude
- o Solitude
- o Solitude
- o Solitude
- o Solitude and remote
- o Solitude, being around nature
- o Solitude, insect world
- o Solitude, nature
- o Solitude, sense of being alone in nature
- o Solitude, trails, wildlife, unique flora

- o Sounds and sights of nature
- o Spiders
- o Staff
- o Stepping back in time - refreshing
- o The beauty of the forest and the peace that was found there
- o The big old growth trees and the quiet forest
- o The boardwalk and guide made our experience relaxing and yet wild
- o The boardwalk and helpfulness of staff, based on our limited time at Congaree
- o The boardwalk trail
- o The boardwalk trail with brochure pointing out points of interest
- o The boardwalk walk through the old growth flood plain forest and the historical moonshine still
- o The boardwalk walking path
- o The boardwalk was terrific
- o The boardwalk. The staff were very nice and informative.
- o The boardwalks and scenery with nature
- o The canoe tour was awesome
- o The cypress trees and "knees"
- o The different areas
- o The eco-system there and it's history; learning of and seeing the campsites and river activities
- o The free, ranger-led canoe trip
- o The hiking trails
- o The huge trees and insects - spiders. It was really quiet. Visitor center.
- o The many unique biological scenes
- o The old growth trees are magnificent
- o The park ranger was a great guy. Very helpful and very attractive.
- o The park rangers were very knowledgeable
- o The peace and quietness. Very, very few people - maybe half a dozen.
- o The pine wilderness and the untouched woods
- o The quality of the boardwalk (construction)
- o The quiet and the trees
- o The quiet walk and the beautiful green cypress trees
- o The seclusion, generous campsite, very positive and helpful staff
- o The self-guided boardwalk tour
- o The serenity of the boardwalk. It was very peaceful.
- o The staff was very informative
- o The swamp, the wildlife - boars, spiders, lizards
- o The trees
- o The variety of hikes/walks. Excellent informational signs/pamphlets. Quiet and relative solitude. Incredible tree species. Sounds of bird life.
- o The various animals we saw, the awesome trees, the wonderful sounds of nature and most of all the solitude
- o The well maintained boardwalks
- o The wilderness, we felt nature all around us and the walk (self-guided came in hand) was beautiful
- o To see animals, trees, and plants on the walk
- o Trails and walks

- o Trails, wildlife
- o Tranquility, seeing wildlife
- o Trees and plants
- o Trees, owls photographic opportunities. The forest and wildlife.
- o Trees, spiders
- o Trees, turtles, thunder/lightning, raw
- o Trying something new and being in nature
- o Turtles, spiders, wilderness
- o Unspoiled solitude
- o Unusual forest; nice, quiet atmosphere
- o Vegetational landscape
- o Very different plants and animals than we see in Ohio
- o Viewing several wild pigs
- o Visitor center is blended nicely into the forest; boardwalk was easy to walk
- o Visitor center, trails
- o Walking along the boardwalk trail and talking with the rangers about other opportunities
- o Walking the boardwalk
- o Walking the boardwalk
- o Walking trail
- o Walkways
- o We liked the quietness and ability to walk at our leisure and sit and observe. We saw a doe and a yearling and we stood watching each other. So peaceful.
- o We were there early and it was not crowded - very peaceful
- o Welcome center
- o Well organized
- o Wild pigs - we saw eight and that was new for us
- o Wildlife - turtles at Weston Lake
- o Wonderful boardwalk hike

Question 32b

What did you and your personal group like least about your visit to Congaree NP? (Open-ended)

- o Bad map and trail markings
- o Being harassed by the park ranger. We were asked if we had been drinking. We were not loud or obnoxious. We asked him directions on the boardwalk. He waited in the parking lot for us for two hours and administered several tests, including a breathalyzer. Of course, I passed. He then called for back up and followed us out.
- o Boardwalk slippery
- o Bugs
- o Camping
- o Chatty persons in bird/lark tour loud and distracting
- o Chiggers
- o Chiggers, trail sometimes obscure, fallen trees on trail, no good places to stop and rest on trail
- o Clearer trails
- o Could do better identifying the numbered stops on the boardwalk tour. We missed several, hard to see.
- o Didn't see any animals
- o Difficult to locate
- o Difficulty in getting there
- o Distance from restroom
- o Don't have an answer - nothing
- o Everything was fine
- o Extreme heat required cancellation of ranger (outdoor) program
- o Facilities were closing down. We came at the end of the day.
- o Failed to see river otters
- o Four employees/volunteers talking together inside visitor center did not offer greeting upon entrance
- o Getting there. More signs might help just because it is such a rural area.
- o Hauling canoes to waterfront and back to truck
- o Having to carry canoes. Too much talking from several groups on canoe trip. Couldn't hear nature noises.
- o Heat
- o Heat
- o Heat
- o Heat
- o Heat
- o Heat
- o Heat
- o Heat - August, 95 degrees
- o Heat - but there is nothing you can do about that
- o Heat and humidity
- o Heat and humidity, spiders
- o Heat and humidity, the sights tend to get old
- o Heat and mosquitoes
- o Honestly, the spider webs across the Oak Ridge Trail, but it was nice to have the trail to myself
- o Hot

