



2024 Socioeconomic Research of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway

Report on 2024 Data Collection



Visitors at Highway 70 Landing preparing their boats for a fishing trip.

NPS / BUTLER J

2024 Socioeconomic Research of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway: Report on 2024 Data Collection

Science Report NPS/SR—2026/407

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Abstract

A strong mandate and need for socioeconomic monitoring have been expressed in the National Park Service (NPS) strategic goals for science, in statements by NPS leadership, and in various official reports. Since such monitoring began in 2022, the NPS has conducted visitor surveys at 24 parks per year across the United States and associated territories. St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (St. Croix NSR) was selected as one of these units for 2024 implementation. This socioeconomic monitoring at St. Croix NSR uses a two-step survey methodology to capture a representative sample of park visitors during the peak season of each respective park unit. This process includes (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a post-trip survey (completed either by mail-back or online) for more in-depth trip details. The types of data collected include visitor demographics, trip characteristics/planning, and experience evaluations. Results are organized by these two survey instruments and are aimed at assisting park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, assessing operations and potential issues, and facilitating communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders. Results of this study and studies at the 23 other park units sampled for 2024 contribute to a technical report on national-level findings.

Introduction

Social science research has become increasingly recognized as a crucial component of park planning, amplifying its significance for the National Park Service (NPS). With the ever-changing landscape of visitation and a desire to provide transformative visitor experiences, understanding the needs and expectations of the visiting public is as important as ever. The agency seeks to provide the highest quality visitor experience while also protecting the important natural and cultural resources that make these sites special.

A pilot visitor study was conducted in 2015/2016 across selected park units throughout the United States. Building upon the insights gleaned from the pilot study, the Socioeconomic Monitoring Program (SEM) Visitor Survey has been carried out each year starting in 2022 at 24 NPS units across the country. St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (St. Croix NSR) was selected as one of these 24 units in 2024. The study aims to deepen understanding of visitor demographics and characteristics at St. Croix NSR.

This report presents the data and findings collected from the SEM Visitor Survey in 2024. The study gathers data at a comprehensive agency level, addressing the informational needs of park managers throughout the National Park System. The data collected during the 2024 SEM Visitor Survey sampling period are intended to provide park managers with data-supported insights into their visitors while enabling data analysis at the agency level and beyond for future applications.

This study collects information about visitor use, aids in finding effective management solutions, and offers insights into the visitors who experience NPS sites. The findings empower NPS managers to better comprehend visitor behaviors, inform park operations, and identify areas for enhancing the visitor experience. Moreover, these results are intended to facilitate communication and foster informed decision-making processes, both within the NPS unit and in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders.

This report does not include spending data, although it was collected as part of the study. For detailed information regarding visitor spending at St. Croix NSR, please refer to the 2024 Visitor Spending Effects report.

The research was carried out by a team including Otak, Inc., RRC Associates, Inc., the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana, and GAIA Environmental Consulting.

Methods

The SEM Visitor Survey methodology is designed to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior at each sampled park unit using the following methods:

1. An onsite intercept survey conducted via tablet, and
2. A post-trip follow-up survey (mail-back or online) for full trip details.

This comprehensive approach provides the necessary information to make on-the-ground decisions in park units using the intercept survey to capture visitor responses on higher priority information, while also capturing key in-depth information on visitor spending and trip characteristics for long-term planning from the post-trip survey. Additionally, the intercept survey is designed to be brief so as not to fundamentally affect visitors' experiences. The methods also permit a larger sample to be collected on key questions of interest by asking these high priority questions during the intercept survey.

Study Area

The St. Croix NSR local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around St. Croix NSR consists of the following counties in Wisconsin: Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix, Sawyer, and Washburn; and the following counties in Minnesota: Chisago, Pine, Dakota, Ramsey, Hennepin, and Washington. Within St. Croix NSR, the study area was comprised of 25 locations. Table 1 lists those sites and the number of onsite intercept surveys completed at each. The distribution of surveyor effort across sites was determined based on historical visitor volumes and spatial distribution across the park's key areas. Where available, Visitor Use Statistics estimates for monthly visitation at each site were used to assign surveyors proportionally to reflect visitor use patterns. Park staff were consulted prior to the study launch to confirm that these metrics accurately captured visitor flows, ensuring that sampling efforts were focused on the most popular and representative locations.

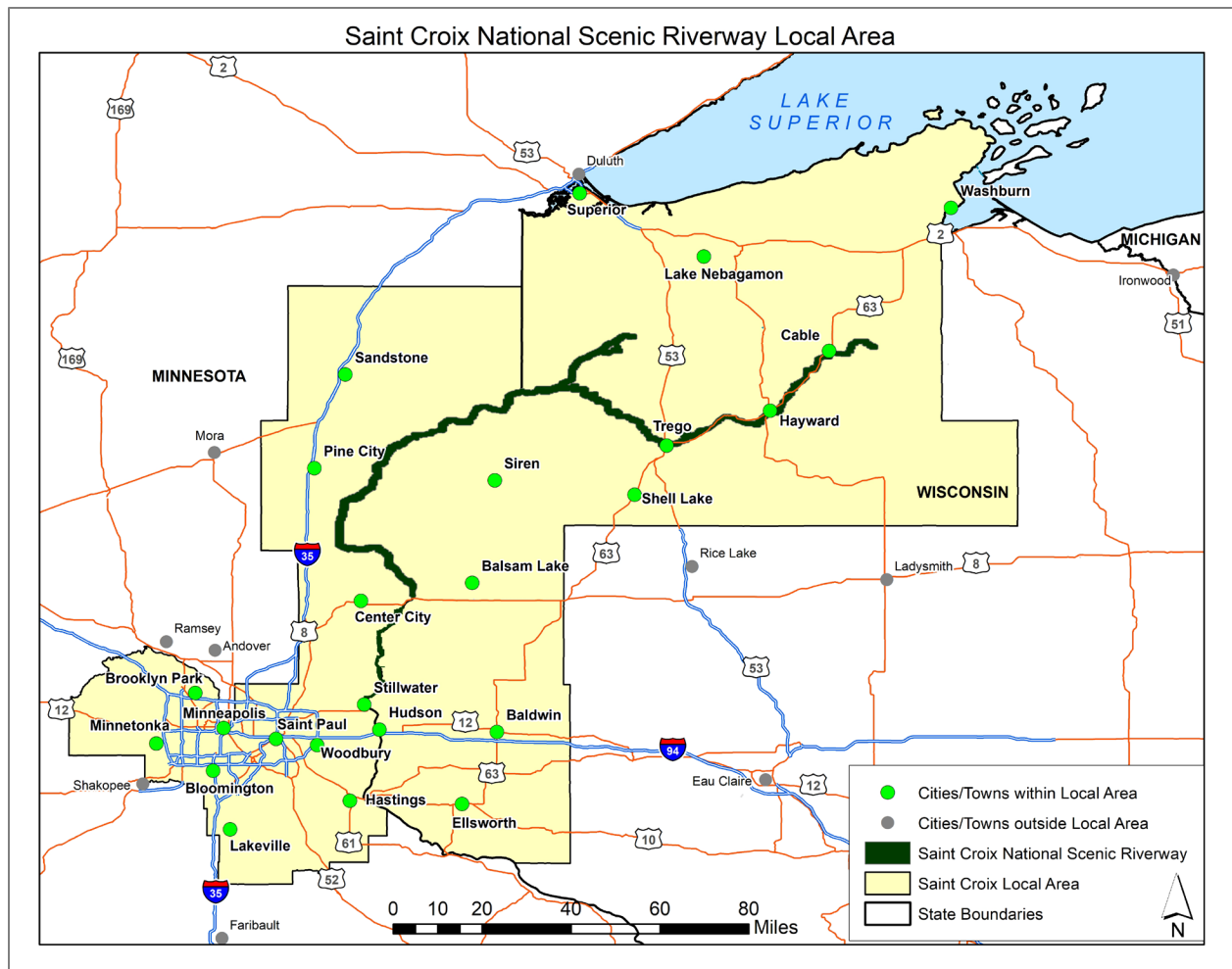


Figure 1. St. Croix NSR local area map.

NPS

Table 1. Intercept surveys conducted within St. Croix NSR.

Intercept Site	Completed Intercept Surveys	
	Number of Surveys	Percent of Surveys
Osceola Landing	119	19.4%
Earl Park Landing	112	18.3%
St. Croix River Visitor Center	71	11.6%
Minnesota Interstate State Park	48	7.8%
Wisconsin Interstate State Park	44	7.2%
Somerset Landing	37	6.0%
St. Croix Boom Site Landing	29	4.7%
Lions Park Landing	24	3.9%
Wild River State Park	23	3.8%
Hayward Beach	18	2.9%
Sandrock Cliffs Trailhead	18	2.9%
Nevers Dam Landing	12	2.0%
Riverside Landing	10	1.6%
St. Croix State Park	8	1.3%
Whispering Pines Landing	6	1.0%
Trout Run Landing	5	0.8%
Gordon Dam County Park Landing	5	0.8%
Norway Point Landing	5	0.8%
Namekagon River Visitor Center	4	0.7%
County Road K Landing	4	0.7%
Stinnett Landing	3	0.5%
Trego Town Park Landing	3	0.5%
Highway 70 Wayside Landing	3	0.5%
Hayward Landing	1	0.2%
County Road O Landing	1	0.2%

Sampling Period and Procedure

Intercept Survey

The onsite intercept survey is designed to rapidly collect visitor information as tablet-based responses, reaching the largest possible sample for the highest priority visitor information. The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of July 12th through July 23rd, 2024. A sample of visitors was intercepted while visiting St. Croix NSR across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. The majority of respondents were visitors on foot at these locations.

Surveyors approached potential respondent groups at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and invite them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in St. Croix NSR (NPS 2024). Within the group, the adult with the next upcoming birthday was asked to participate. If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a St. Croix NSR employee, and had not previously taken the survey) and agreed to participate in the study, the surveyor verbally administered the survey questions and recorded the responses on a handheld tablet device. If the visitor did not agree, surveyors asked if they would be willing to answer three non-response bias questions (see the Non-Response Bias Analysis section, below). Upon complete or partial refusal, the surveyor would thank the visitor for their time, log the non-response, and approach the next visitor group.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were invited to participate in a post-trip survey by mail-back or online response. Those who agreed to participate were given an envelope containing a printed copy of the post-trip survey with a postage paid envelope for mailing it back, as well as a hyperlink and instructions for accessing it online. As part of the intercept protocol, surveyors logged a unique identifier (four-digit code) from the envelope into the tablet for future connection to the post-trip survey.

Therefore, four potential outcomes were possible when intercepting visitors (see Table 2):

1. Complete refusal, refused to answer any questions, including non-response bias questions;
2. Partial refusal, answered non-response bias questions but nothing further;
3. Completed intercept, but refused to take post-trip survey; or
4. Completed intercept and took post-trip survey.

Table 2. Response outcomes—St. Croix NSR intercept survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	649
Complete refusals	8
Partial refusals (non-response bias questions completed)	28
Intercept surveys completed	613
Post-trip surveys distributed	599
Intercept response rate	94.5%
Post-trip acceptance rate	97.7%

During the sampling period, six surveyors were stationed simultaneously at different sampling sites from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm (with the exception of the Visitor Center, which was sampled from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm to align with hours of operation). Each surveyor worked 10 seven-hour days (approximately six hours of data collection and a one-hour lunch break) and had two days off during the 12-day sampling window.

Post-Trip Survey

The post-trip survey was distributed to participating respondents who completed the intercept survey and then agreed to take a follow-up survey after completing their trip to the NPS unit. This method extended data collection and asked participants to complete the survey after their visit, either through a provided postage-paid envelope, or online via a provided survey link. The post-trip survey covers visitor trip spending details, travel patterns, and perceptions of their recent visit (NPS 2024). Both the intercept survey and the post-trip survey were tagged with a unique identifier (four-digit code) for each respondent so their onsite intercept responses could be paired with their post-trip responses. Numbers were assigned at random to the individual. The use of this code allows the data to be joined, while keeping all surveys confidential and removing respondents' identifying information. Joining the two datasets provides a more complete picture of in-park experiences and post-visit perceptions.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were asked for their physical mailing address or email address. This allowed for a reminder postcard or email to be sent to all respondents who provided contact information about a week following the end of each onsite data collection period. This postcard or email thanked respondents for their original participation and encouraged them to complete the post-trip survey if they had not already done so.

Three weeks after postcard mailing, a second contact (with the same unique IDs) was delivered to all outstanding addresses/emails, noting that the individual's completed questionnaire had yet to be received. The mailed survey packets included replacement surveys and postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes. A final contact was mailed/emailed to all remaining non-respondents four weeks after sending the second contact (i.e., first full replacement survey). Table 3 shows response rates for the post-trip survey.

Table 3. Response outcomes—St. Croix NSR post-trip survey.

Outcome	Total
Post-trip surveys distributed	599
Valid post-trip surveys completed	193
Response rate	32.2%

Non-Response Bias Analysis

To account for potential biases between respondents and non-respondents, three questions were asked of eligible visitors contacted who did not wish to participate in the survey. The responses to these three questions can then be compared to both the larger group of respondents who completed the intercept survey, and the smaller group who completed both the intercept and post-trip surveys.

The Office of Management and Budget recommends testing for non-response bias when a response rate is less than 80%. With an intercept survey response rate of 94.5%, concern over intercept non-response is muted. However, because the post-trip survey response rate (32.2%) did not meet the minimum threshold, bias testing was conducted to evaluate differences between those respondents who completed the full survey (both intercept and post-trip), and those who only completed the intercept portion.

A chi-square test for homogeneity was performed for two of the three questions to evaluate differences between the groups (the test could not be performed for the third question due to low cell counts). The chi-square test for homogeneity is a statistical test used to determine whether there is a significant association between categorical variables. It compares observed data with expected frequencies to assess if any deviations are due to chance. A p-value of 0.05 is used as the indicated threshold of this significance; p-values of 0.05 or lower indicate significant difference between groups.

The p-values for both questions are above the threshold of 0.05, indicating no significant differences between those who completed the intercept survey only, and those who completed both the intercept and follow-up surveys on these measures. Based on the variables measured, this section of the study does not have a bias due to non-response. Results of the bias testing are shown in Tables 4 through 6.

Table 4. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around St. Croix NSR?” Note: p-value = 0.31.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	146	76.4%	306	72.5%
No	45	23.6%	116	27.5%

Table 5. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: chi-square test cannot be performed due to low cell counts.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	191	100.0%	418	99.1%
No	0	0.0%	4	0.9%

Table 6. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in St. Croix NSR and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value = 0.77.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	25.7%	113	26.8%
No	142	74.3%	309	73.2%

Results

Results are presented separately for both the intercept and post-trip surveys throughout the following section. To preserve the data for additional analyses, outliers for open-ended numeric questions (e.g., nights spent, days in local area, etc.) have not been removed. Given these outliers, medians are shown instead of means throughout the report, in order to better represent the central tendency. Some questions were omitted because they were not applicable to this report.

