National Park System
2017 Visitor Survey Card Data Report

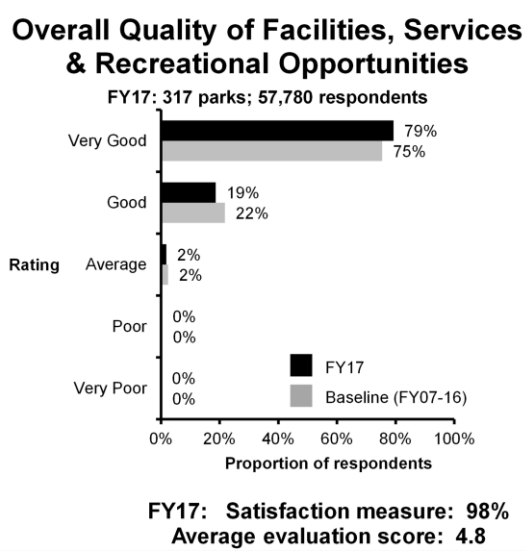
Introduction

To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a visitor survey was conducted in 335 units of the National Park System in FY17. The survey was developed to measure each park unit's performance related to NPS GPRA Goals IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and appreciation).

The results of the Visitor Survey Card (VSC) survey are summarized in this data report. A description of the research methods and limitations is on the back page.

Below (left) is a graph summarizing visitor opinions of the "overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities" in the system. This graph compares FY17 data (shown in black) with a ten-year baseline data (FY07-16) shown in gray. The satisfaction measure below this graph is a combined percentage of "good" and "very good" responses. This is the primary performance measure for Goal IIa1. (The satisfaction measure may not equal the sum of "very good" and "good" percentages due to rounding.)

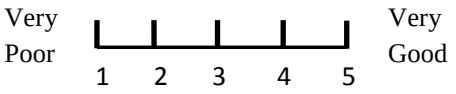
Below (right) is the FY17 GRPA reporting measure for Goal IIa1. The percentage included in the box should be used for reporting GPRA Goal IIa1 performance. **The systemwide response rate was 55% with 60,947 total visitors responding to the survey.**



Understanding the Results

Inside this report are graphs that present the combined survey results for the National Park System. The report contains three categories of data—park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Within these categories are graphs for each indicator evaluated by park visitors. For example, the park facilities category includes indicators such as visitor center, exhibits, restrooms, and so forth. In addition, responses for indicators within each category are averaged into a combined graph for the category (e.g., combined park facilities).

- Each graph includes the following information:
  - the number of parks and visitor responses for the indicator;
  - FY17 data (black) and baseline data (gray);
  - the percentage of responses which were "very good," "good," "average," "poor," and "very poor;"
  - a satisfaction measure that combines the percentage of total responses which were "very good" or "good;" and
  - an average evaluation score (mean score) based on the following values: very poor = 1, poor = 2, average = 3, good = 4, very good = 5.



- The higher the average evaluation score, the more positive the visitor response.
- Graph percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

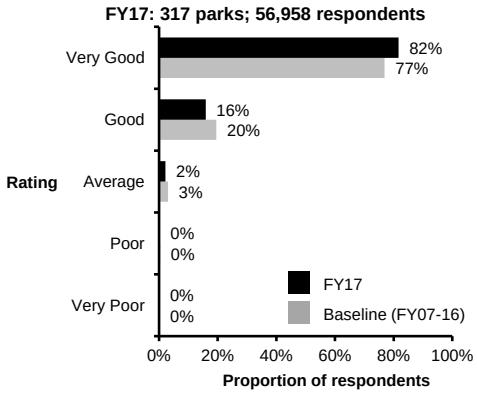
FY17 GPRA Reporting Measure for Goal IIa1

Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities:

98%

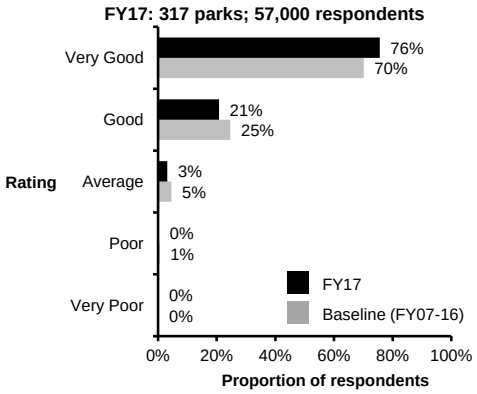
National Park System
Park Facilities

Visitor Center



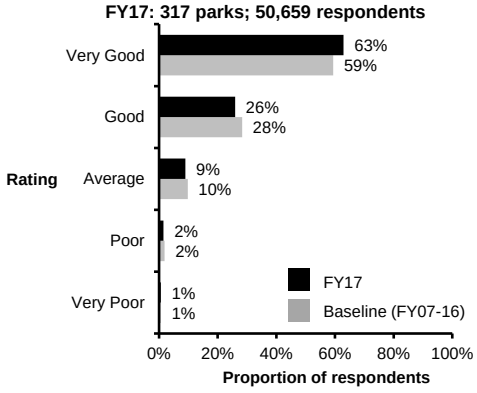
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

