



2022 Socioeconomic Research of Thomas Edison National Historical Park

Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)



Main entrance into the Thomas Edison National Historical Park laboratory complex.

NPS

2022 Socioeconomic Research of Thomas Edison National Historical Park: Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)

Science Report NPS/SR—2026/466

Otak Inc.¹, RRC Associates Inc.², University of Montana³

¹ Otak, Inc.

Portland, Oregon

² RRC Associates, Inc.

Boulder, Colorado

³ University of Montana

Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research

Missoula, Montana

Please cite this publication as:

Otak Inc., RRC Associates Inc., and University of Montana. 2026. 2022 Socioeconomic Research of Thomas Edison National Historical Park: Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised). Science Report NPS/SR—2026/466. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado.

<https://doi.org/10.36967/2318784>

The revised version of this report corrects a previous error identified in Figure 8 and includes minor editorial, formatting, and accessibility updates. No substantive changes have been made to the findings or conclusions presented in the original 2022 report.

The National Park Service Science Report Series disseminates information, analysis, and results of scientific studies and related topics concerning resources and lands managed by the National Park Service. The series supports the advancement of science, informed decisions, and the achievement of the National Park Service mission.

All manuscripts in the series receive the appropriate level of peer review to ensure that the information is scientifically credible and technically accurate.

Views, statements, findings, conclusions, recommendations, and data in this report do not necessarily reflect views and policies of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute endorsement or recommendation for use by the U.S. Government.

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

This report is available in digital format from the [National Park Service DataStore](#) and the [Natural Resource Publications Management website](#). If you have difficulty accessing information in this publication, particularly if using assistive technology, please email irma@nps.gov.

Contents

	Page
Figures.....	v
Tables.....	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Methods.....	3
Study Area.....	3
Sampling Period and Procedure	4
Intercept Survey.....	4
Mail-Back/Online Survey.....	5
Non-Response Bias Analysis	6
Results.....	8
Intercept Survey Results.....	8
Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency	8
Question 3: Trip Purpose.....	10
Question 4–5: Length of Stay.....	11
Questions 6: Overnight Visitors	12
Questions 7–9: Party Characteristics.....	15
Questions 11–14: Park Use Characteristics.....	17
Question 15: Transportation	20
Question 17: Previous Visits to Thomas Edison NHP	22
Question 18: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units	23
Follow-Up Survey Results	24
Questions 1–2: Information About Thomas Edison NHP	24
Question 3: Transportation	26
Question 4: Travel Party Composition.....	27
Question 10: Entrance Fees	28
Questions 12–14: Trip Characteristics	29
Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit.....	31

Contents (continued)

	Page
Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning	33
Questions 20–21: Use of Devices.....	35
Question 22: Physical Difficulties.....	38
Questions 25–28: Visitor Experience.....	39
Questions 31–39: Background/Demographics	43
Literature Cited	46
Appendix A: Accessible Tables.....	47

Figures

	Page
Figure 1. Thomas Edison National Historical Park local area map.	4
Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to Thomas Edison NHP.	9
Figure 3. Role of Thomas Edison NHP in overall trip purpose.	10
Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around Thomas Edison NHP.	11
Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around Thomas Edison NHP.	12
Figure 6. Number of nights spent in the local area around Thomas Edison NHP, by accommodation type.	13
Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent’s personal group while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.	15
Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent’s personal group while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.	15
Figure 9. Duration of the respondent’s trip to Thomas Edison NHP.	17
Figure 10. Most recent entrance used to enter Thomas Edison NHP.	18
Figure 11. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Thomas Edison NHP.	18
Figure 12. Form of transportation used to enter Thomas Edison NHP on the day of the survey.	20
Figure 13. Number of people in or on respondent’s vehicle when entering Thomas Edison NHP.	20
Figure 14. Previous visits to Thomas Edison NHP.	22
Figure 15. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.	23
Figure 16. Sources used to obtain information about Thomas Edison NHP prior to the trip.	24
Figure 17. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Thomas Edison NHP on the recent trip.	26
Figure 18. Travel party composition during Thomas Edison NHP visit.	27
Figure 19. Entrance fees to enter Thomas Edison NHP on the most recent trip.	28
Figure 20. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.	29
Figure 21. Participation in activities at Thomas Edison NHP.	30
Figure 22. Reasons or motivations to visit Thomas Edison NHP.	31

Figures (continued)