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 613 visitor intercept surveys conducted in St. Croix NSR from July 12th through 23rd, 2024. All results are presented in this report, regardless of sample size, which varies by question. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$. Categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around St. Croix NSR. Permanent and seasonal residents were then asked for their ZIP code within the local area. Respondents who do not reside permanently or seasonally in the local area were asked if they currently live in the U.S., and if so, for their ZIP code. Figure 2 depicts responses to this group of questions.

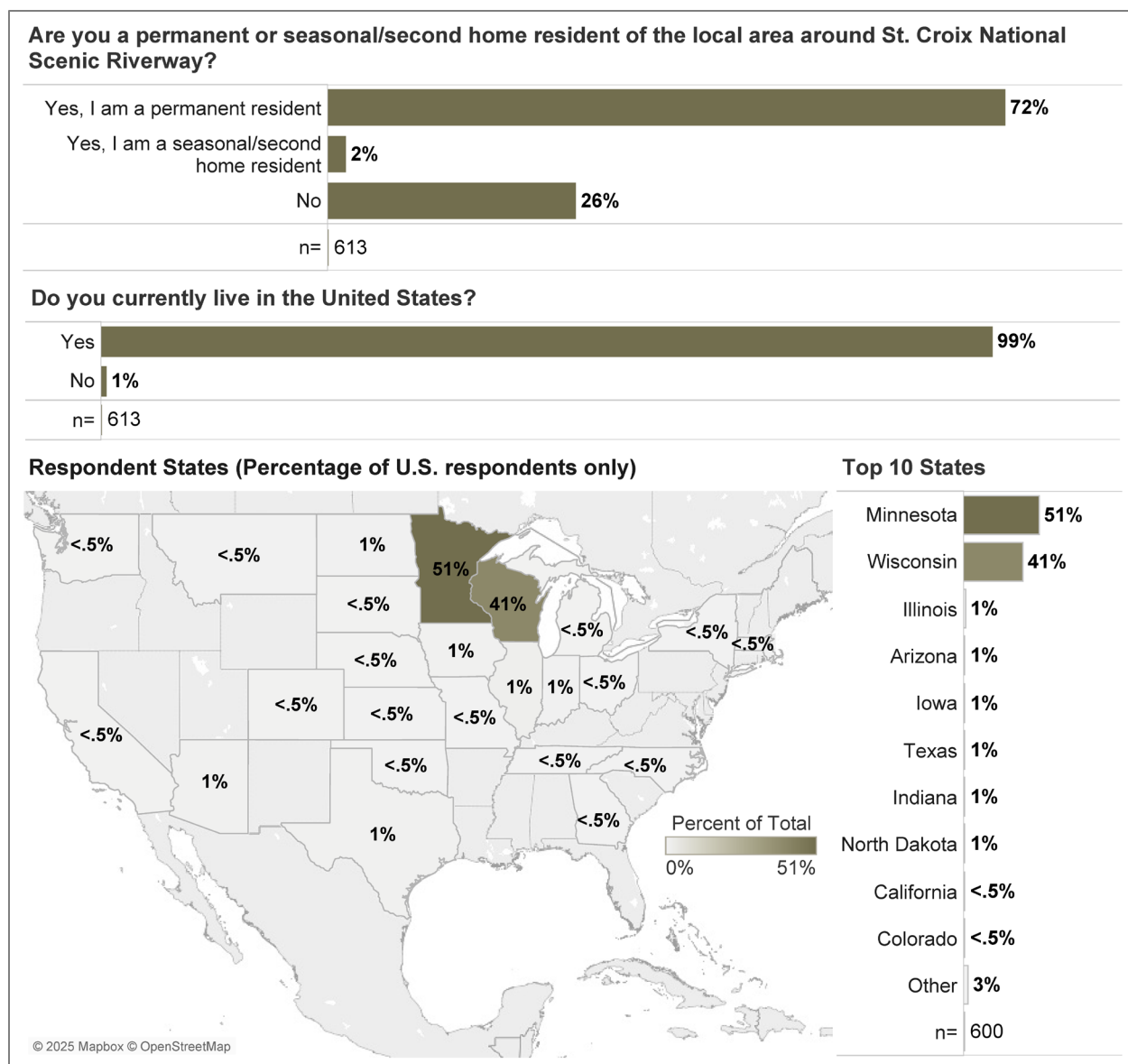


Figure 2. Respondent residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors surveyed at St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (a combined 74%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around St. Croix NSR.
- There was a large geographic concentration of respondents from Minnesota and Wisconsin (where St. Croix NSR is located).
- Among the 99% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 51% reside in Minnesota, followed by Wisconsin (41%).

Question 3: Trip Purpose

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area were asked about the purpose for their overall trip away from home, while permanent or seasonal residents of the local area were asked about the purpose of their trip away from home “today,” the day they were intercepted in the park. Figure 3 depicts responses to this group of questions.

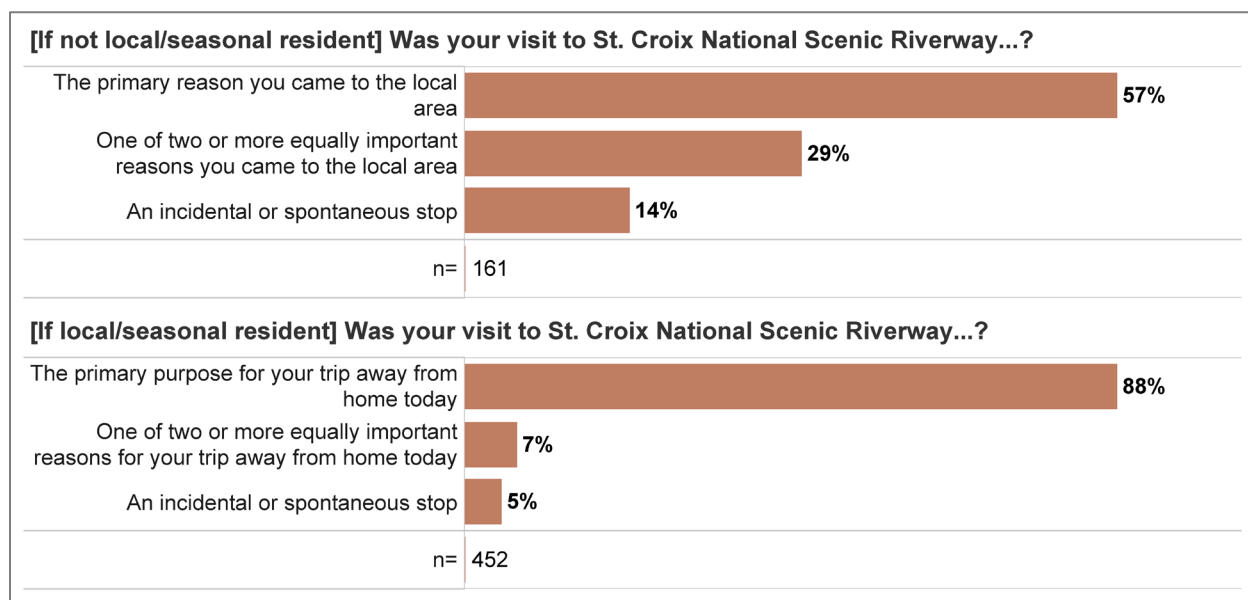


Figure 3. Role of St. Croix NSR in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- A majority (57%) of respondents who resided outside the local area (i.e., St. Croix National Scenic Riverway local area, as depicted in Figure 1) stated that their visit to St. Croix NSR was the primary reason for their trip to the area.
- For just over a quarter (29%) of non-local respondents, visiting St. Croix NSR was one of two or more equally important reasons that brought them to the area.
- The remaining 14% of non-local respondents indicated their visit to St. Croix NSR was an incidental or spontaneous stop while they were already in the area.
- Among permanent or seasonal local resident respondents, most (88%) stated that visiting St. Croix NSR was the primary reason for their trip away from home on the day they were contacted, while seven percent indicated that visiting St. Croix NSR was one of two or more equally important reasons for their trip, and five percent stated that it was a spontaneous or incidental stop.

Question 4: Length of Stay

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around St. Croix NSR were also asked how many days they planned to spend within that local area, including days spent in the park. All respondents, regardless of residency, were asked whether they would be staying overnight away from their permanent residence within the local area. Responses to both of these questions are depicted in Figure 4.

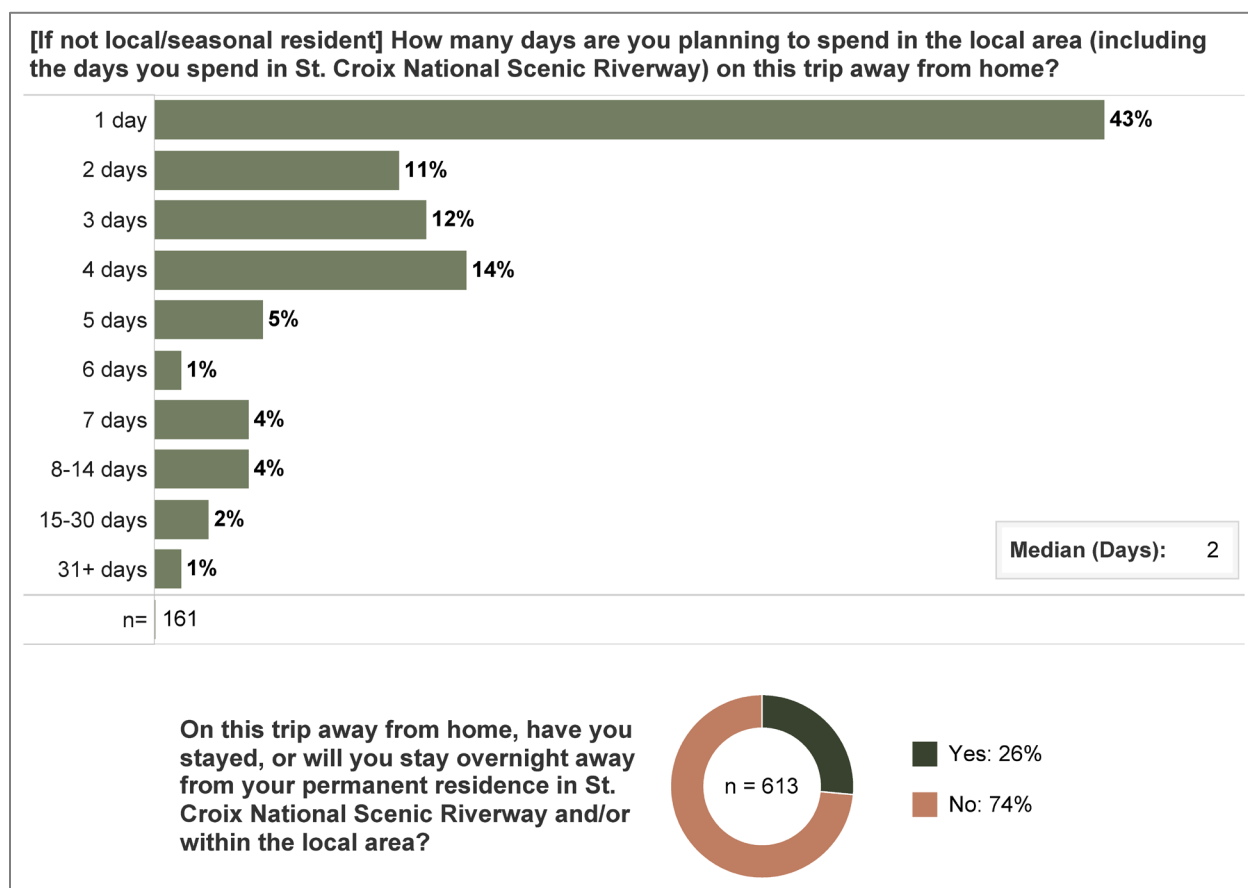


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- A plurality of non-local respondents (43%) spent one day in the local area, while 11% spent two days, 12% spent three days, and 14% spent four days. The median length of stay was two days.
- Additionally, about a quarter of all respondents (26%; including permanent/seasonal residents) had stayed or planned to stay overnight away from their permanent residence in the park and/or in the local area.

Questions 5–6: Overnight Visitors

If respondents indicated that they stayed overnight in the local area, they were asked about the type(s) of accommodation they used or planned to use while there (Figure 5).

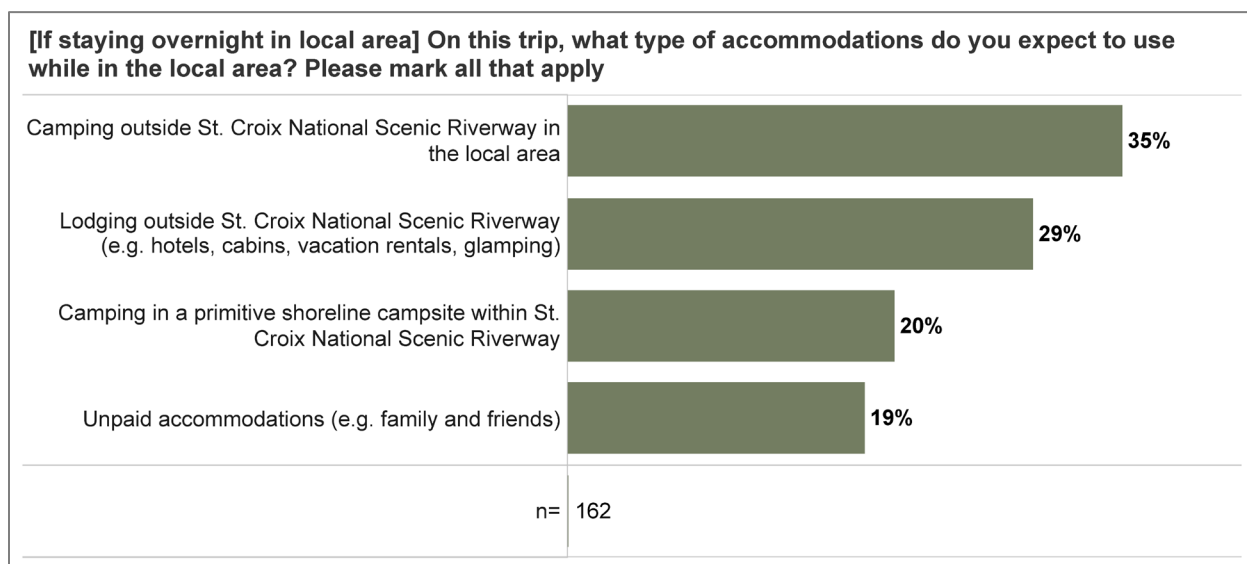


Figure 5. Accommodation types used by overnight visitors within St. Croix NSR and in the local area surrounding it.

NPS

- More than one-third of overnight respondents (35%) camped outside of St. Croix NSR in the local area.
- This was followed in prevalence by lodging in the local area (29%), camping in primitive shoreline campsites within St. Croix NSR (20%), and unpaid accommodations (19%).

Respondents were then asked to indicate the number of nights they spent or would spend in each accommodation type (Figure 6).