Exhibits



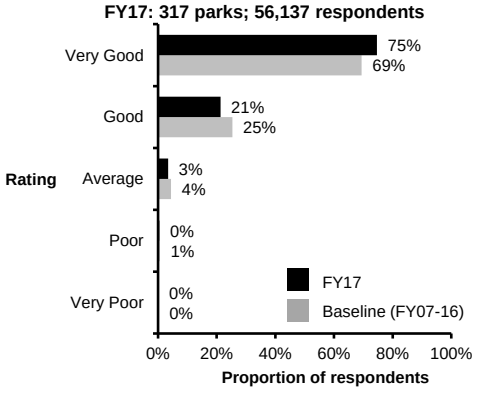
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Restrooms



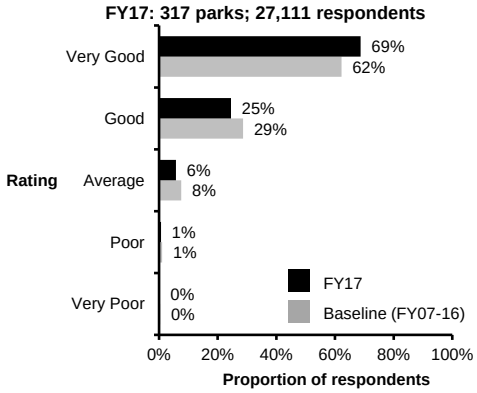
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 89%
Average evaluation score: 4.5

Walkways, Trails, and Roads



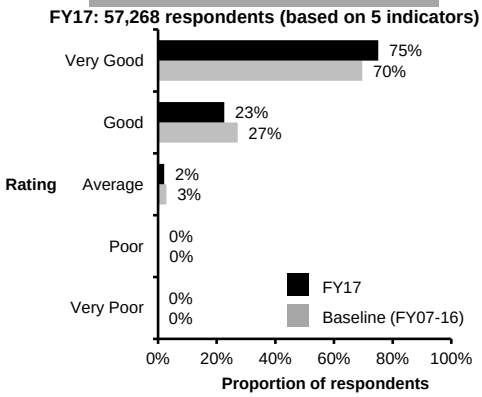
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Campgrounds and/or Picnic Areas



FY17: Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

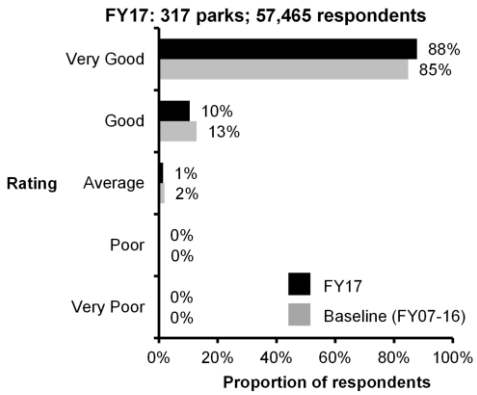
Combined Park Facilities



FY17: Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

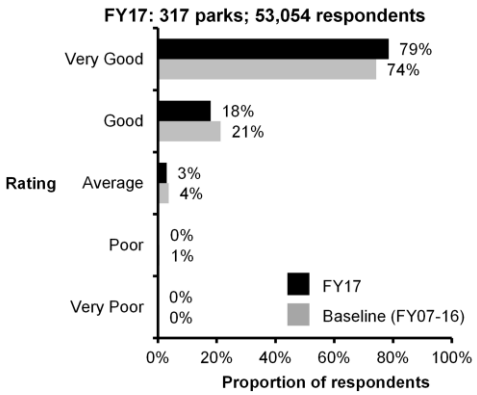
National Park System
Visitor Services

Assistance from Park Employees



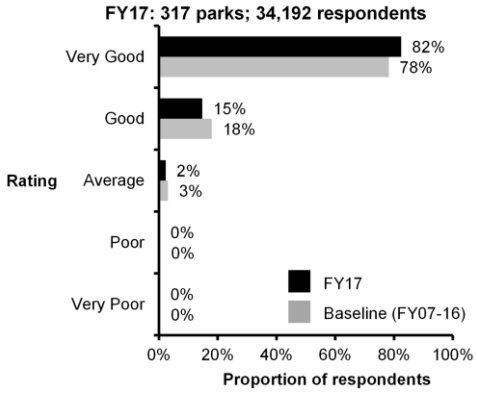
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.9