- o Hot and sticky
- o Hot weather
- o Hot weather
- o How hot it was
- o Humid weather
- o Humidity
- o Humidity
- o Humidity
- o Humidity
- o Humidity
- o Humidity
- o Humidity - not your fault
- o Humidity, but that's part of nature. Beautiful park.
- o Humidity, heat
- o I came unprepared for the hot temperature
- o I didn't find much to complain of, but perhaps more easily accessible campsites
- o I didn't see as many wild animals as I hoped for, but it was late morning when I hiked
- o I don't feel like I learned much about the wildlife in the forest
- o I think there should be more history information in visitor center about the area
- o I was alone and therefore felt unsafe
- o Impact of wild pigs, noise of other visitors
- o Inability to see more of the park by car
- o Intrusive and seemingly unnecessary park police presence, especially in campground - treated people as suspects, not visitors
- o Invasive plants (e.g. stilt grass) and animals (hogs)
- o It was very hot and humid. Ranger-guided tour was cancelled.
- o Kayak launch site
- o Knuckle head kids
- o Lack of distance signs on boardwalk. I'm handicapped and walked to where loops meet. The only sign was "no dogs."
- o Lack of presence of park rangers on trails
- o Lack of space to park RV
- o Launching canoes - uncertain what role we were to do
- o Law enforcement being sneaky and walking into your campsite like they owned it
- o Leaving
- o Liked it all
- o Liked it all
- o Limited drinks/snacks in center
- o Limited information in exhibits at visitor center
- o Litter
- o Loud group of summer camp kids and indistinct signage on trail regarding dogs
- o Loud visitors at night
- o Loved it
- o Map confusion on water
- o Missed the canoe trip due to storm

- o Missing canoe tour because of personal time restraints
- o Mosquitoes
- o Mosquitoes
- o Mosquitoes
- o No changes in elevation
- o No signs marking the way to the park from interstate
- o No time to explore
- o No vehicle access to river. No RV campground.
- o Not able to see lake clearly
- o Not being able to take a canoe tour
- o Not enough ranger-led trips/talks/programs
- o Not enough time spent
- o Not enough time to do more
- o Not much wildlife
- o Not seeing wild pigs
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing
- o Nothing - everything was great
- o Nothing - it was all pretty cool
- o Nothing - love the park
- o Nothing specific
- o Nothing, but not enough time
- o Nothing, we love the Congaree
- o Numbers for self-guided tour, hard to find, white paint might make them show up
- o Only one bathroom at the Visitor Center
- o Other people being loud
- o Other than trail, it didn't offer very much
- o Our feet hurt by the end
- o Outdated video
- o Path from canoe parking to launch; expected more information "guided tour"
- o People falling into water when getting out of canoe along slippery bank adjacent to deep water
- o Pig damage, dangerously slippery boardwalk - and not particularly wet or muddy
- o Poison ivy and mosquitoes
- o Poor park literature
- o Poor selection in gift shop; hard to get feel for park in short time period
- o Seeing limited wildlife - no snakes or deer seen
- o Signs

- o Small size of park
- o Snakes
- o Snakes!
- o Solitude
- o Some trail numbers were missed, location changed - some high - others low
- o Some trash left by people and airplane noise overhead
- o Spiders
- o Spiders
- o Spiders
- o Spiders and spider nets crossing the trail
- o Temperature
- o Temperature too hot and humid
- o The apparent impact of a drought - nothing the immediate "staff" could do anything about
- o The boardwalk was wet and slippery
- o The bugs
- o The extreme heat and humidity, but we know we chose a day that would be hot and humid
- o The heat and humidity. We need to visit again in the fall.
- o The heat at 102 degrees
- o The heat while we were there. Spider webs from few hikers.
- o The heat. Not being able to take a guided canoe tour.
- o The humidity under the tree canopy
- o The humidity, but that can't be changed
- o The landmarks numbers need to be noticed by painting trim in red
- o The markers identifying features on the boardwalk need to be easier to find
- o The poor signage trying to get there
- o The terrible condition of the Kingsnake Trail. We got lost it was in such disrepair.
- o There were no alligators
- o This time was great, but in the past it has been loud on boardwalk with people
- o Too many canoers on tour
- o Too short
- o Visitors talking and not realizing how loud they are in the forest
- o We did not allot enough time to fully appreciate the park
- o We didn't get to go canoeing
- o We disliked the heat
- o We enjoyed everything about the visit
- o We felt the Junior Ranger books were a little too heavy even for 10 year old children
- o We left three kids home for canoe trip as we could only reserve one, then found out multiple no shows. Very irritating.
- o We liked everything
- o We liked everything
- o We wondered about lack of food facilities, or at least food vending machines at welcome center
- o We wouldn't have found the NP without our GPS
- o Weren't able to see all of the wildlife in our brief visit, but that's no fault of the park
- o When we entered the park we weren't sure if we actually entered; it was desolate
- o Without flood, not a lot to see

Question 33

Congaree NP was established because of its significance to the nation. In your opinion, what is the national significance of this park? (Open-ended)