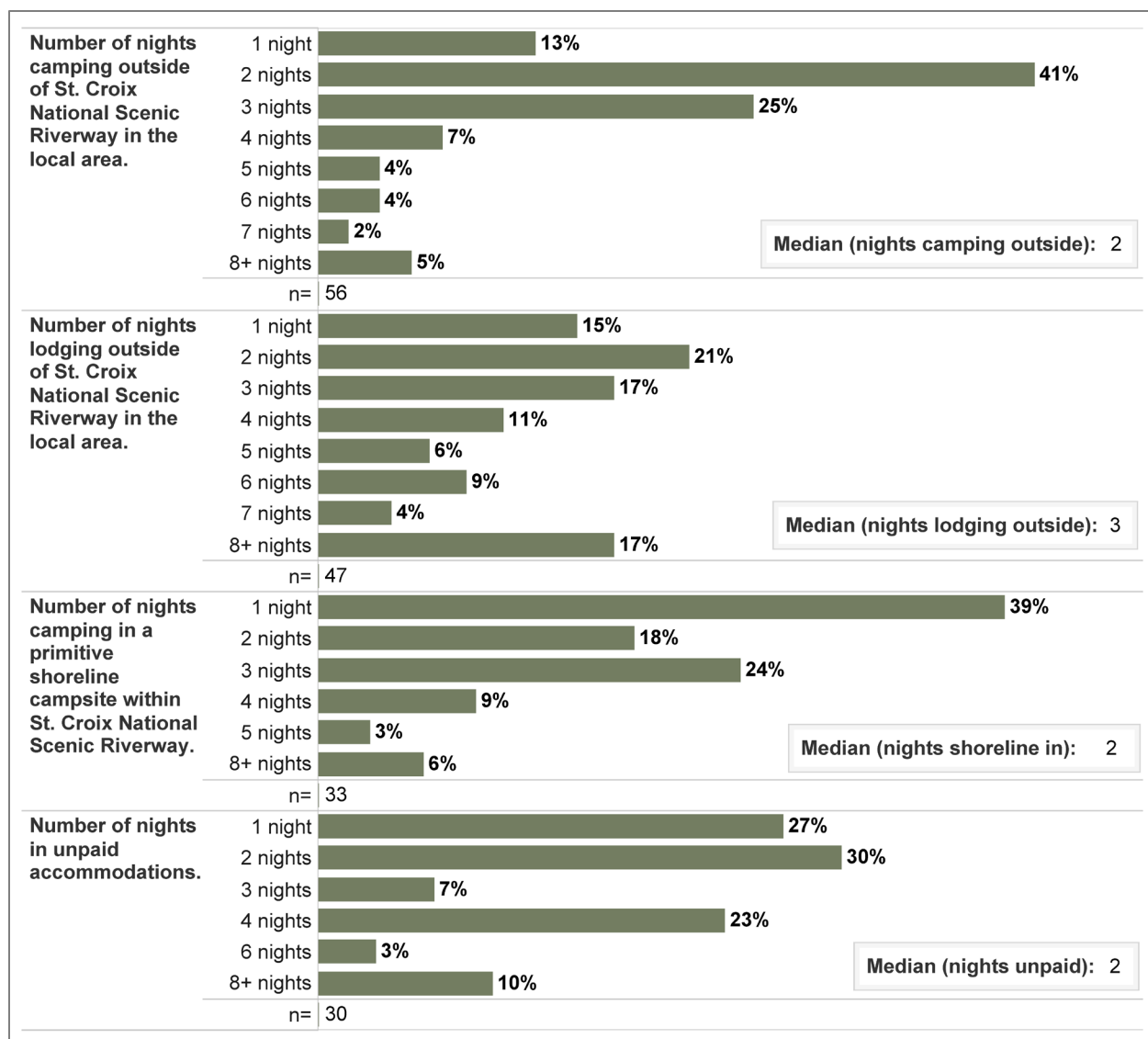


Figure 6. Number of nights spent within St. Croix NSR and in the local area surrounding it, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 8](#).

NPS

- Among the 35% of overnight respondents who camped outside of St. Croix NSR (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights. The majority (54%) of campers spent two nights or fewer camping in the local area during this trip; 79% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 29% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of St. Croix NSR in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was three nights. More than one-third (36%) lodged two nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 53% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 20% of overnight respondents who camped in primitive shoreline campsites within St. Croix NSR (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights. The majority (57%) of campers spent two nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; 81% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 19% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights. The majority (57%) stayed in unpaid accommodation for two nights or fewer; 64% spent three nights or fewer.

Questions 9–11: Party Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate how many adults (18 or older) and children (under 18) were in their personal group during their visit to St. Croix NSR (Figure 7). A personal group was defined as the visitor and companions with whom they visited the park, such as a spouse, family, and/or friends, but respondents were informed not to account for the larger group with whom they may have traveled, such as a school, church, scout, or tour group.

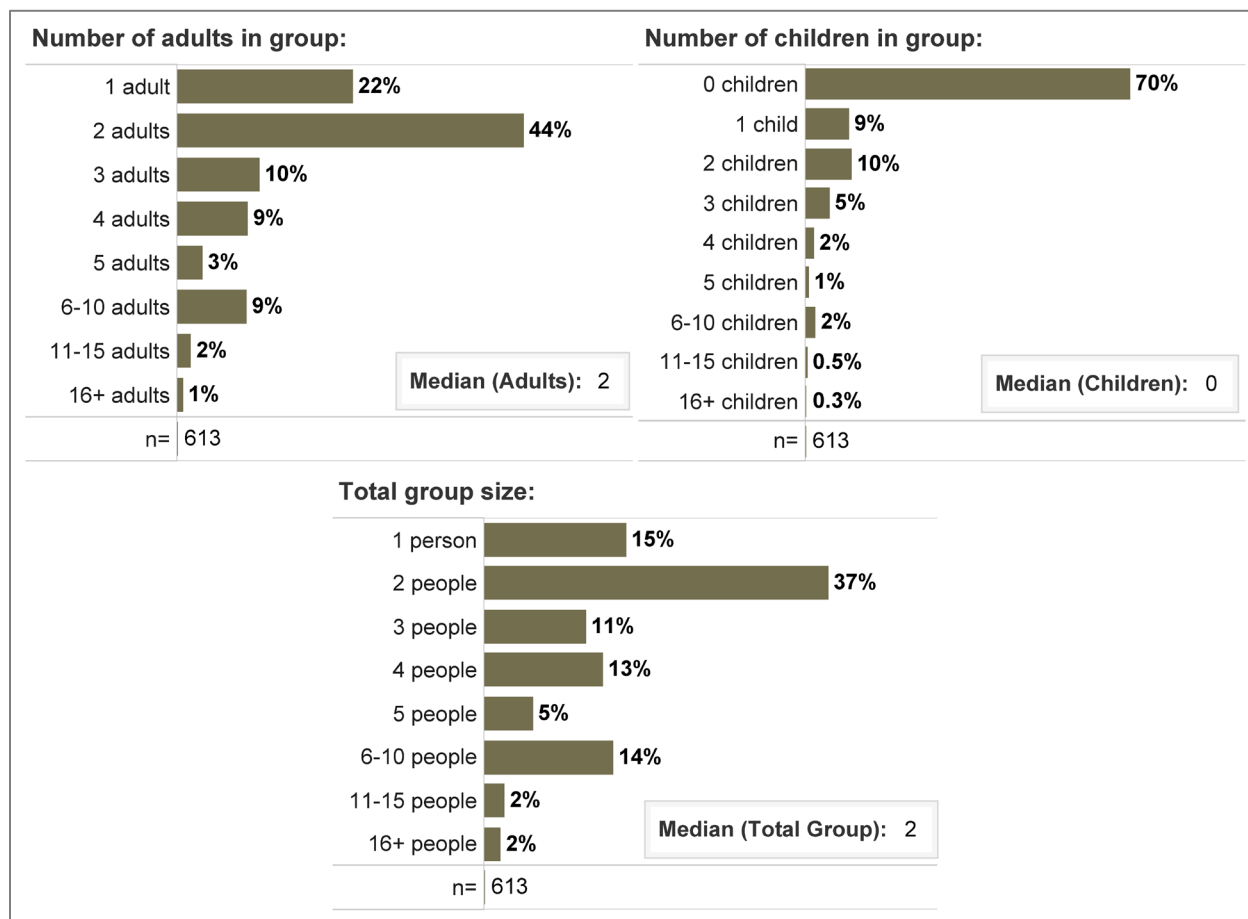


Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 9](#).
NPS

- The median number of adults per group was two. Nearly half of all groups (44%) included two adults.
- Most groups (70%) did not include any children.
- The median total number of people (adults and children) per group was two.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 8). These data show the true age distribution of respondent groups sampled at St. Croix NSR.

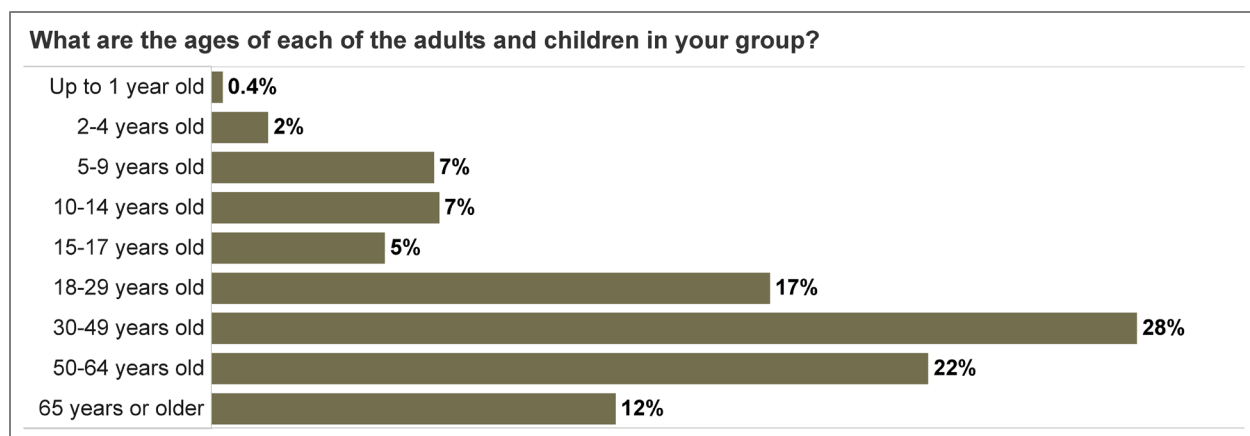


Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting St. Croix NSR.
NPS

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 30 to 49 years old (28%), followed by 50 to 64 years old (22%), and 18 to 29 years old (17%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of 21.4% of group members.

Questions 14–18: Park Use Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit St. Croix NSR for more than one day, and then a series of follow-up questions about the length of time they might spend in the park (Figure 9 and Table 7).

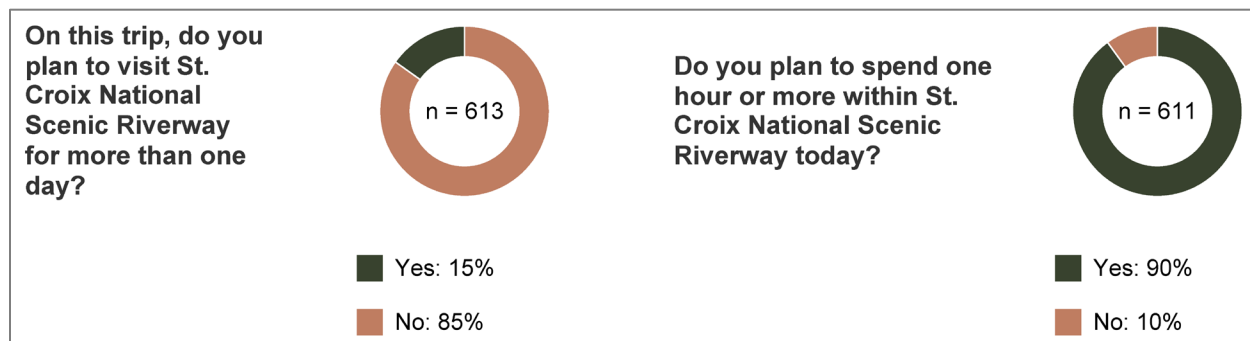


Figure 9. Length of time spent within St. Croix NSR on this trip.

NPS

- Most respondents (90%) planned to spend one hour or more within St. Croix NSR on the day they were surveyed. Among these visitors, the median length of time spent in the park “today” was three hours.
- Among the 10% of respondents who planned to spend less than an hour within the park on the day they were surveyed, the median length of anticipated visit was 30 minutes.
- Additionally, most respondents (85%) were planning to spend just a single day in St. Croix NSR on their trip. Among the 15% of respondents who planned to visit for more than one day, the median length of visit was two days.
- Those respondents who spent more than one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was two days.

Table 7. Length of time spent within St. Croix NSR on this trip.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within St. Croix NSR today?	61	30
[If planning to spend one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within St. Croix NSR today?	541	3
[If planning to visit more than one day] How many days do you plan to spend within St. Croix NSR on this trip?	94	2
[If planning to visit more than one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	93	2

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the most recent entrance they used to enter St. Croix NSR (Figure 10).

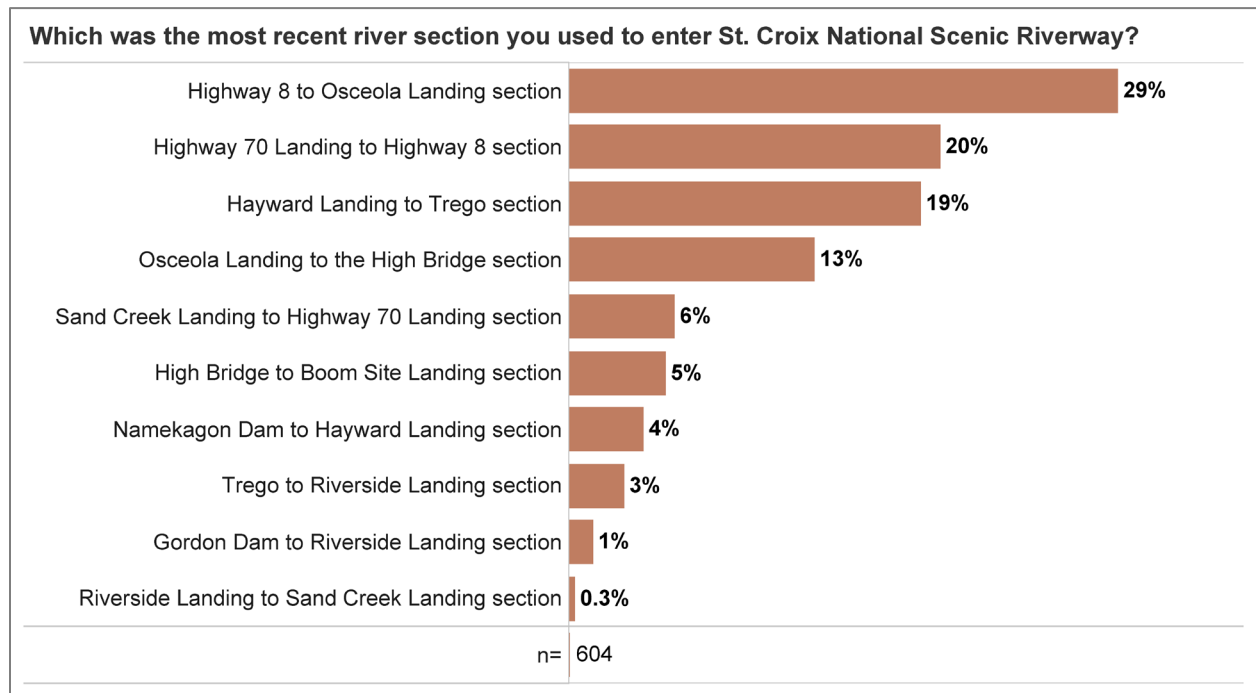


Figure 10. Most recent entrance used to enter St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- Among respondents, Highway 8 to Osceola Landing was the section of the river that was most commonly used to enter St. Croix NSR (29%).
- Other sections of river that were commonly used by respondents include the Highway 70 Landing to Highway 8 section (20%), the Hayward Landing to Trego section (19%), and the Osceola Landing to High Bridge section (13%).
- Due to park geography and proximity of intercept sites to entrances, the results for most recent entrance used were impacted by the volume of visitors intercepted at various sites.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within St. Croix NSR and asked to indicate if they had been to, or planned to visit them, that day (Figure 11).