Park Map or Brochure



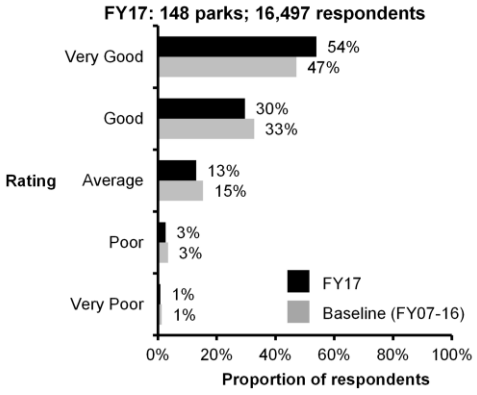
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Ranger Programs



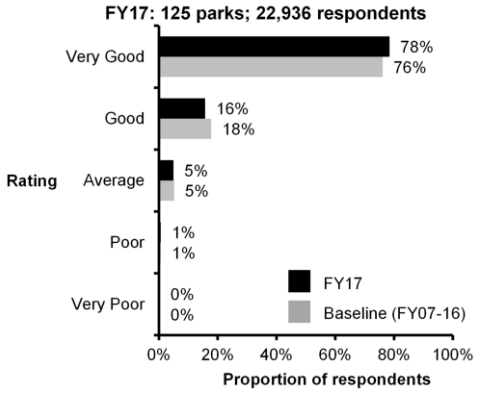
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 97%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

Commercial Services in the Park



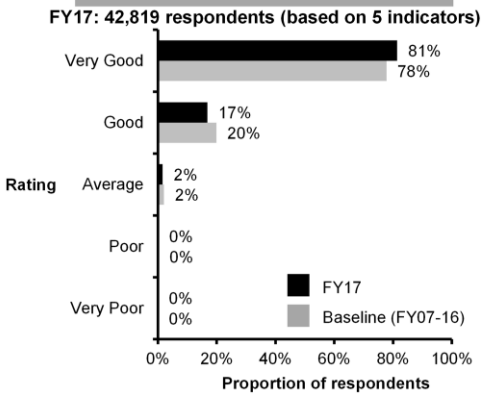
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 84%
Average evaluation score: 4.3

Value for Entrance Fee Paid



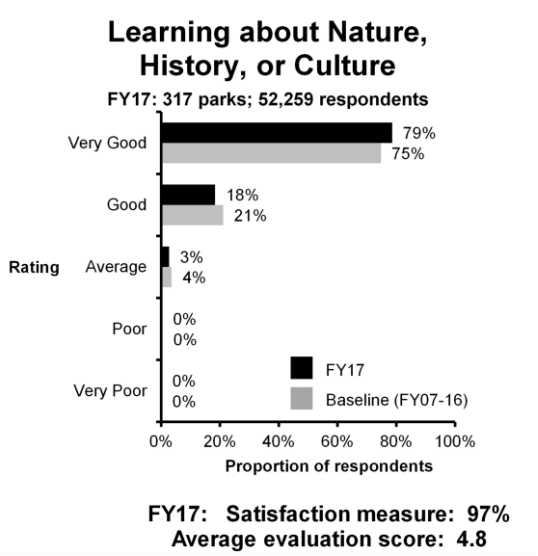
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 94%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Combined Visitor Services