- o A good example of what we should treasure for the future
- o A preserved natural landscape
- o A unique forest representative of the region's natural history
- o Ability to see lands by the boardwalk without disturbing the lands
- o Again, the eco-system and its flora and fauna inhabitants and its location
- o Age of trees living here and animals that inhabit these areas
- o An area to enjoy that is pure nature
- o An old growth wilderness, preserved and intact
- o Anywhere that nature is being preserved and protected is of national significance
- o Area to be protected due to uniqueness
- o As officially stated. NPS got it right.
- o Battlegrounds
- o Being the only national park in the state and champion trees
- o Bio-diversity hotspot. It also preserves one of the last old-growth forests of the its kind.
- o Biodiversity, originality of primary forest
- o Champion trees
- o Champion trees
- o Cypress trees
- o Don't know
- o Ecological; maintain as meant to be - keep concrete/man out
- o Exceptional - it would have been a giant loss had it not become a national park
- o Extremely significant
- o Extremely significant because the swamp environment is not one we were familiar with
- o Flood plain ecosystem
- o Flood plain forest are few untouched tracts
- o Forced Sherman to march further south? Just kidding, its uniqueness and natural state.
- o Forest
- o Forest
- o Forest and wildlife preservation
- o Francis Marion, activities - an example of undisturbed wilderness
- o Future generations
- o Gnomes
- o Good
- o Great old swamp
- o Great significance
- o Habitat and ecological studies
- o Habitat protection
- o Helps keep nature safe
- o Highly significant
- o How it was
- o Hugely significant

- o I think it represents the natural/historic importance of this part of the country to our nation's history
- o International bird habitat, national forest, old growth bottomland flood plain
- o It is a one of a kind park
- o It is a wilderness area with one of the largest forests in the US
- o It is fortunate to have been able to save 24,000 acres out of 52 million
- o It is one of the few remaining bottomland forests
- o It is pretty unique to get to walk through a swamp
- o It is significant in the sense that the old growth forest is protected
- o It is very important to preserve whatever is left of natural habitats, not just for the nation, but for this world survival
- o It is wonderful
- o It preserves a glimpse of our state's natural beauty before man exploited
- o It preserves a rare and unique ecosystem
- o It preserves the land and protects the animals and plants
- o It preserves the largest trees east of the Rockies and some great flood plain habitat. People need to see it.
- o It preserves the way the land used to be and allows visitors to learn about it and its history
- o It reminds us of the past and how many died during war
- o It shows the interaction of the trees and the marsh and the delicate balance they have
- o It's a preservation success story near a large urban area. As the largest old growth bottomland forest in North America it is worthy of our respect and loving care. It is a classroom without peer.
- o It's an oasis of biodiversity
- o It's an untouched jewel in the middle of the state
- o It's expanse in an increasingly fragmented habitat for wildlife
- o It's just different
- o It's the largest intact stand of hardwood bottomland left. It's a unique habitat type with unique organisms.
- o It's unique history, flora, fauna
- o It's proximity to the downtown. It's habitat.
- o Keeping an old growth forest intact
- o Keeping old trees safe
- o Large cypress and other hardwood forest in natural state in flood plain of the river
- o Large expanse of forests and biological diversity
- o Large number of record breaking trees
- o Large variety of trees/vegetation and what it can teach us about ecosystems
- o Last contiguous remaining wild section of old growth river bottom flood plain forest
- o Leave everything untouched as the way nature intended
- o Little significance
- o Love the untouched aspect
- o Lowland forest, large tree preservation
- o Maintaining old growth forests and flood plains along with great canoeing opportunities within driving distance of major population centers
- o Maintaining some of our natural settings
- o Maintaining the old timber for future generations
- o Mangrove forest

- o Many historic looks into past, information
- o More visits
- o Natural environment where early revolutionaries – Swamp Fox - established a base of operations
- o Nature, history. It is so refreshing.
- o Not many swamp areas like these left in the country due to development
- o Oh my God - all of it. You can't find this anywhere else
- o Old forest maintained and preserved
- o Old growth
- o Old growth bottomland habitat of major size - river and area
- o Old growth flood plain area
- o Old growth flood plain forest
- o Old growth forest
- o Old growth forest
- o Old growth forest
- o Old growth forest
- o Old growth forest preservation
- o Old growth trees
- o Old growth trees and all of the wonderful creatures big and small that live there
- o Old growth trees, few remaining areas with this ecology
- o Old growth trees, flood plain must be protected
- o Old growth trees, unimpacted environment
- o Old growth, huge cypress and pines
- o Old trees
- o Old, large trees
- o One of few similar areas
- o Opportunity to observe nature doing her own thing
- o Originality
- o Plants, animals
- o Preservation
- o Preservation efforts
- o Preservation of a large tract of old growth bottom land forest
- o Preservation of a particular environment
- o Preservation of a unique ecosystem
- o Preservation of a unique ecosystem
- o Preservation of disappearing natural resource
- o Preservation of natural habitat of nation's original inhabitants (wildlife)
- o Preservation of natural resources
- o Preservation of old growth bottomland forest can teach us how to re-grow this elsewhere
- o Preservation of old growth flood plain forest
- o Preservation of old growth forest
- o Preservation of old growth forest and generally preservation of our natural landscape
- o Preservation of our nations old growth flood plain forest
- o Preservation of our natural forests
- o Preservation of wilderness