Considering your visit today, have you been to or do you plan to visit any of the following locations within St. Croix National Scenic Riverway? Please mark all that apply

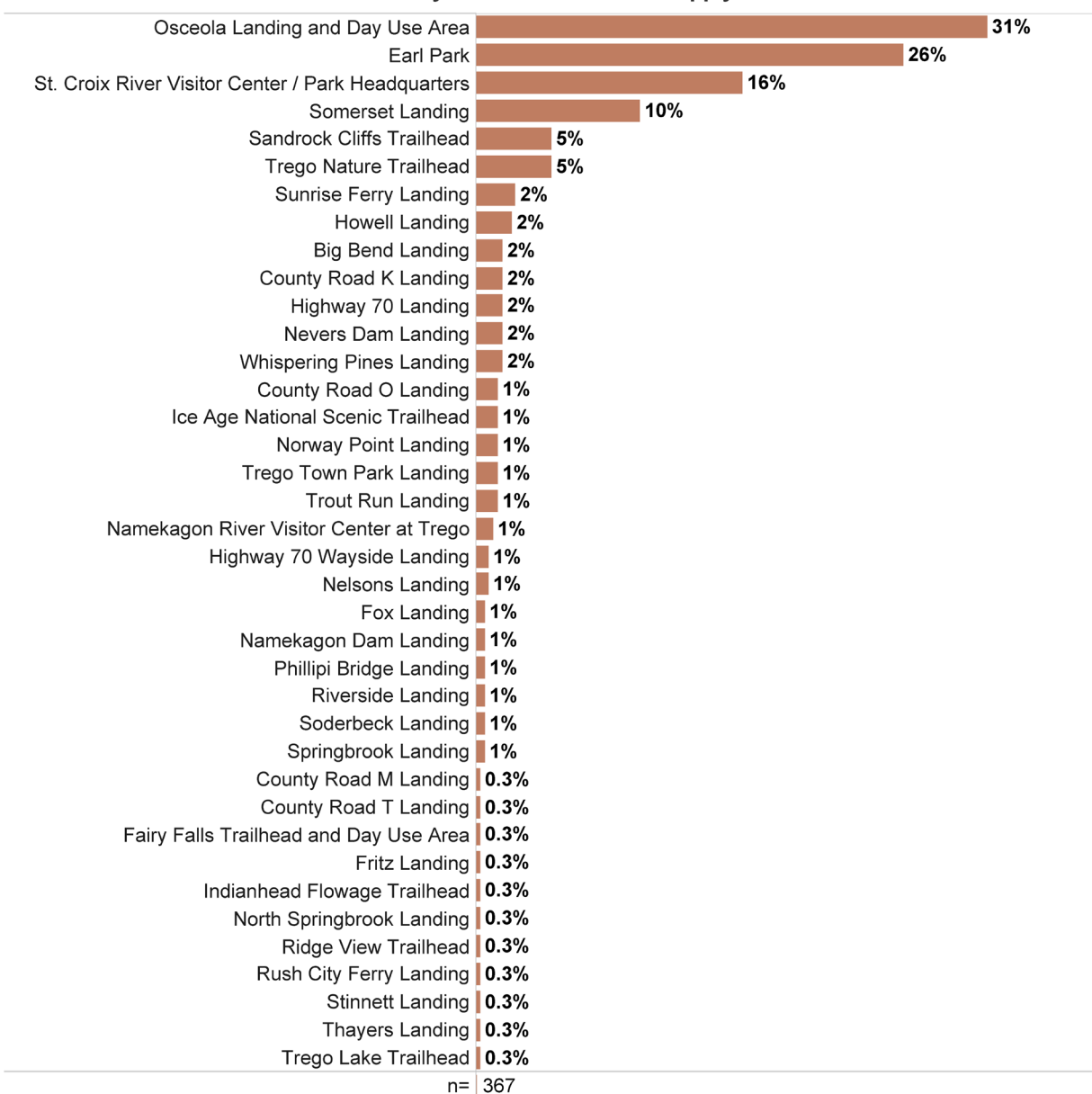


Figure 11. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- The most commonly visited location in St. Croix NSR was Osceola Landing and day use area (31% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by Earl Park (26%) and St. Croix River Visitors Center/Park Headquarters (16%).
- County Road M Landing, County Road T Landing, Fairy Falls Trailhead and day use area, Fritz Landing, Indianhead Flowage Trailhead, North Springbrook Landing, Ridge View Trailhead, Rush City Ferry Landing, Stinnett Landing, Thayer's Landing, and Trego Lake Trailhead were the least-visited locations from the list provided, with only 0.3% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit any of these locations.

Question 19: Transportation

Respondents were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter St. Croix NSR on the day they were surveyed (Figure 12).

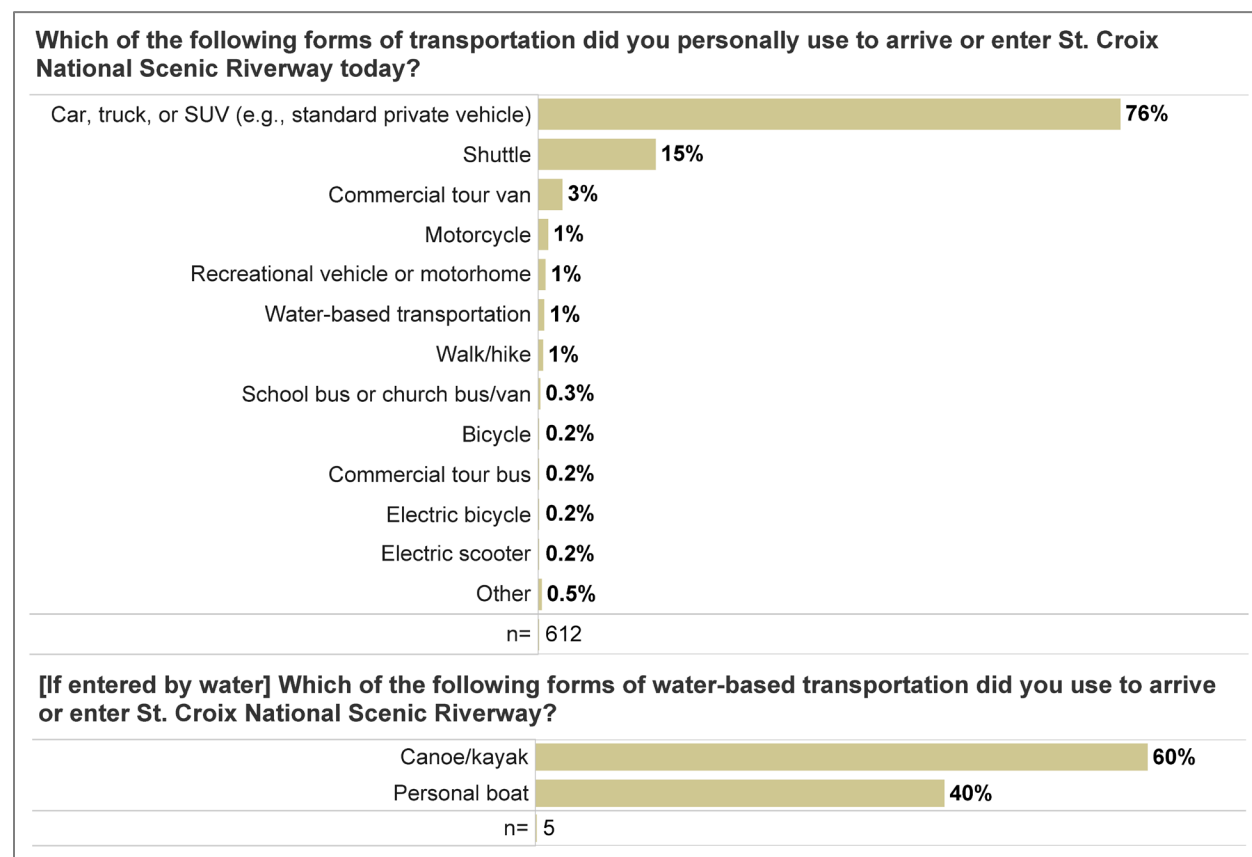


Figure 12. Form of transportation used to enter St. Croix NSR on the day of the survey.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (76%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter St. Croix NSR on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by use of a shuttle (15%), and commercial tour van (3%).
- One percent of respondents arrived at St. Croix NSR in an RV or motorhome, and on a motorcycle.
- Five respondents entered St. Croix NSR in water-based transportation, with 60% using canoes or kayaks, and 40% using a personal motorized boat.

If respondents entered the park using a multi-passenger private vehicle (i.e., car, truck or SUV, recreational vehicle or motorhome, or motorcycle), they were asked to indicate how many people were traveling in or on that vehicle (Figure 13).

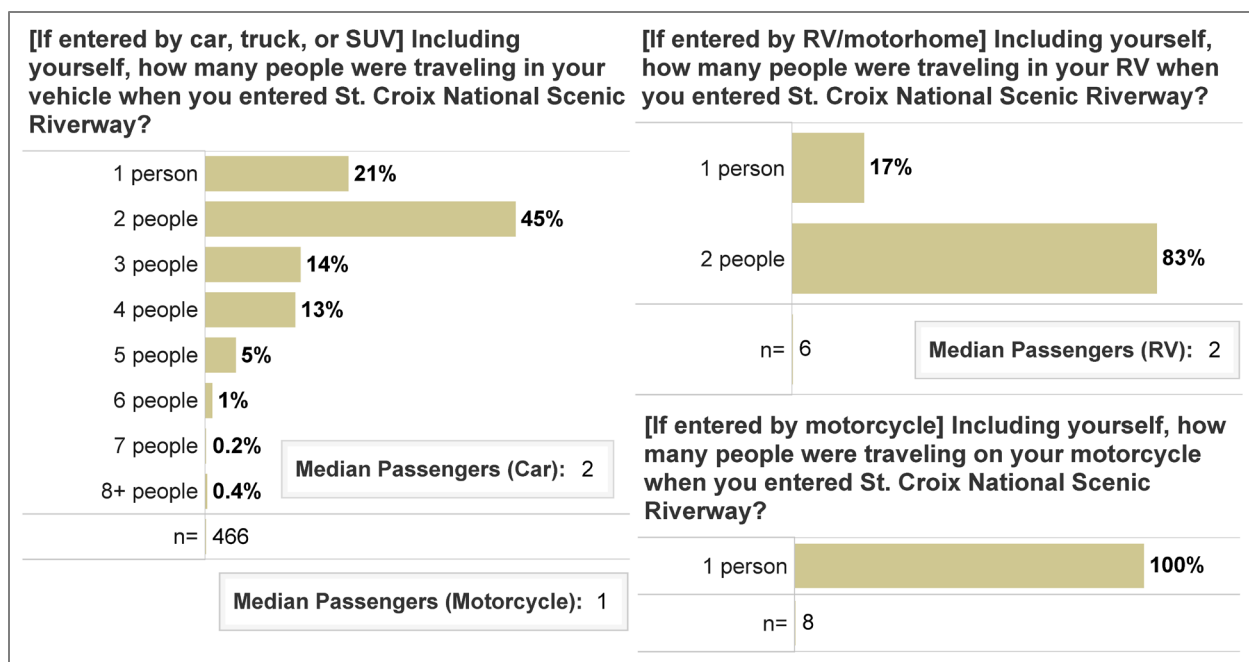


Figure 13. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 10](#).

NPS

- Nearly half (45%) of respondents traveling by car reported two people. The next common group size was one person (21%), followed by three people (14%), and four people (13%).
- Most respondents entering St. Croix NSR by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of two people (83%), followed by one person (17%).
- All eight motorcyclists (100%) were traveling on their own.

Question 21: Previous Visits to St. Croix NSR

Respondents were asked if they were first-time visitors to St. Croix NSR. Repeat visitors were then asked how many visits they have made to St. Croix NSR in the last 12 months and the last five years (Figure 14).

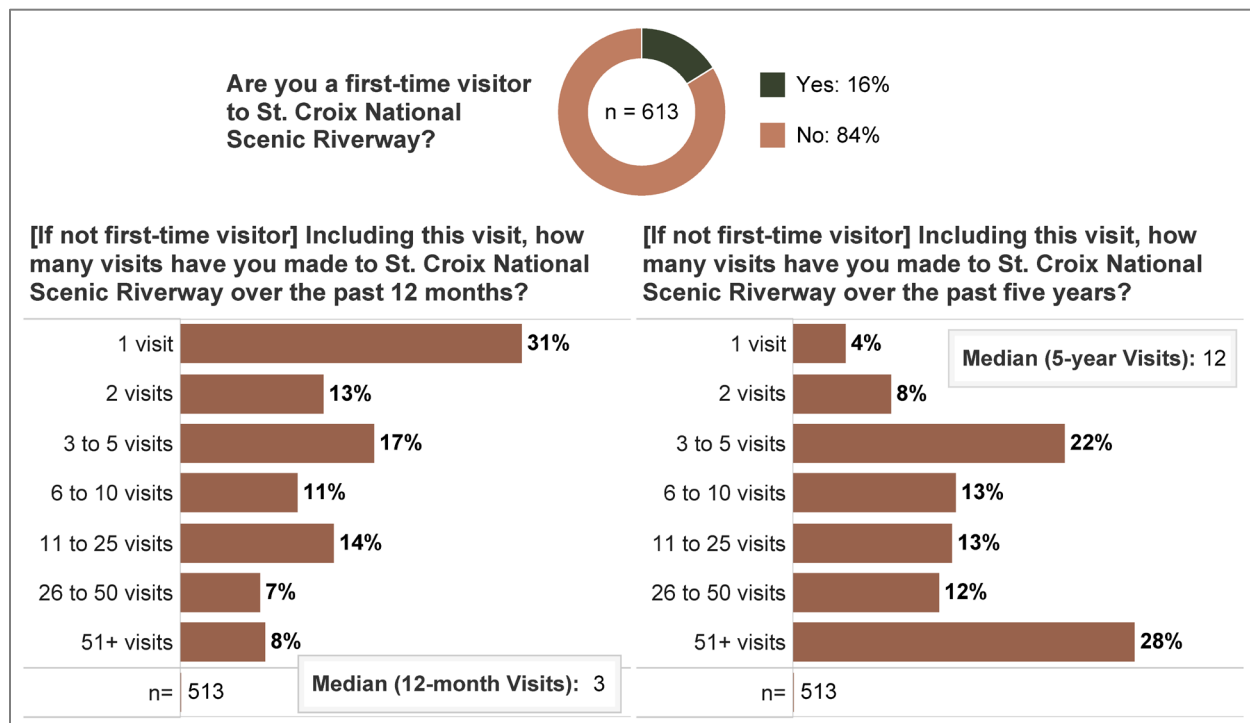


Figure 14. Previous visits to St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- A small percentage of respondents (16%) were on their first-ever trip to St. Croix NSR.
- Among the 84% of respondents who were repeat visitors, about one-third (31%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- However, most repeat visitors (96%) had visited at least one prior time in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was 12, including the current trip; 53% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past five years.