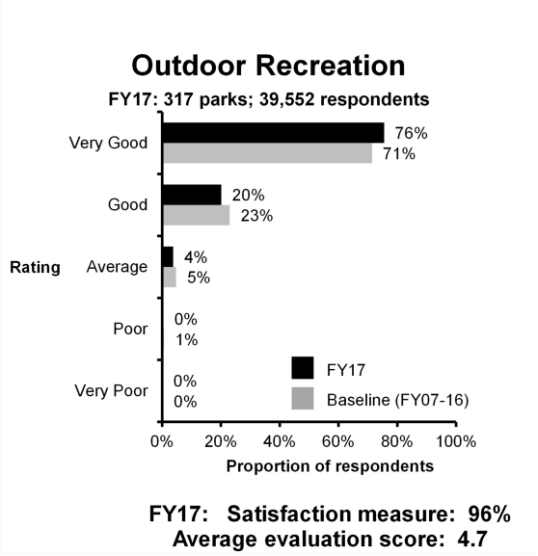


FY17: Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

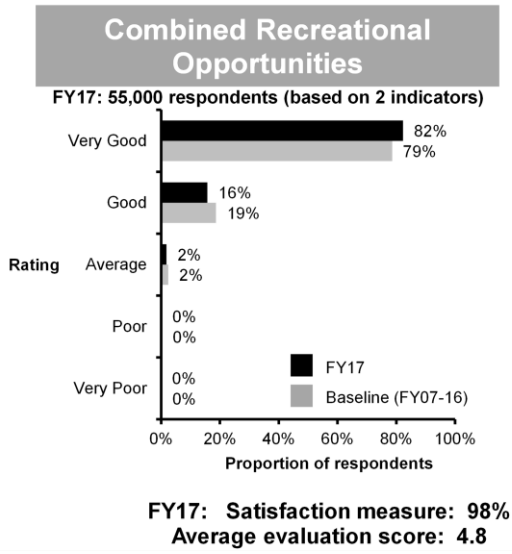
National Park System
Recreational Opportunities



FY17: Satisfaction measure: 97%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

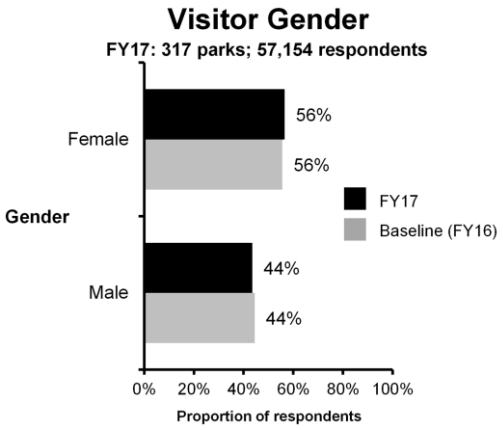


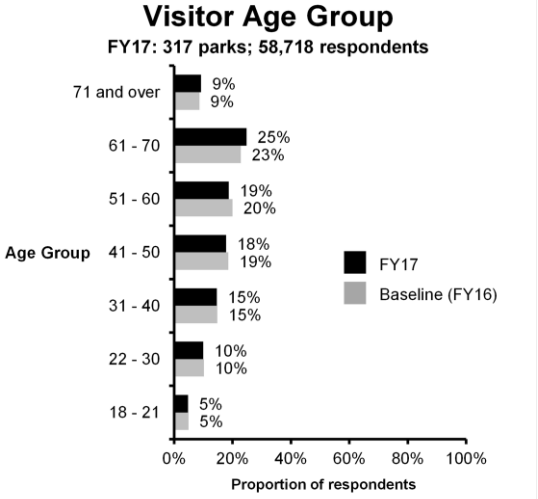
FY17: Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.7



FY17: Satisfaction measure: 98%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

National Park System
Visitor Gender and Age Group





Research Methods

Survey cards were distributed to a random sample of visitors in 335 units in the system during the periods from February 1 – August 31, 2017. At each park, visitors were sampled at selected locations representative of the general visitor population.

Returned cards were electronically scanned and the data analyzed. Responses from individual parks in the system were combined into one dataset. Data from parks with less than 30 returned cards, or from parks with discrepancies in the data collection methods, were omitted from this report. Frequency distributions were calculated for each indicator and category.

Results reported for the survey questions: "Value for Entrance Fee Paid" and "Commercial Services in the Park" consist of only parks that charge an entrance fee or offer commercial services. For this reason the number of parks and number of respondents with the lower in these charts than in others in this report.

All percentage calculations were rounded to the nearest percent. Therefore, individual percentages in each table may not add to 100 percent. The response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of returned survey cards by the total number of survey cards distributed. The sample size ("N") varies from figure to figure, depending on the number of responses.

For most indicators, the survey data are expected to be accurate within ±.3% with 95% confidence. This means that if the different samples had been drawn, the results would have been similar (±.3%) 95 out of 100 times.

The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year, to park visitors who did not visit the survey locations, or to park units in the system that did not participate in the survey.

The combined indicators are an average of several individual indicators. The average is based on the indicators within the grouping that have responses. For those combined indicators based on five indicators, the average for each respondent is only calculated if at least three of the indicators have responses. For the combined question based on two indicators, the average is only calculated if at least one of the indicators has a response. These respondent averages are then transformed into the same 5 point scale where 5 is Very Good and 1 is Poor, based on a logical classification of the rating scale.

Low survey response rates increase the probability of non-response bias. Non-response bias occurs when those who choose to participate in a survey differ substantially and systematically from those who choose not to participate. If these differences are related to GPRA measures, the results may be unreliable.

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The Visitor Survey Card Project
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