	Page
Figure 23. Programs participated while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.	33
Figure 24. Learning.....	34
Figure 25. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.....	35
Figure 26. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.	36
Figure 27. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.	36
Figure 28. Physical difficulties while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.....	38
Figure 29. Meeting Thomas Edison NHP expectations.....	39
Figure 30. Rating Thomas Edison NHP experience.	40
Figure 31. Rating the quality of Thomas Edison NHP facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.....	41
Figure 32. Rating overall quality of Thomas Edison NHP facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.....	42
Figure 33. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.	43
Figure 34. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.	44
Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size.	44
Figure 36. Respondent’s language preference.	45

Tables

	Page
Table 1. Information about sampling locations in Thomas Edison NHP.....	4
Table 2. Response outcomes—Thomas Edison NHP intercept Survey.....	5
Table 3. Response rate—Thomas Edison NHP follow-up mail-back/online survey.....	6
Table 4. Non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Thomas Edison NHP?”.....	6
Table 5. Non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?”.....	7
Table 6. Non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you [and your personal group] stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Thomas Edison NHP and/or within the local area?”.....	7
Table 7. Amount of time spent within Thomas Edison NHP.....	17
Table 8. Data from Figure 6.....	47
Table 9. Data from Figure 7.....	47
Table 10. Data from Figure 13.....	47
Table 11. Data from Figure 14.....	47
Table 12. Data from Figure 15.....	47
Table 13. Data from Figure 22.....	48
Table 14. Data from Figure 25.....	48
Table 15. Data from Figure 26.....	48
Table 16. Data from Figure 27.....	49
Table 17. Data from Figure 30.....	49
Table 18. Data from Figure 31.....	49
Table 19. Data from Figure 35.....	50

Abstract

A strong mandate and need for socioeconomic monitoring are expressed in the NPS strategic goals for science, in statements by the NPS leadership, and the report of the Second Century Commission. This mandate resulted in a pilot socioeconomic monitoring study in 2015/2016 at a sample of park units across the U.S; the current study uses outcomes from the first stage of the pilot program and progresses into a second stage of the pilot process at 24 NPS units across the United States. Thomas Edison National Historical Park (Thomas Edison NHP) was selected as one of these units. This report informs core issues of visitor use management and develops a deeper, contemporary understanding of who visits Thomas Edison NHP and what they do during their visit. It uses a two-phased survey methodology to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior: (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a follow up (mail-back and/or online survey) for full trip details. The results are organized by these two phases and are intended to assist park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, operations and potential issues, as well as to facilitate communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

The revised version of this report corrects a previous error identified in Figure 8 and includes minor editorial, formatting, and accessibility updates. No substantive changes have been made to the findings or conclusions presented in the original 2022 report.

Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) has both a strong mandate and need for socioeconomic research. This is expressed in the NPS strategic goals for science, in statements by the NPS leadership, in the report of the Second Century Commission, and through the Department of the Interior priorities for 2018–2022. Additionally, a recent U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report identified the needs to better understand and monitor customer experience dimensions where results more directly link to investments made. The need for socioeconomic research and monitoring also was identified in an external review of the NPS Social Science Program and supported in the 2008 Interior Appropriations Bill Joint Explanatory Statement.

This mandate resulted in a pilot socioeconomic monitoring study in 2015/2016 at a sample of park units across the U.S., previously described as “Phase One.” The current study uses outcomes from the 2015/16 pilot program and progresses into “Phase Two” of the pilot process at 24 NPS units across the United States. Thomas Edison National Historical Park (Thomas Edison NHP) was selected as one of these units. Phase Two seeks to further explore visitor demographics and characteristics, applying recommendations from the 2015/16 Phase One pilot program and validating instrument and method refinements. It is part of the program designed to collect data from in-park visitors at a broad agency level in order to best represent information needs regarding visitors across the National Park System. Data collected during the 2022 Phase Two sampling period¹ are intended to inform individual park managers of key information about their visitors and allow for analysis of data at the agency level for future implementation.

The purpose of this study is to inform core issues of visitor use management, management solutions, and to develop a current and deeper understanding of who visits Thomas Edison National Historical Park, what they do during their visit, and their spending profile. The results of the study are intended to assist Thomas Edison National Historical Park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, operations, and issues that may exist due to increasing visitation, and facilitating communication and decision processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

The study was conducted by a large-scale research team from Otak, Inc., RRC Associates, Inc., and the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana.