- o Preserve local charms
- o Preserve low country hardwood forest and territory
- o Preserve natural life
- o Preserve old growth forest
- o Preserving an old growth cypress forest
- o Preserving old growth forest and the flood plain ecosystem
- o Preserving old growth forests
- o Preserving the natural ecosystem in South Carolina
- o Preserving unique forest
- o Preserving wilderness areas in general and old growth forests in particular
- o Preserving wildlife
- o Protected flood plain
- o Protected old growth hardwood forest with flood plain
- o Protecting the natural wildlife of South Carolina
- o Protecting the swamp habitat and champion trees
- o Protection of few remaining old growth forests and wetlands
- o Protection of nature, the unique environment at Congaree National Park. Preservation of pristine bottomland and swamp forest with all of its biodiversity.
- o Protection of swamp for future generations
- o Protection of old growth trees
- o Quite important, unique nature
- o Rare and undisturbed
- o Reminder of the beauty and gift of nature to educate people about nature
- o Reminder of the natural gifts we have largely lost
- o Remnant of native ecosystem - best remaining example of it
- o Reserve for birds; provides natural absorption of water to prevent flooding
- o Retain natural woodlands, resources
- o Saving a flood plain forest
- o Saving the old growth flood plain forest for future generations and in aiding climate research changes
- o Scarcity of type of forest
- o Shows South Carolina wildlife and history
- o Significance of stay wild
- o So that all the world can experience God's great creation
- o Southeast wilderness preservation; not much left
- o Swamp
- o Swamp atmosphere and education, being able to view old growth forest and big trees
- o Swamps need protection
- o Tall trees and cypress knees
- o The conservation of the champion trees
- o The diverse plants
- o The ecosystem
- o The fact that it is one of the few old growth forests left in the country
- o The fact that it is one of the largest areas with growth and trees like the ones that grow there
- o The flood plain forest ecosystem
- o The large virgin hardwoods and unique ecosystem

- o The largest flood plain, hardwood, swamp land tract of wilderness - unique ecosystem
- o The old growth forest
- o The old growth forest with the wide variety of vegetation all in one area
- o The plants and animals are unique and educational
- o The solitude and abundance of gigantic old growth trees
- o The special environment of this forest
- o The swamp life, the beautiful trees
- o The trees are of exceptional height and age
- o The unique ecosystem
- o The wildlife, the unique habitat and the champion trees makes Congaree a special place to be preserved
- o The wildlife, trees
- o To educate the peoples
- o To keep this unique land available so generations to come can experience it
- o To maintain nature and allow generation to enjoy
- o To preserve and protect the natural landscape and wilderness of the area
- o To preserve our wildlife and our forests
- o To preserve what others take for granted and destroy
- o Trees
- o Trees
- o Trees are beautiful, land for animals
- o Trees that can't be found anywhere else
- o Trees/plants
- o Unique and threatened ecosystem that should be preserved as part of natural heritage
- o Unique because of old growth bottomland habitat
- o Unique biodiversity
- o Unique ecosystem
- o Unique ecosystem in park system and in our own experience
- o Unique environment
- o Unique environment
- o Unique plants/animals, new species
- o Unspoiled nature, champion trees, conservation, recreational opportunities
- o Unusual climate
- o Varied - conservation, beauty, history
- o Very important
- o Very much
- o Very significant
- o Very significant, even if not well loved by human visitors
- o We need more parks like this one
- o We need more parks. This one was a nice surprise.
- o Where else can one see an old growth forest like the one at Congaree
- o Wildlife and virgin forest
- o Yes, very

Question 34

If you were a manager planning for the future of Congaree National Park, what would you and personal group propose? (Open-ended)

- o "Rest stations" along the way
- o A "current conditions" point on the web page so people would know if it was at flood stage
- o A close trip to the local community to build awareness and support
- o A few more established campgrounds
- o A free recreation day
- o A full hookup - water, sewer, electric, catv - RV campground located at the river.
- o A lodge, so that people that don't camp can stay in the park
- o A night on the boardwalks to listen to nightlife with a park ranger
- o Acquire any inholdings or adjacent land that could lead to incompatible development
- o Acquire buffer areas adjacent to critical areas
- o Add more trails to the park
- o Adding a few RV sites would be helpful so we could stay longer
- o Adding canoe rides
- o Adding trails
- o Advertise more to locals
- o Advertising, canoe and kayak rental and shuttle
- o Advertise
- o An integrated national campaign for NP to increase awareness and attendance
- o An RV campground
- o Area for snake aquarium. I would like to see what species are there.
- o Balance protection/conservation and recreational use
- o Be sure to let workers know their worth, appreciation for a job well done
- o Better advertising. Put signs on I-95. This is not a well-known park but it has a lot to offer.
- o Better camping sites
- o Better camping. Kayaking. Boat landing.
- o Better creek maps and tree marking
- o Better facilities at primitive campground
- o Build a lodge to attract overnight guests. Flood the surrounding states with information about park.
- o Build trails on new property
- o Buying and preserving as much land as possible to add to the park before it is too late
- o Campground with electricity
- o Can't do it better
- o Canoe/kayak rentals
- o Canoeing
- o Canoeing, kayaking, boardwalk trails
- o Canopy/zip line tours
- o Clean up deadfall on trails; have someone walk the trails once in a while
- o Clear the canoe trail. More hiking trails to reach more of the park.
- o Connect in a more concrete way with local schools to integrate Congaree into science lessons at school
- o Continue preservation and protection from invasive, nonnative species of plants and animals