Question 22: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units

Finally, respondents were asked how many visits they made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months (Figure 15).

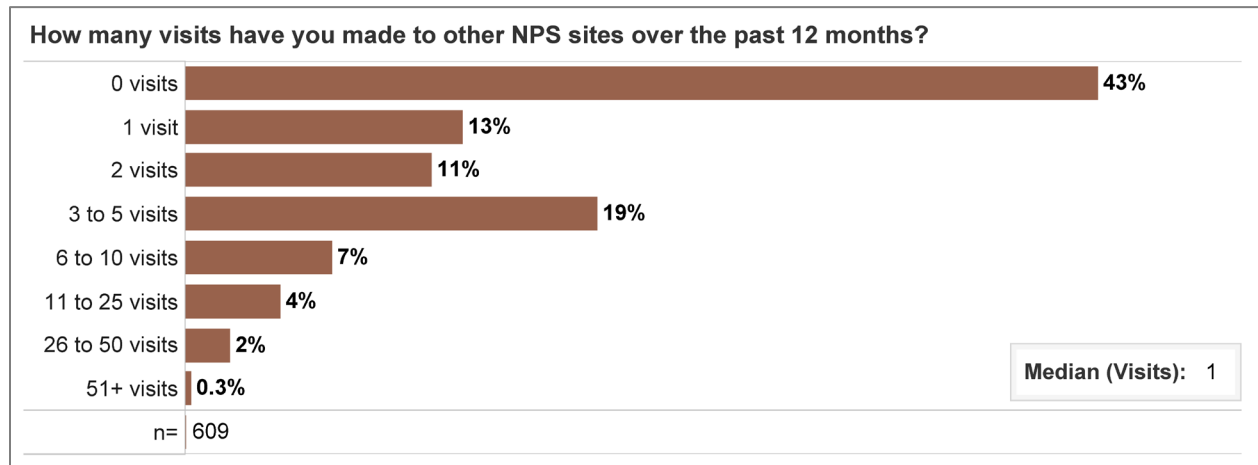


Figure 15. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- Two-thirds (67%) had made at least one visit to other NPS site(s) in the past year.
- The median number of visits made to other NPS site(s) in the past 12 months was one, though a combined 32.3% had made three or more visits in the past year.

Post-Trip Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 193 post-trip visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in St. Croix NSR in summer 2024. Again, caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$, and categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Information About St. Croix NSR

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about St. Croix NSR prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 16).

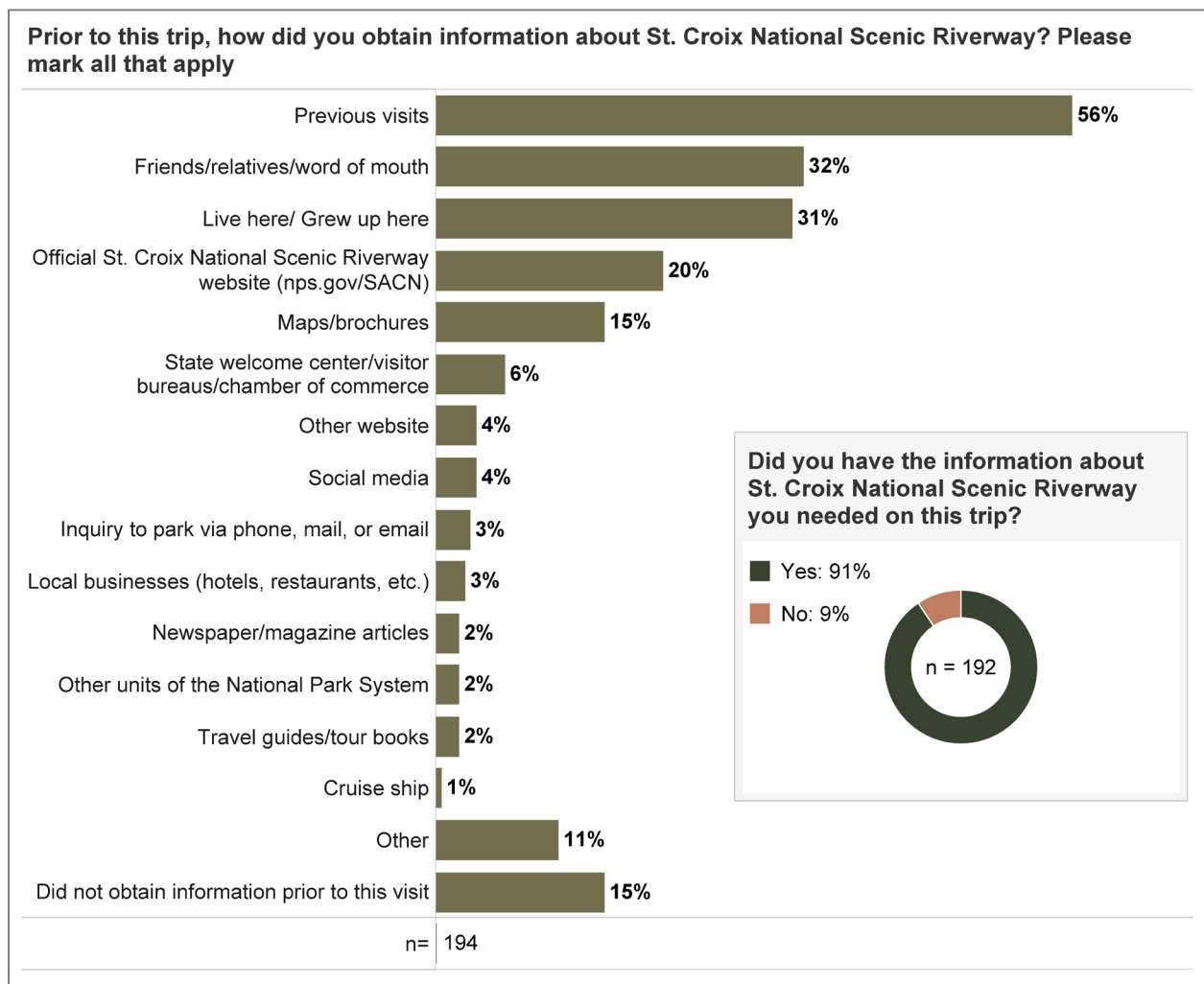


Figure 16. Sources used to obtain information about St. Croix NSR prior to the trip.

NPS

- The most used resource was information from a previous visit, with 56% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was friends, relatives, or word of mouth (32%), followed by information gained by living or growing up in the area (31%), and the official St. Croix NSR website (20%).
- In a follow-up question, 91% of respondents said that they had the information about St. Croix NSR that they needed on their trip, while nine percent indicated that there was information that they needed but did not have.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who did not have the information they needed on this trip were asked to elaborate.

Question 3: Transportation

In the intercept survey, respondents indicated a mode of transportation they used to enter the park on the day of the intercept. In the post-trip survey, respondents were asked to select all forms of transportation they personally used to travel from their home to St. Croix NSR on their trip (Figure 17).

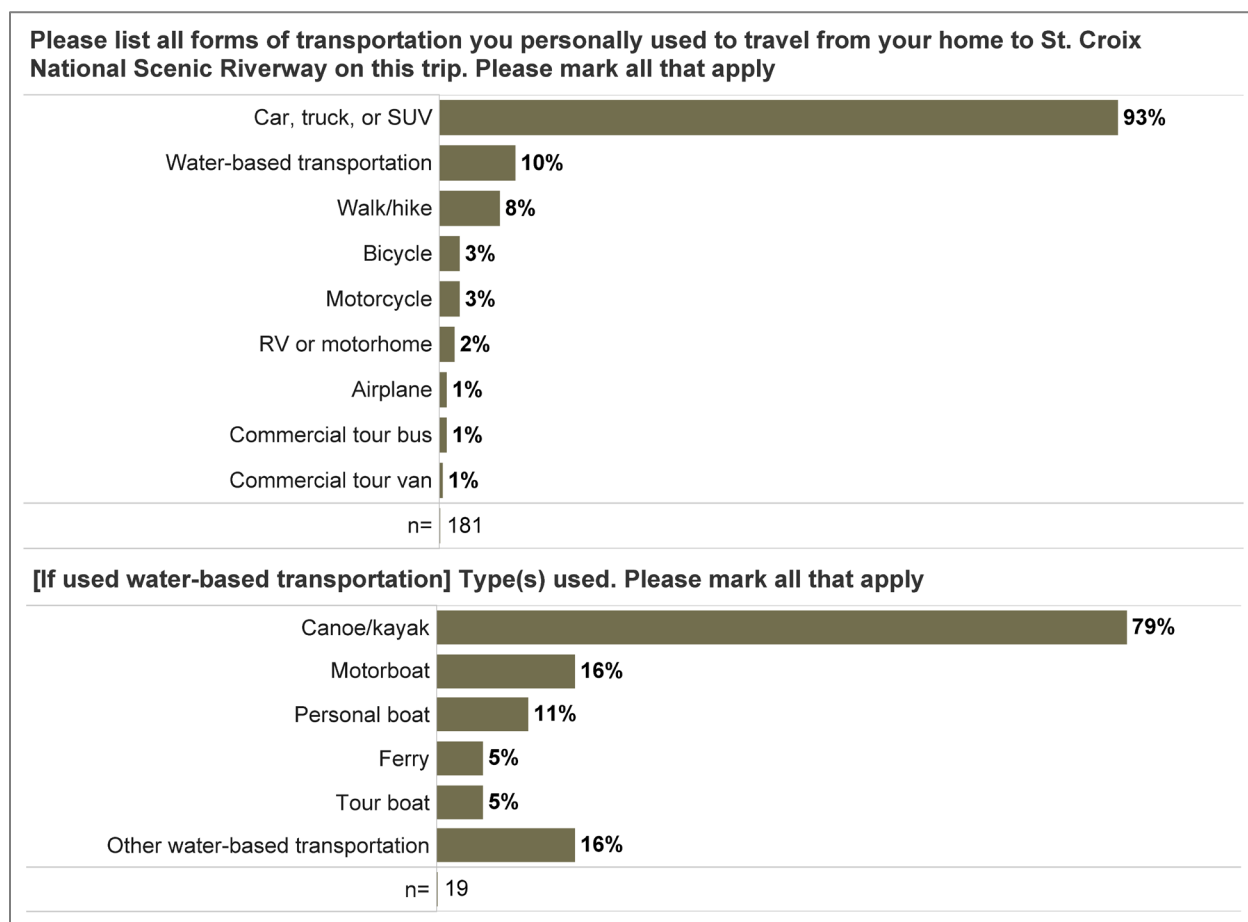


Figure 17. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to St. Croix NSR on the recent trip.

NPS

- Nearly all respondents (93%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to St. Croix NSR.
- The second most common mode of travel was water-based transportation (10%), followed by walking or hiking (8%).
- Of those respondents who used some form of water-based transportation, 79% used canoe or kayak, 16% used a motorboat, 16% used some other form of water-based transportation, and 11% used a personal boat.

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to St. Croix NSR on the day of the survey (Figure 18).

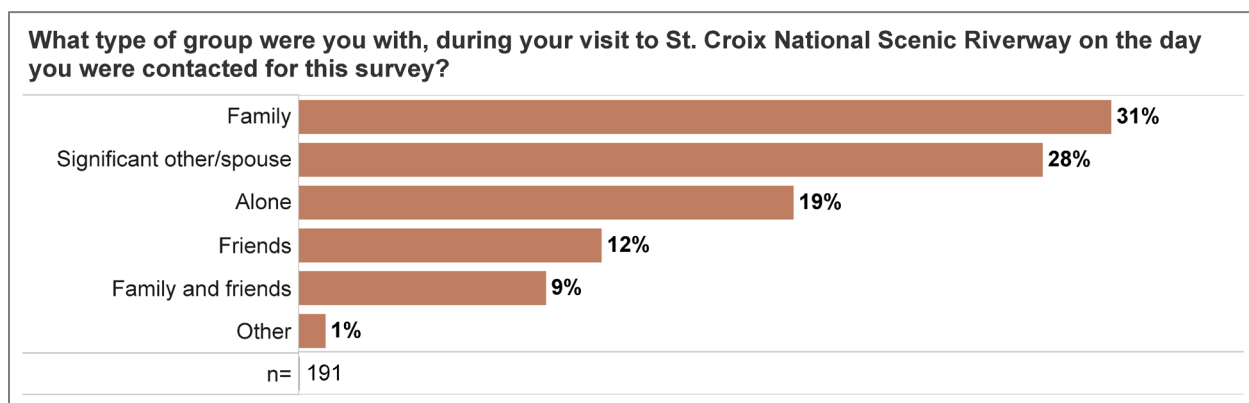


Figure 18. Travel party composition during St. Croix NSR visit.

NPS

- About one-third of respondents (31%) visited St. Croix NSR with their family, while 28% visited with their significant other or spouse, and 19% visited alone on the day of the survey.
- An additional 12% of respondents explored St. Croix NSR with friends, and nine percent visited with family and friends.

Questions 11–13: Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked if they visited other National Park Service sites on their trip away from home (Figure 19).