¹ It is important to note that during the 2022 Phase Two sampling period, some aspects of the visitor profiles (e.g., perceptions and behavior) may have been impacted, to varying degrees, by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Pattern shop Thomas Edison National Historical Park.
NPS

Methods

The study used a two-phased survey methodology to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior:

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

This comprehensive two-phase approach provides the necessary information to make on-the-ground decisions using immediate feedback from the intercept survey while also capturing key in-depth information on visitor spending profiles and trip characteristics for long-term planning. Additionally, the tablet survey was kept brief to ensure the visitor's experience was not altered. The methods also permit a larger sample to be collected on key questions of interest.

Study Area

The Thomas Edison NHP local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Thomas Edison NHP consists of Passaic, Bergen, Morris, Essex, Hudson, Union, Somerset, and Middlesex counties in New Jersey; and New York (Manhattan) in New York. Within Thomas Edison NHP, the study area was comprised of 2 locations. Table 1 shows more details about sampling locations. The locations and volumes of surveyor effort were determined based on historic visitor volumes and distribution across the park's main areas.

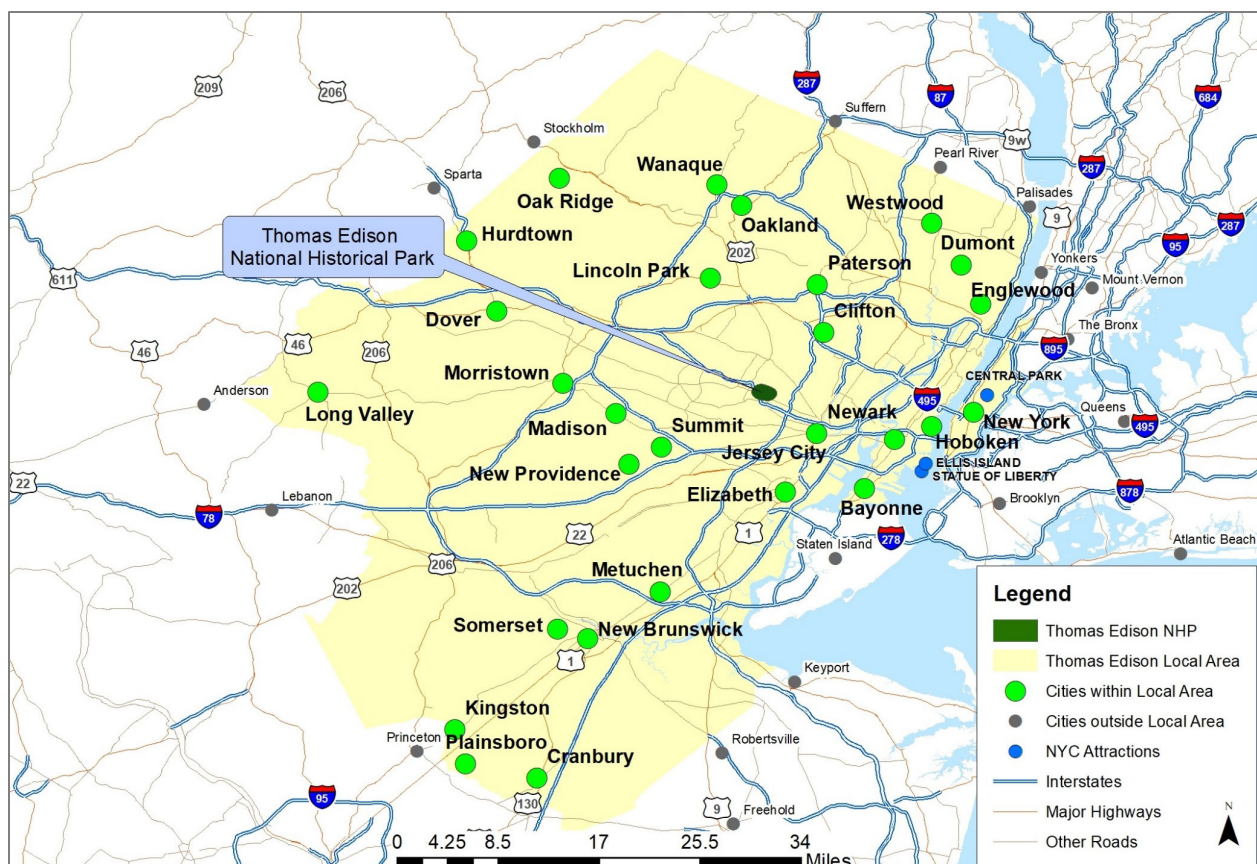


Figure 1. Thomas Edison National Historical Park local area map.
NPS

Table 1. Information about sampling locations in Thomas Edison NHP.