- o Continue protecting such a wonderful natural
- o Continue to do the great job you're doing. Maybe a little more educational programs.
- o Continue upgrading of hiking trails
- o Continued efforts for financial stability to ensure protection from loss
- o Continued funding to protect these trees
- o Continued management of invasive plant and animal species and preservation of native species
- o Do better maps; mark on the map and on the trail points to figure out where you are
- o Easier access to champion trees and labeling of each
- o Educational weekend programs for kids
- o Eliminate the wild hogs
- o Enlarge the borders
- o Enlarged exhibits and film
- o Enlarging
- o Eradication of exotic species and increase educational opportunities in surrounding communities
- o Expand and improve visitor center and campgrounds. Broaden partnership with city, University of South Carolina, donors.
- o Expand area under protection
- o Expand natural areas adjacent to park
- o Expand the park
- o Expanding the park to include the other side of the Congaree River
- o Expansion and ensured protection. I would add another trail that would lead to river and develop trails in new additions to the park.
- o Expansion of trails and backpacking
- o Extend the boardwalks. Improve the signs directing to the park.
- o Extending the amount of the park that is viewable on the boardwalk
- o Family camping and exotics control
- o Find a way to make more people aware of this park
- o Focus on water activities
- o Friendlier park rangers with more experience
- o Get the word out that you are there so others will come
- o Great job! Loved it!
- o I do not have an overview that would make an opinion meaningful
- o Improve information displays on the boardwalk for types of vegetation
- o Improve trail system - more loops instead of loop-less trails
- o Improving the surrounding area by keeping industry as far away as possible
- o Incorporate paths with natural features and make paths more defined
- o Increased publicity for Congaree National Park. Perhaps a documentary television program. We heard about the park only by chance.
- o Just more spreading of the word. I don't feel many know of the park.
- o Keep doing what you're doing with excellence
- o Keep expanding, work on invasive plant control, and stop wasting park resources on unnecessary law enforcement
- o Keep it simply
- o Keep it the way it is
- o Keep it the way it is

- o Keep the park a place that a visitor has to want to visit. Don't add "flashy" things to attract visitors.
- o Keep up the good work
- o Keep up the great work
- o Keeping the boardwalk clean of debris
- o Killing the pigs in perpetuity. Whole system appraisal of resource.
- o Larger size, more inclusion of ecosystem, greater amounts of water in ecosystem
- o Leaving it alone
- o Let more people know about the park
- o Looking at nature's true beauty
- o Maintain trails, education, and canoeing
- o Maintaining the wilderness
- o Make entrance more welcoming. Promote hiking trails more.
- o Make maps and trail guides more visible, available - not just inside
- o Make sure it remains wild and a national park
- o Maybe a couple more self-guides, like the numbered guide along the boardwalk, throughout the park
- o Maybe add an observation tower, maybe a zip line, more access to Congaree River
- o Maybe build a canopy tower where visitors can see the forest at different levels
- o More accommodation available in the park - like cabins
- o More advertisement
- o More advertisement so visitors respect and want to see this special place
- o More advertising
- o More advertising - most locals don't realize we have a National Park
- o More advertising - we didn't even know the national park was here
- o More advertising of recreational opportunities at Congaree National Park
- o More advertising, HD video in the visitor center
- o More availability for canoe trips during summer travel months
- o More boardwalk paths, better information on the canoeing
- o More boardwalk trails
- o More cultural interpretation and community engagement
- o More educational classes, fun activities for children
- o More funding
- o More historical facts
- o More history on the area and books in visitor center
- o More information on trails
- o More internet exposure
- o More local awareness, especially to parents and their kids. Word of mouth is the best marketing for the park.
- o More outdoor activities, more restrooms
- o More posters
- o More rangers who can lead canoe tours, program was full for this quarter so we need to come back for that
- o More signs on 601, especially after Route 263 intersection. Get GPS companies to correct directions to park by providing GPS coordinates to park entrance on Old bluff Road.
- o More special events to get people excited about nature
- o More trails and a larger campground