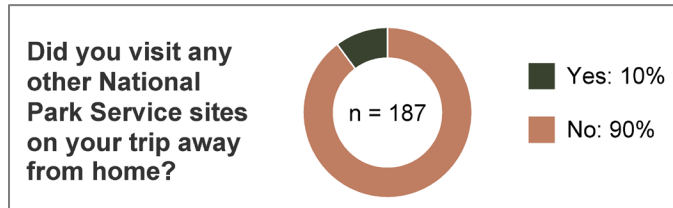


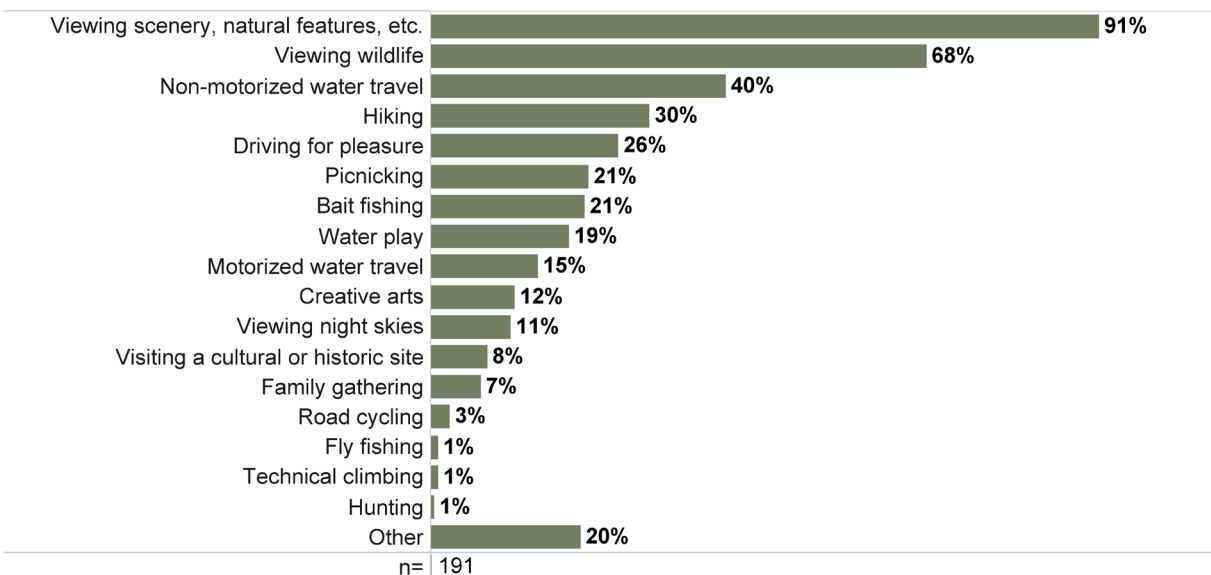
Figure 19. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- A small portion (10%) of all respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 90% identified St. Croix NSR as the only NPS site they visited while away from home.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who had visited other NPS sites on their trip were asked to list which one(s).

Survey respondents were then asked to identify all activities that they participated in while visiting St. Croix NSR, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 20).

On this trip, in which of the following activities did you personally participate in while visiting St. Croix National Scenic Riverway? Please mark all that apply



And which was your primary activity during your visit to St. Croix National Scenic Riverway on the day you were contacted for this survey?

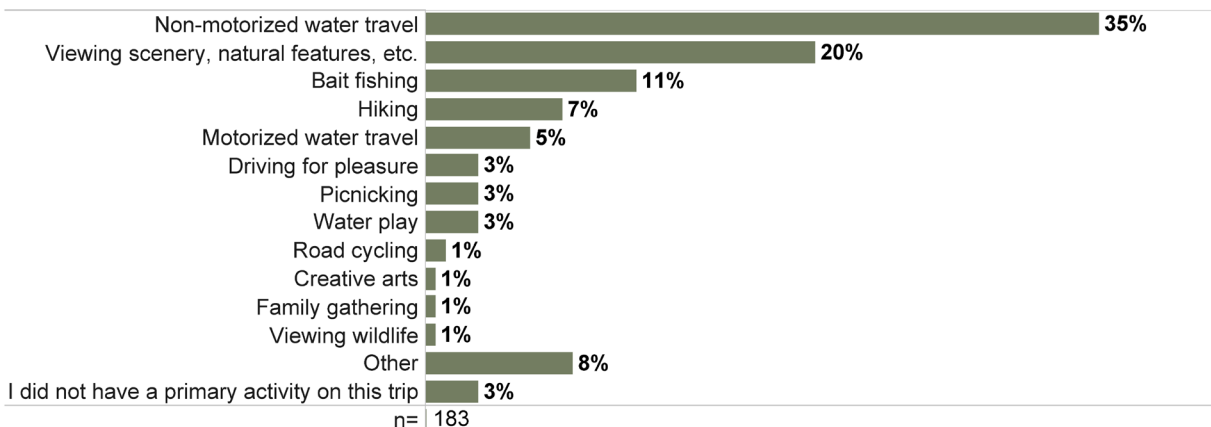


Figure 20. Participation in activities at St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- Most respondents reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (91%), and viewing wildlife (68%).
- Fly fishing, technical climbing, and hunting were all uncommon activities (reported by one percent of respondents).
- More than one-third of respondents (35%) reported non-motorized water travel as their primary activity, followed by viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (20%).
- Notably, while two-thirds of respondents reported viewing wildlife during their trip, only one percent of respondents identified this as their primary activity.

Questions 14–15: Reasons to Visit

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reasons to visit St. Croix NSR on their trip and were then asked which of those was the most important reason for them to visit St. Croix NSR (Figure 21).

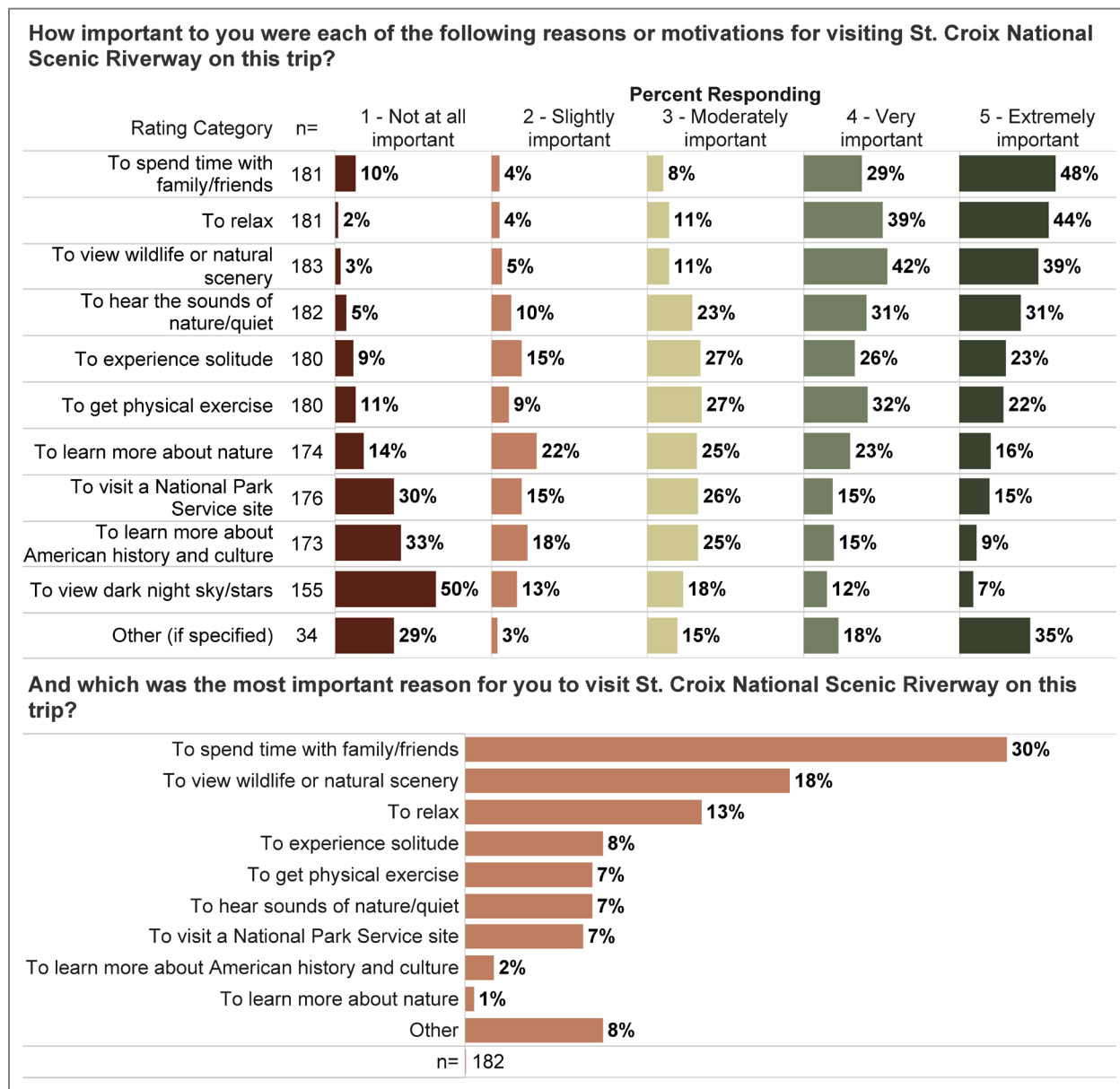


Figure 21. Reasons or motivations to visit St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents chose to spend time with family or friends (48%) and to relax (44%) as extremely important reasons for their trip to St. Croix NSR.
- Other important reasons rated were to view wildlife or natural scenery and to hear the sounds of nature/quiet (39% and 31% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons rated were to learn more about American history and culture and to view dark night sky/stars (only 9% and 7% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 33% and 50% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).
- The most common response about the most important reason was to spend time with family or friends (30%), followed by to view wildlife or natural scenery (18%), and to relax (13%).

Questions 16–18: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services in which they personally participated in St. Croix NSR during their trip (Figure 22).

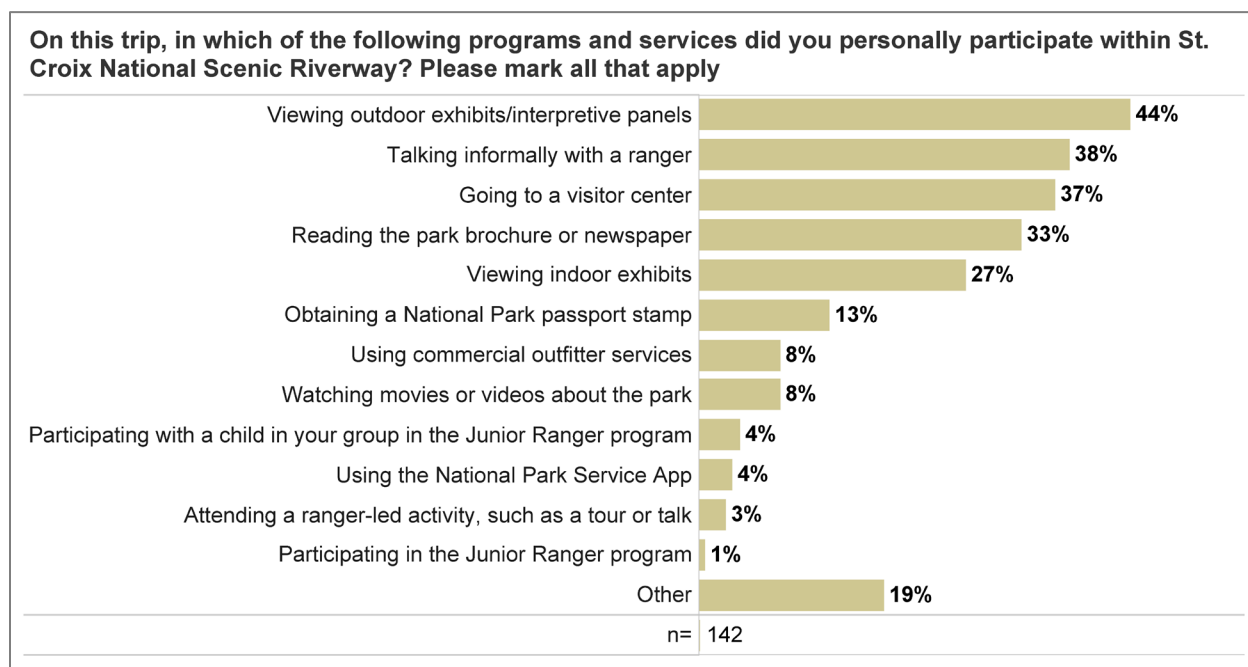


Figure 22. Participation in programs at St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- The three most-used programs were viewing outdoor exhibits and interpretive panels, talking informally with a ranger, and going to a visitor center, with more than one-third of respondents (44%, 38%, and 37% respectively) reporting participating in each of them.
- Two other programs were engaged in by over a quarter of respondents: reading the park newspaper or brochure (33%) and visiting indoor exhibits (27%).

Two follow-up questions asked if respondents learned anything from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture, and what specific subjects they would like to learn about in the future (Figure 23).

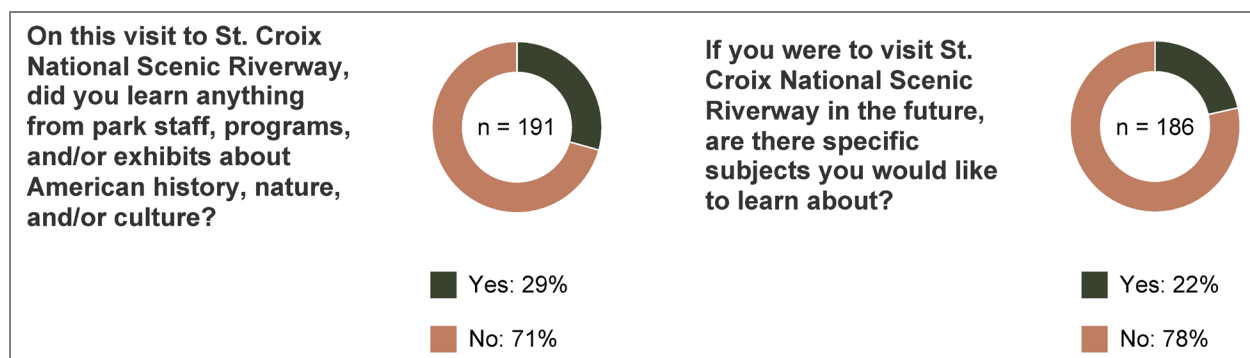


Figure 23. Learning outcomes while visiting St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

NPS

- More than a quarter of respondents (29%) reported that they learned something from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- Nearly a quarter of respondents (22%) reported that if they were to visit St. Croix NSR in the future, there are specific subjects they would like to learn about.
- Respondents who said yes to either of these two questions were asked to elaborate.

Questions 19–20: Use of Devices

Two survey questions were focused on the use of electronic devices, their importance, and the quality of service provided. First, respondents were asked which personal electronic devices they used while in St. Croix NSR (Figure 24).

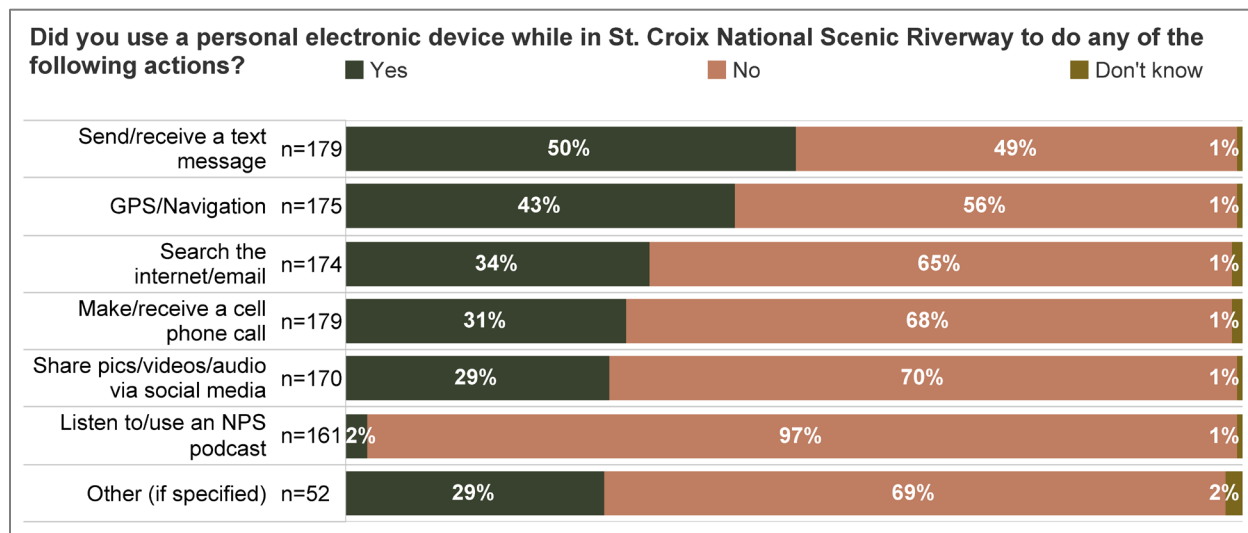


Figure 24. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- Half of respondents (50%) reported sending or receiving a text message, and 43% of respondents reported using GPS/navigation.
- Conversely, only two percent of respondents listened to or used an NPS podcast.

Then, respondents were asked to rate both the importance of each of these electronic device uses (Figure 25), and the quality of their service (Figure 26).

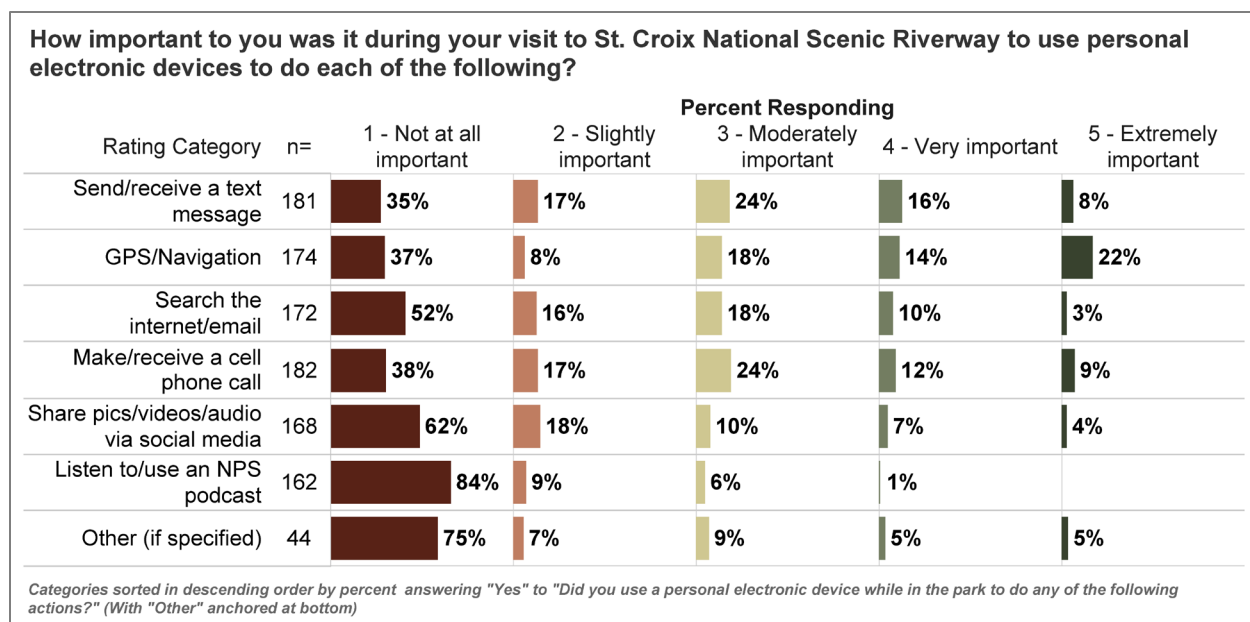


Figure 25. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- The most important device use was GPS/navigation (22% of respondents rated it as extremely important). Notably, for all personal electronic device uses, more respondents considered them not at all important than considered them extremely important.
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important only by no respondents, and not at all important by 84% of respondents.

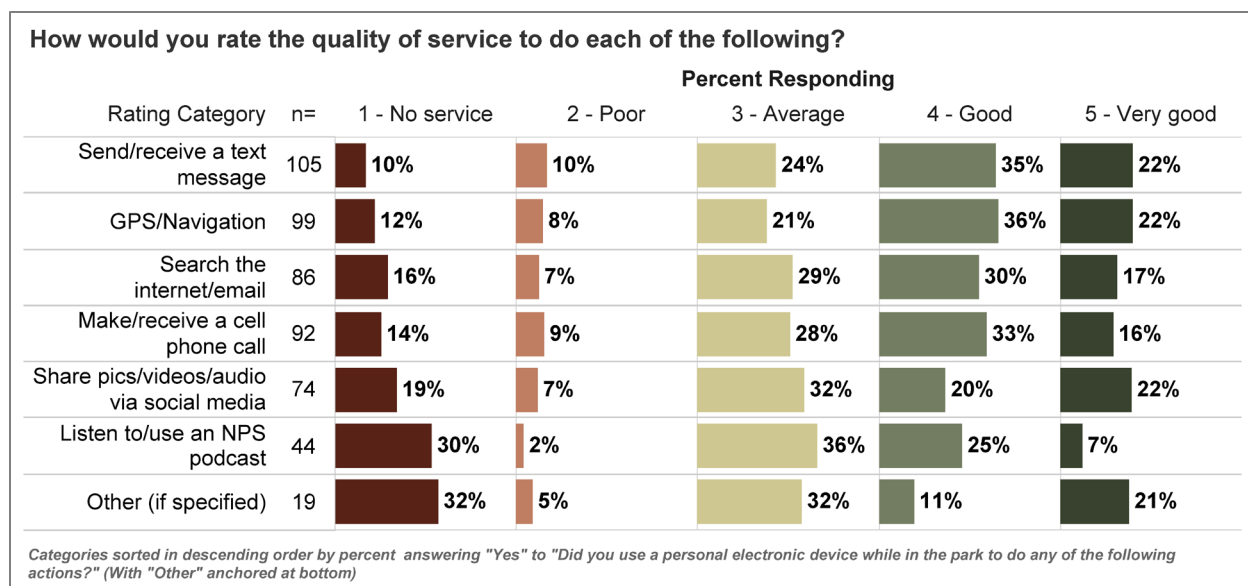


Figure 26. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting St. Croix NSR. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- GPS/navigation was rated as very good or good by 22% and 36% of respondents, respectively. However, 12% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- Varying proportions of respondents (ranged from 10% to 30%, depending on the service) reported that they also had no service to send or receive a text message, search the internet or email, make or receive a cell phone call, share picture, videos, or audio via social media, and listen to an NPS podcast.
- However, a small percentage of respondents (ranging from 7% to 22%, depending on the service) rated these services as very good.

Question 21: Physical Difficulties

Respondents were asked if anyone in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to St. Croix NSR. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 27).

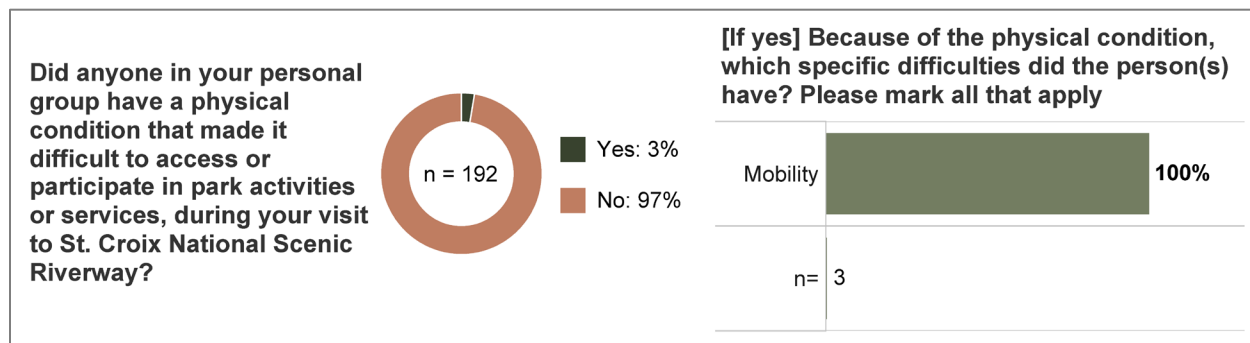


Figure 27. Physical difficulties while visiting St. Croix NSR.

NPS

- Most respondents (97%) reported that nobody in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to St. Croix NSR.
- Among the three percent of respondents who identified at least one difficulty, all reported mobility issues in their group.

Questions 24–27: Visitor Experience

Respondents were asked if their visit to St. Croix NSR met their expectations (Figure 28).

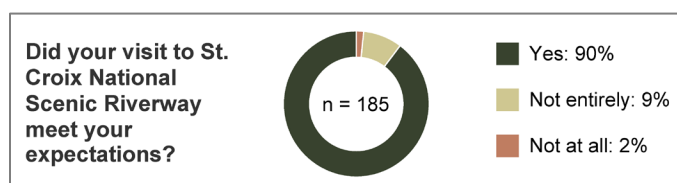


Figure 28. Meeting St. Croix NSR expectations.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (90%) reported that their visit to St. Croix NSR met their expectations, while nine percent of respondents said it did not meet their expectations entirely, and two percent of respondents indicated that it did not meet their expectations at all.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, respondents were asked to elaborate on their responses.

Respondents were then given several statements about St. Croix NSR and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 29).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?						
Rating Category	n=	Percent Responding				
		1 - Strongly Disagree	2 - Somewhat Disagree	3 - Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 - Somewhat Agree	5 - Strongly Agree
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is a safe place to visit	188	1%	2%	2%	13%	82%
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway	156	4%	10%	19%	24%	43%
Historical and cultural features in St. Croix National Scenic Riverway are well maintained/preserved	152	1%	3%	19%	34%	42%
Natural resources in St. Croix National Scenic Riverway are in pristine condition	185	1%	7%	12%	38%	41%
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at St. Croix National Scenic Riverway	165	20%	24%	27%	15%	15%
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	131	17%	24%	37%	17%	5%
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway is too crowded	189	30%	26%	25%	16%	4%

Figure 29. Rating St. Croix NSR experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “St. Croix NSR is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 95% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. This was followed by “natural resources in St. Croix NSR are in pristine condition” and “historical and cultural resources in St. Croix NSR are well maintained/preserved” (79% and 76% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “St. Croix NSR is too crowded” and “St. Croix NSR is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities” received the least support, with only a 20% and 22% of respondents, respectively, either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and 30% and 17% of respondents, respectively, strongly disagreeing with each of them.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in St. Croix NSR (Figure 30).

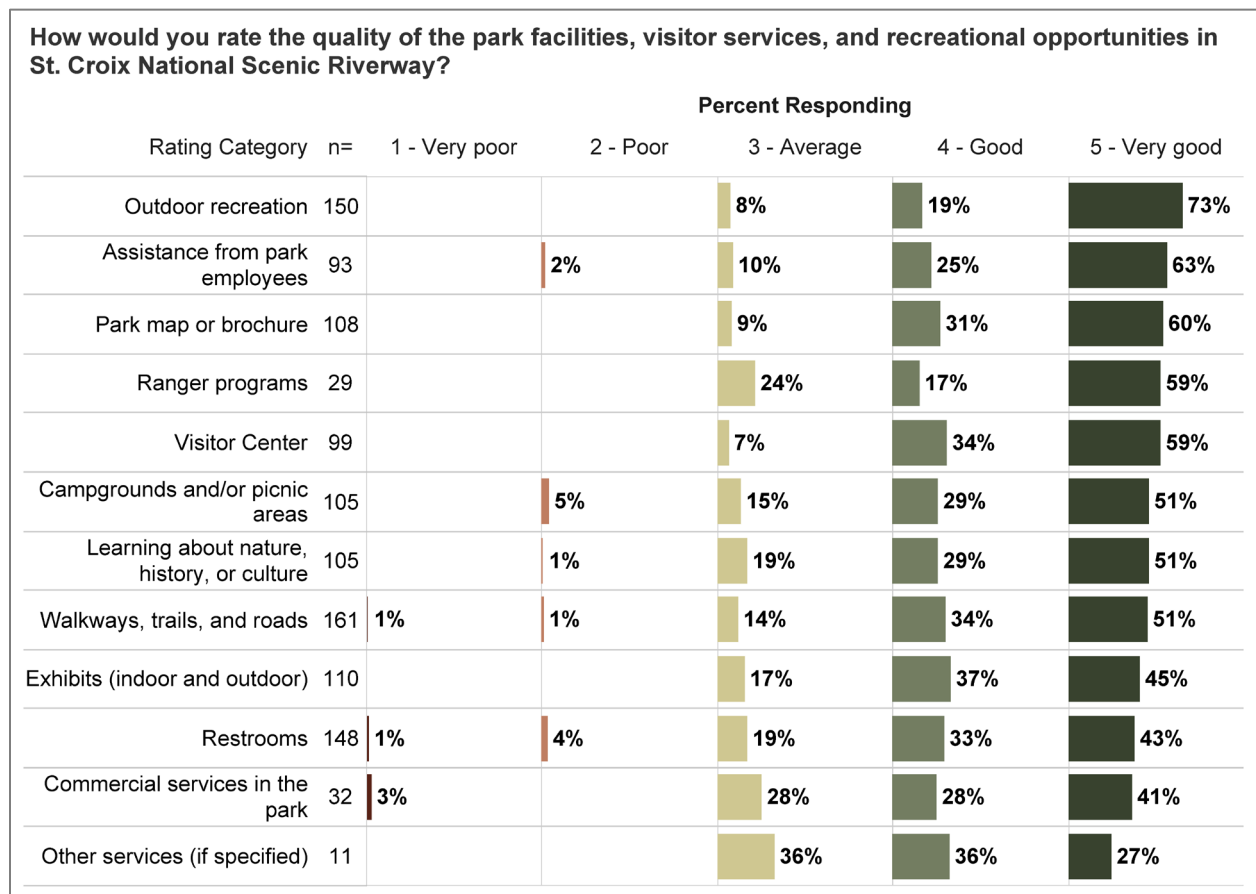


Figure 30. Rating the quality of specific St. Croix NSR facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- Over half of respondents (ranging from 51% to 73%) rated walkways, trails, and roads, learning about nature, history, or culture, campgrounds and/or picnic areas, the visitor center, ranger programs, the park map or brochure, assistance from park employees, and outdoor recreation as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of respondents rated indoor and outdoor exhibits, restrooms, and commercial services in the park as very good.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 31).