- o More walk ways
- o More wildlife centered activities
- o Move in gift shop and visitor center, especially exhibits
- o Movie on history of South Carolina, paleological, geological natural environmental changes
- o My knowledge of this park is insufficient for answering this question
- o Night tomb - Halloween. Emphasize spookiness.
- o No idea
- o No planes flying overhead
- o Offering programs more often
- o Other activities, more canoeing options
- o Park facilities
- o Photo wall of the natural (native) insects, birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.
- o Please have identity markers placed under tree, flora and fauna to match self-guided tour pamphlet
- o Possibly provide information on the animals in the park
- o Preserve the natural beauty by limiting access as necessary, but use for education - both formal and tourist
- o Primitive campsites for backpackers; canoe/kayak rentals on or near park
- o Promote educational opportunities more
- o Promote more widely
- o Protecting, what is there, and enlarging the boundaries, if possible
- o Protection against commercial/industrial influence and better protection against Republican budget cuts
- o Ranger-led camping
- o Ranger-led walks
- o Removal of wild pigs, electric RV hookups and sites
- o Repair boardwalk
- o Responsible enjoyment - encourage use for recreation - hiking, canoeing, camping
- o RV friendly parking
- o Save the land
- o See the movie in the visitor center and walk
- o Seems well managed, no change
- o Signs to get to the park
- o Somehow getting the news out to South Carolina residents that there is a national park close by to raise interest in it
- o Someone overseeing boardwalk daily to maintain it. Sweep out under benches so visitors aren't afraid of spiders and wildlife.
- o Stronger advocacy - enlist help of legislators
- o Summer workshops for K-12 teachers to develop more citizen scientist monitoring, and encourage more teachers to bring school-aged visitors to the park
- o Survival training/more fireside camping, more fishing access on creeks and rivers
- o Target small group activities to specific interests - hikers, photographers, kayakers
- o That personal care be given to such a beautiful place
- o The canoe/kayak tours were booked. We would have liked more activity options, but overall great experience.
- o The visit was really too short to have an informed knowledge base to answer this

- o The website should have more information about why the park is compelling and why you should visit. Information from the visitor center would be good on the website
- o The wild pig population must be controlled. Would like to see trail extension from Kingsnake to old road to river.
- o To expand borders and to enhance habitat for native species
- o To limit development, keep plants and wildlife protected
- o Trail maintenance
- o Try to restore and protect more similar ecosystems in area
- o Update visitor center, interpretive displays
- o Updated informational film
- o Very little
- o Water and "real" bathroom at campgrounds, more trails, eradicate fire ants
- o Water source at campground
- o Weigh cost vs. benefit: we need to scale back

Question 35

Is there anything else you and your personal group would like to tell us about your visit to Congaree National Park? (Open-ended)

- o A hidden gem
- o A pleasant and enjoyable experience
- o A video would have been nice to see before going out on our walk
- o A wonderful experience
- o As mentioned, no signs on boardwalk and no map in "self-guided boardwalk trail" brochure. Walked to where path split on boardwalk and never saw a number. And because of no distance markers, we turned around and only saw the first sitting area. Wanted to see the bald cypress at #3, but didn't know if it was 1 miles or 2 miles.
- o Beautiful park. We loved it. Employees were so helpful.
- o Beautiful, peaceful place
- o Better posting of bike trails. More trails open to biking.
- o Canoe guide Corrine and volunteer very nice and helpful. Tried to control "noisy" people as much as possible.
- o Congaree was not a destination point but rather a stop on our way to Charleston for a wedding
- o Enjoyable and rewarding visit for an unknown and spur of the moment decision to stop in
- o Enjoyed it
- o Enjoyed it and will be back
- o Enjoyed it very much
- o Enjoyed our visit. Glad we stopped.
- o Enjoyed the staff - they were helpful and courteous
- o Enjoyed, thank you
- o Even in close to 100 degrees it was a wonderful experience for the whole family
- o Even though it was a hot day, we thoroughly enjoyed our visit. Keep up the good work.
- o Expand visitor center gift shop
- o Friendly staff and clean bathrooms
- o Got lost - more signs
- o Great
- o Great experience
- o Great job
- o Great job done by the staff of the national park
- o Great job. We will be back.
- o Great park, clean. I had a blast.
- o Great park, we'll be back. We didn't know about canoeing opportunities, but we are excited about doing a trip in future.
- o Great time. Thanks.
- o Great wildlife sightings
- o Great, friendly rangers
- o Great. We love the parks.
- o Greatly enjoyed it
- o Had a great time. Everyone was so helpful. Best of luck.
- o Had a great time. Will come back.
- o Had a really nice time and will come back

- o Have always enjoyed
- o I asked a ranger for a private place to breast-feed and she told me to use the restroom. I said that was unacceptable and another ranger provided me with a "movie room" that wasn't very private. Market better to families by providing a much-needed air-conditioned family feeding room.
- o I had no idea it existed until studying my Passport Album. I am very glad we made time to see it and look forward to visiting again and spending a lot more time.
- o I love the mosquito meter
- o I love this park. It truly is a jewel.
- o I only had a very short time there. Very interested in venturing to canoe, fish and explore.
- o I realize that budgets are strained, but bridges on backcountry trails need replacement
- o I thought it was great. I have wanted to go for years and I was not let down Beautiful habitat, great trails/kayaking, and awesome animals.
- o I was pleasantly surprised by the enjoyable, educational experience. I liked the self-guided boardwalk tour; there should be posters for sale of park scenes. I really like that the park is free
- o I would like to get a photo of the woodpeckers
- o I would love to volunteer in some way
- o I would prefer federal dollars go to protect national parks than many other federal programs
- o I'm thankful this place is being protected; an excellent use of tax dollars
- o I've been going to Congaree since I was old enough to walk. I love it as much today as I did then.
- o If ever in the area again we would definitely go back again
- o It was a blessing to visit there
- o It was a pleasure to discover every little thing such as mushrooms, spiders, barred owl and a hawk. We greatly appreciate the park and all of the staff.
- o It was a true surprise how wonderful this park is - a true hidden treasure that needs to be preserved. We absolutely will be back.
- o It was a very nice visit. Good instructions, friendly people.
- o It was an exceptionally rich visit to a unique ecosystem for my daughter and me
- o It was fun
- o It was great to meet and speak with "roving" rangers. Friendly staff get A+ at Congaree.
- o It was our first visit and it was very hot, but we would love to come back in the spring when it is cool and maybe not so dry
- o It was quite enjoyable and the staff helped very much
- o Just how degrading it was to be accosted like I was by the ranger
- o Keep up the good work
- o Keep up the good work
- o Keep up the good work and expand the park
- o Love the deer
- o Loved the people working there
- o Loved the visitor center displays. We learned a lot.
- o Make numbers on boardwalk more visible - maybe just paint with bright colors
- o Need to specify that the guide doesn't do the canoeing just leads the group
- o Never let our natural resources be misused, protect them
- o Nice park
- o Nice staff
- o Nice visit
- o Not many mosquitos. We got lucky.

- o Our 2 year old grandson particularly liked the "stuffed" animals on display
- o Please do not give visitors surveys before they go hiking. I had to carry this survey all over the park.
- o Pretty cool place, loved the visitor center
- o Pure pleasure - I love visiting as often as I can when in town. I have been a visitor of this particular site since before the center and paths were created. I really enjoy the new boardwalks and informational center available. One of the things I most admire is how this was put together for individuals to enjoy and how it was done without interrupting the natural flow of the environment. I have many pictures within my home that I have taken, framed and enjoy. I will continue to visit the park as often as I can when I'm in town.
- o Question 17 should include water fountains - extremely important
- o Ranger help was awesome
- o Ranger personnel excellent and informative
- o Rangers and volunteer we spoke with were knowledgeable and helpful
- o Rangers were very helpful
- o Saw two groups of wild pigs
- o Saw two large pileated woodpeckers on Cedar Creek
- o Signage for leaving park back to interstates in highways
- o Staff very friendly and helpful
- o Staff was extremely pleasant and inviting us to return
- o Staff were exceedingly friendly and knowledgeable
- o Stopped by to check it out (and to check it off the list), will definitely come back to explore
- o Such a helpful and friendly staff. All facilities were exceptionally clean.
- o Superb overall
- o Swamps are rad
- o Thank you
- o Thank you for a great visit
- o Thank you for a rewarding and respectful experience
- o Thank you for your good work
- o Thank you. I was looking for an inexpensive way to celebrate my birthday and this was perfect for me.
- o Thanks for keeping it a special place
- o Thanks for learning something new
- o Thanks, I had a great time
- o The bats did a great job eating the mosquitos
- o The law enforcement rangers are getting a bad reputation with some dedicated long-term visitors - surliness, "command voice" at innocent kids, etc. I have heard the complaints and seen a bit.
- o The park rangers and volunteer staff are wonderful
- o The ranger and volunteers there are exceptional
- o The rangers were very friendly, informative, and helpful. The visitor center was beautiful. Loved the park. Thoroughly enjoyed visit. Will definitely visit it again.
- o The staff was very helpful
- o The staff was wonderfully helpful
- o The two gals working in the visitor center were great - Corrine and Kristen
- o There 9 am on 8/3/2011 - staff was helpful and very pleasant. In reference to Q6B - Animals change their habitat as climate dictates, so boundaries for them change constantly. No one can say they do or do not belong in an area. Part of nature adjustment plan. However, if introduced not naturally (released illegally by humans), then yes, remove.

- o There should also be arrows on the trees for landmark
- o This is a wonderful place to experience. Rangers are great.
- o This park is beautiful. Keep it for us, we will be back.
- o This trip was totally awesome
- o Very enjoyable
- o Very enjoyable
- o Very enjoyable experience
- o Very enjoyable walk on boardwalk. Nice area, scenery, quality. Free entrance is a major draw.
Thanks.
- o Very interesting and educational
- o Very interesting and educational. Would like to arrive earlier next time.
- o Very peaceful, inspiring, beautiful. We are grateful for the experience.
- o Very, very inspiring. It felt like a "monument" - a national monument in the midst of an otherwise environmentally challenged area. It must be respected and protected.
- o Wanted to do photography, but little information available on good spots
- o We are completing the Junior Ranger programs and loved this park. We wish we could have spent more time, but we had been away from home for a week and just wanted to go home. Our family had no idea the park was so nice and we wish we could have allotted more time to do a longer walk.
- o We are grateful for the Congaree and all those who work and volunteer there
- o We are huge national park fans. The ranger and the exhibits were better than at some of the more renowned parks. Congaree is a great park. The ranger is fantastic.
- o We came a long way to see the area including Congaree. We felt the park helped justify the trip.
- o We can see both why the site is a National Park and why it previously was not. It's not as immediately compelling as some.
- o We enjoyed it
- o We enjoyed our trip. Well worth the drive from Georgia.
- o We enjoyed our visit
- o We enjoyed our visit very much
- o We entered from 601 and State Route 48. Signs were poor or nonexistent leaving in some direction. Could easily miss a turn and get lost. At least put signs pointing to Columbia so driver knows to turn left on right exiting park. This is basic stuff dealing with tourists.
- o We had a great experience and learned a lot from our guide
- o We had a great time and we recommend this park to our friends
- o We had a great time, loved camping and had a great experience at Congaree National Park. Very friendly staff at visitor center. Thanks.
- o We had a wonderful time
- o We had fun
- o We just felt that the Congaree River is central to the park and we couldn't get there to see it. We stayed at Barnyard RV Park on US-1 but that was too far for member #2 to drop off me and my kayak and return back to RV. Anyway, no access to river. We did appreciate use of NPS wheelchair on boardwalk loop. Member #2 used it a little but it was the only way I could persuade her to attempt doing the loop.
- o We love cypress knees
- o We loved it
- o We loved it
- o We loved it and will come back frequently