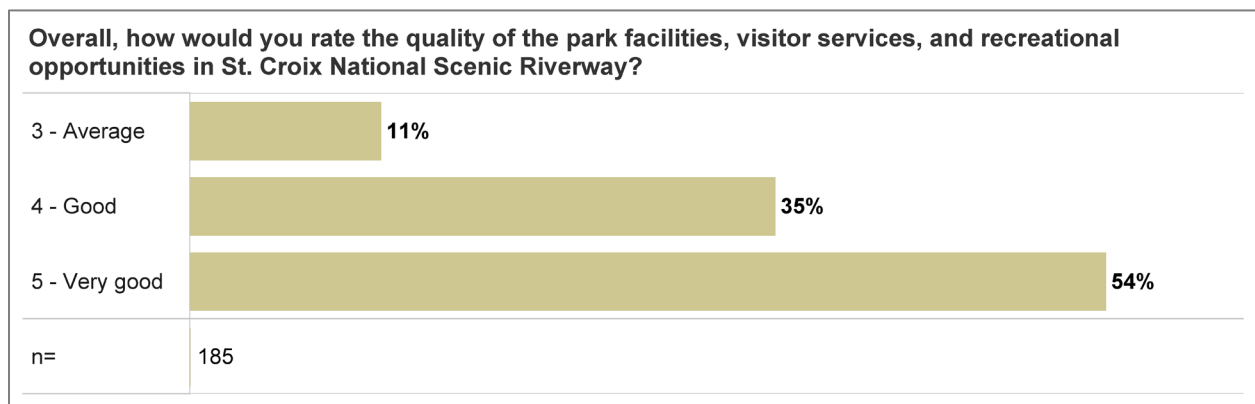


Figure 31. Rating overall quality of St. Croix NSR facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

NPS

- In general, a majority of respondents (54%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in St. Croix NSR as very good, and another 35% rated them as good.
- Just about one-in-nine (11%) respondents rated the overall quality as average or below.

Questions 30–38: Background/Demographics

In the final section of the post-trip survey, respondents were asked various questions about their personal and household demographics. Figure 32 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent age and education.

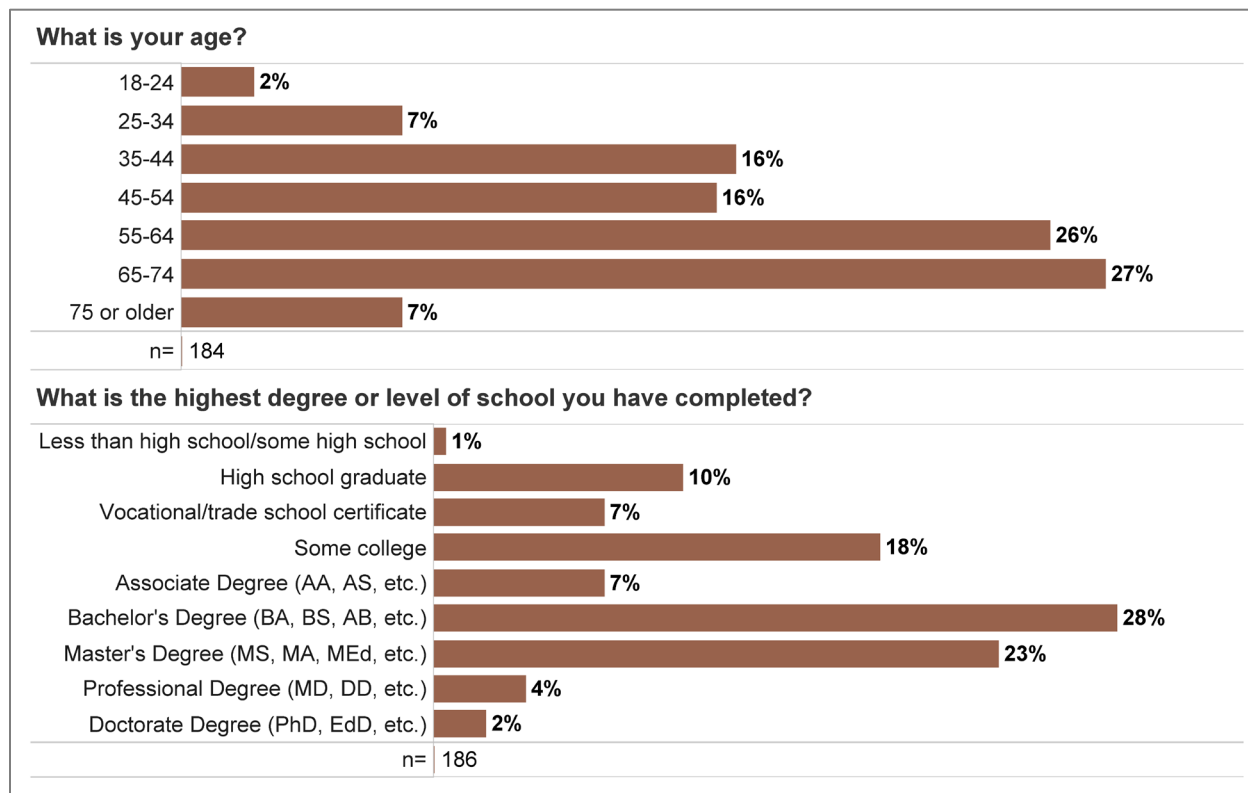


Figure 32. Respondent demographics: age and level of education.

NPS

- The most common age categories were 65 to 74 years old (27%), 55 to 64 years old (26%), 35 to 44 years old (16%), and 45 to 54 years old (16%). The least represented age group was 18 to 24 years old (only two percent of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents reported obtaining higher education, with a combined 64% having some college degree.

Respondents were also asked to identify their race(s) and if they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Figure 33).

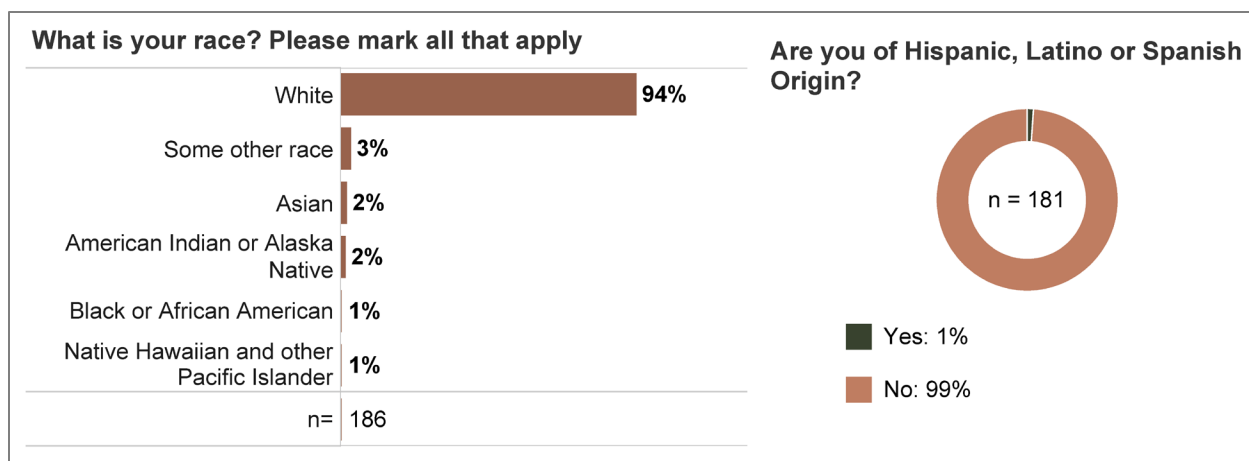


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (94%) were White, while three percent were a racial category not listed.
- Most respondents (99%) were not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.

At a household level, respondents were asked to report annual income and number of contributors, as well as how many people (adults and children) live in their household (Figure 34).

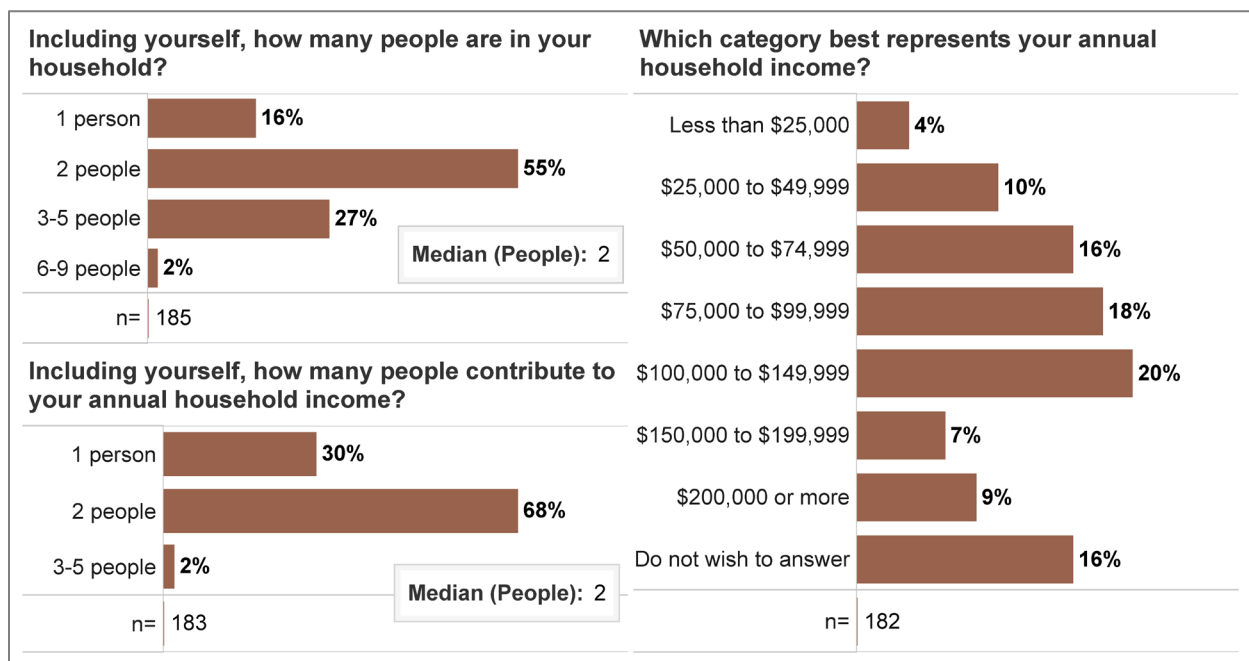


Figure 34. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- A majority of respondents (55%) had two people in their household, followed by three to five people (another 27%).
- Visitors surveyed at St. Croix NSR reported moderate income levels. Nearly half of respondents (48%) reported that their annual household income was below \$100,000, and another 20% earned \$100,000 to \$149,000.
- A majority of respondents (68%) came from a dual-income household.

Finally, respondents were asked about their language preference (Figure 35).

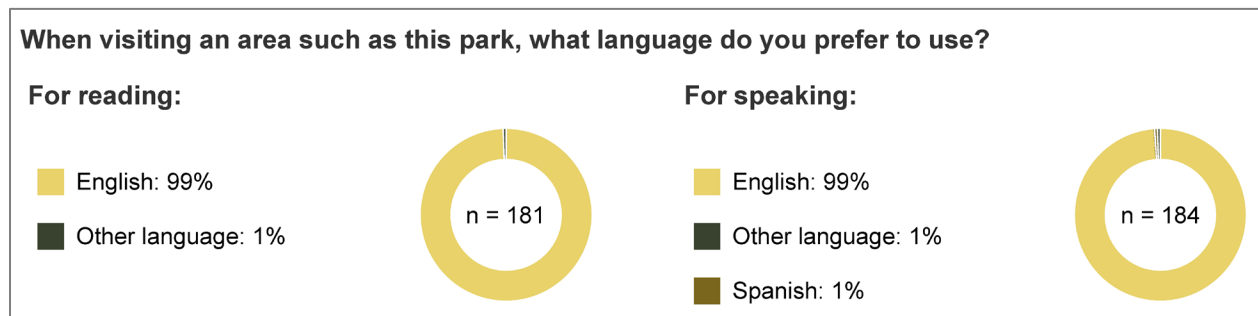


Figure 35. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- The overwhelming majority of respondents (99%) preferred to use English both for reading and speaking when visiting an area such as St. Croix NSR.
- Only one percent of respondents preferred Spanish or another language for either reading and/or speaking.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2024. 2024 Socioeconomic Monitoring of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway: Visitor intercept and post-trip surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2317412>

Appendix A: Accessible Tables

Tables 8 through 19 contain tabular data from figures found in the body of the report.

Table 8. Data from [Figure 6](#). Number of nights spent in the local area around St. Croix NSR, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	Sample Size (n)	Median
Primitive shoreline campsite within St. Croix NSR	33	2
Camping outside St. Croix NSR	56	2
Lodging outside St. Croix NSR	47	3
Unpaid accommodations	30	2

Table 9. Data from [Figure 7](#). Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting St. Croix NSR.

Group Composition	Sample Size (n)	Median
Adults	613	2
Children	613	0
Total group size	613	2

Table 10. Data from [Figure 13](#). Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering St. Croix NSR.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered St. Croix NSR?	466	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered St. Croix NSR?	6	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered St. Croix NSR?	8	1

Table 11. Data from [Figure 14](#). Previous visits to St. Croix NSR.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to St. Croix NSR over the past 12 months?	513	3
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to St. Croix NSR over the past five years?	513	12

Table 12. Data from [Figure 15](#). Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
How many visits have you made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months?	609	1

Table 13. Data from [Figure 21](#). Reasons or motivations to visit St. Croix NSR.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
To visit a National Park Service site	176
To experience solitude	180
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	182
To learn more about nature	174
To learn more about American history and culture	173
To spend time with family/friends	181
To get physical exercise	180
To view wildlife or natural scenery	183
To relax	181
To view dark night sky/stars	155
Other (if specified)	34

Table 14. Data from [Figure 24](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting St. Croix NSR.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	179
Send/receive a text message	179
Search the internet/email	174
GPS/Navigation	175
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	170
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	161
Other (if specified)	52

Table 15. Data from [Figure 25](#). The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting St. Croix NSR.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	182
Send/receive a text message	181
Search the internet/email	172
GPS/Navigation	174
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	168
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	162
Other (if specified)	44

Table 16. Data from [Figure 26](#). Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting St. Croix NSR.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	92
Send/receive a text message	105
Search the internet/email	86
GPS/Navigation	99
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	74
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	44
Other (if specified)	19

Table 17. Data from [Figure 29](#). Rating St. Croix NSR experience.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
St. Croix NSR is a safe place to visit	188
St. Croix NSR is too crowded	189
Natural resources in St. Croix NSR are in pristine condition	185
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at St. Croix NSR	156
St. Croix NSR is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	131
Historical and cultural features in St. Croix NSR are well maintained/preserved	152
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at St. Croix NSR	165

Table 18. Data from [Figure 30](#). Rating the quality of St. Croix NSR facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Visitor Center	99
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	110
Restrooms	148
Walkways, trails, and roads	161
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	105
Assistance from park employees	93
Park map or brochure	108
Ranger programs	29
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	32
Other services (if specified)	11
Learning about nature, history, or culture	105
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	150

Table 19. Data from [Figure 34](#). Household demographics: annual household income and household size.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	185	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	183	2

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