- o We visit often. It is a treasure. We take our grandchildren just as we took our own children years ago.
- o We were blown away and will be back; the park staff are incredibly knowledgeable and helpful!
- o We were very enjoy our visit at the park; learn a lot about wildlife. Have a great time.
- o We're glad we organized our family trip to visit CNP
- o We've lived in Sumter for two years and finally came for a visit. What a treasure to have so nearby.
- o Wonderful place
- o Wonderful trip - we want to come back. Need outdoor amphitheater to talk to large groups, educate.
- o Would be great if more ranger-guided canoe tours were offered - on weekdays as well as weekends.
We loved the place, especially the grand trees.
- o Would have loved to enroll my children in the week-long ranger camp, but distance is too great.
Loved the park. Please keep it open.
- o You guys do almost everything right. Fix Kingsnake Trail and you get two thumbs up from us.
- o You need to sell more bug spray that is environmentally safe, along with sunscreen, etc. Sell more earth friendly products that people would like to buy.

Appendix 1: The Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Additional Analysis

The Visitor Services Project (VSP) offers the opportunity to learn from VSP visitor study data through additional analysis. Two-way and three-way cross tabulations can be made with any questions.

Below are some examples of the types of cross tabulations that can be requested. To make a request, please use the contact information below, and include your name, address and phone number in the request.

1. What proportion of family groups with children attends interpretive programs?
2. Is there a correlation between visitors' ages and their preferred sources of information about the park?
3. Are highly satisfied visitors more likely to return for a future visit?
4. How many international visitors participate in hiking?
5. What ages of visitors would use the park website as a source of information on a future visit?
6. Is there a correlation between visitor groups' rating of the overall quality of their park experience and their ratings of individual services and facilities?
7. Do larger visitor groups (e.g., four or more) participate in different activities than smaller groups?
8. Do frequent visitors rate the overall quality of their park experiences differently than less frequent visitors?

The VSP database website (<http://vsp.uidaho.edu>) allows data searches for comparisons of data from one or more parks.

For more information please contact:

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College of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 441139
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843-1139

Phone: 208-885-2585
Fax: 208-885-4261
Email: lenale@uidaho.edu
Website: <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>

Appendix 3: Decision Rules for Checking Nonresponse Bias

There are several methods for checking nonresponse bias. However, the most common way is to use some demographic indicators to compare between respondents and nonrespondents (Dey 1997; Salant and Dillman 1994; Dillman and Carley-Baxter 2000; Dillman, 2007; Stoop 2004). In this study, we used five variables: group type, group size, age of the group member (at least 16 years old) completing the survey, whether the park was the primary destination for the visit, and visitor's place of residence proximity to the park to check for nonresponse bias.

Chi-square tests were used to detect the difference in the response rates among different group types, whether the park was the primary destination for this visit, and visitor's place of residence and proximity to the park. The hypothesis was that there is no significant difference across different categories (or groups) between respondents and nonrespondents. If the p-value is greater than 0.05, the difference between respondents and nonrespondents is judged to be insignificant.

Two independent-sample T-tests were used to test the differences between respondent's and non-respondent's average age and group size. The p-values represent the significance levels of these tests. If p-value is greater than 0.05, the two groups are judged to be insignificantly different.

Therefore, the hypotheses for checking nonresponse bias are:

1. Respondents from different group types are equally represented
2. Respondents and nonrespondents are not significantly different in term of proximity from their home to the park
3. Respondents and nonrespondents are not significantly different in term of reason for visiting the park
4. Average age of respondents – average age of nonrespondents = 0
5. Average group size of respondents – average group size of nonrespondents = 0

As shown in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, the p-value for respondent/nonrespondent comparisons except for group size were less than 0.05, indicating significant differences between respondents and non-respondents. The results indicate some biases occurred due to nonresponse. Visitors at younger age ranges (especially 35 and younger), came from the local area (within a 50 mile radius), visitors traveling with friends, and visitors indicated park as primary reason to visit the area were underrepresented in the survey results. Results of the study in this report only reflect the simple frequencies. Inferences of the survey results should be weighted to counter balance the effects of nonresponse bias.

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