Intercept Site	Completed Intercept Surveys		Nearby Attractions
	Number of Surveys	Percent of Surveys	
Visitor Center	326	88.3%	Laboratory Complex
Glenmont Estate	43	11.7%	Thomas Edison's home

Sampling Period and Procedure

Intercept Survey

The on-site intercept survey was developed to collect rapid visitor information via tablet-based responses, which were then analyzed and provided for park managers within several weeks of conclusion of data collection. This effort allowed for immediate management action if needed.

The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of August 6th to 19th, 2022. A sample of visitors were intercepted while visiting Thomas Edison NHP across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. All respondents were visitors on foot at these locations.

Surveyors approached potential respondents at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and ask them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in Thomas Edison NHP (NPS 2022). If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a Thomas Edison NHP 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 Non-Response Bias Analysis section). 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, visitors were invited to participate in a follow-up survey by mail-back or online response. Those who agreed to participate were given an envelope containing a printed copy of the follow-up survey and 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 follow-up survey.

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

1. Complete refusal, refusing to answer any questions, including non-response bias questions;
2. Partial refusal, answering non-response questions but nothing further;
3. Complete intercept, but refuse to take follow-up;
4. Complete intercept and take follow-up.

Table 2. Response outcomes—Thomas Edison NHP intercept Survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	414
Complete refusals	27
Partial refusals (non-response questions completed)	18
Intercept surveys completed	369
Follow-up surveys distributed	350
Intercept response rate	89.1%
Follow-up acceptance rate	94.9%

During the sampling period, 2 surveyors were stationed simultaneously at different sampling sites. Start times varied day-to-day and by location to capture a diverse sample of visitors across Thomas Edison NHP. Each surveyor worked nine 7-hour days (six hours data collection and one-hour lunch break) and rotated between several sites. Each surveyor had one day off during the 10-day sampling window.

Mail-Back/Online Survey

The follow-up mail-back/online 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 Thomas

Edison NHP. This method extended data collection and asked participants to complete the survey after their visit either through a postage-paid envelope provided to them, or online via a provided survey link. The follow-up survey covers visitor trip spending details, travel patterns, and perceptions of their recent visit (NPS 2022). Both the intercept survey and the follow-up survey were tagged with a unique identifier (four-digit code) for each respondent so their on-site tablet responses could be paired with their follow-up responses. Joining the two datasets provides a more complete picture of connecting 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 contacts about a week following the end of each data collection period. This postcard or email thanked them for their original participation and encouraged them to complete the follow-up 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 rate for the follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Table 3. Response rate—Thomas Edison NHP follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Outcome	Total
Follow-up surveys distributed	350
Valid follow-up surveys completed	114
Response rate	32.6%

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 on-site intercept survey. These three questions can then be compared to both those who completed the intercept survey only, and those who completed both the intercept and follow-up surveys. With an intercept survey response rate of 89.1%, concern over *intercept* non-response is muted. Tables 4 through 6 below show results of bias testing between intercept-only and full survey respondents.

Table 4. Non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Thomas Edison NHP?” Note: p-value = 0.35.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	51	45.1%	129	50.4%
No	62	54.9%	127	49.6%

Table 5. Non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: p-value not computed due to low cell counts in “No” category.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	113	100.0%	243	94.9%
No	0	0.0%	13	5.1%

Table 6. Non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you [and your personal group] stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Thomas Edison NHP and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value = 0.58.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	21.2%	48	18.8%
No	89	78.8%	208	81.3%

Using a p-value of 0.05, the distribution of responses among full survey respondents and intercept-only respondents differed significantly for no questions. The results of the non-response bias analysis provide no compelling evidence that the survey data are biased due to systematic differences between respondents and non-respondents on these variables.

Results

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 369 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Thomas Edison National Historical Park from August 6th to 19th, 2022. 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. 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.

Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Thomas Edison NHP. If they did not reside permanently or seasonally in the local area, they 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.

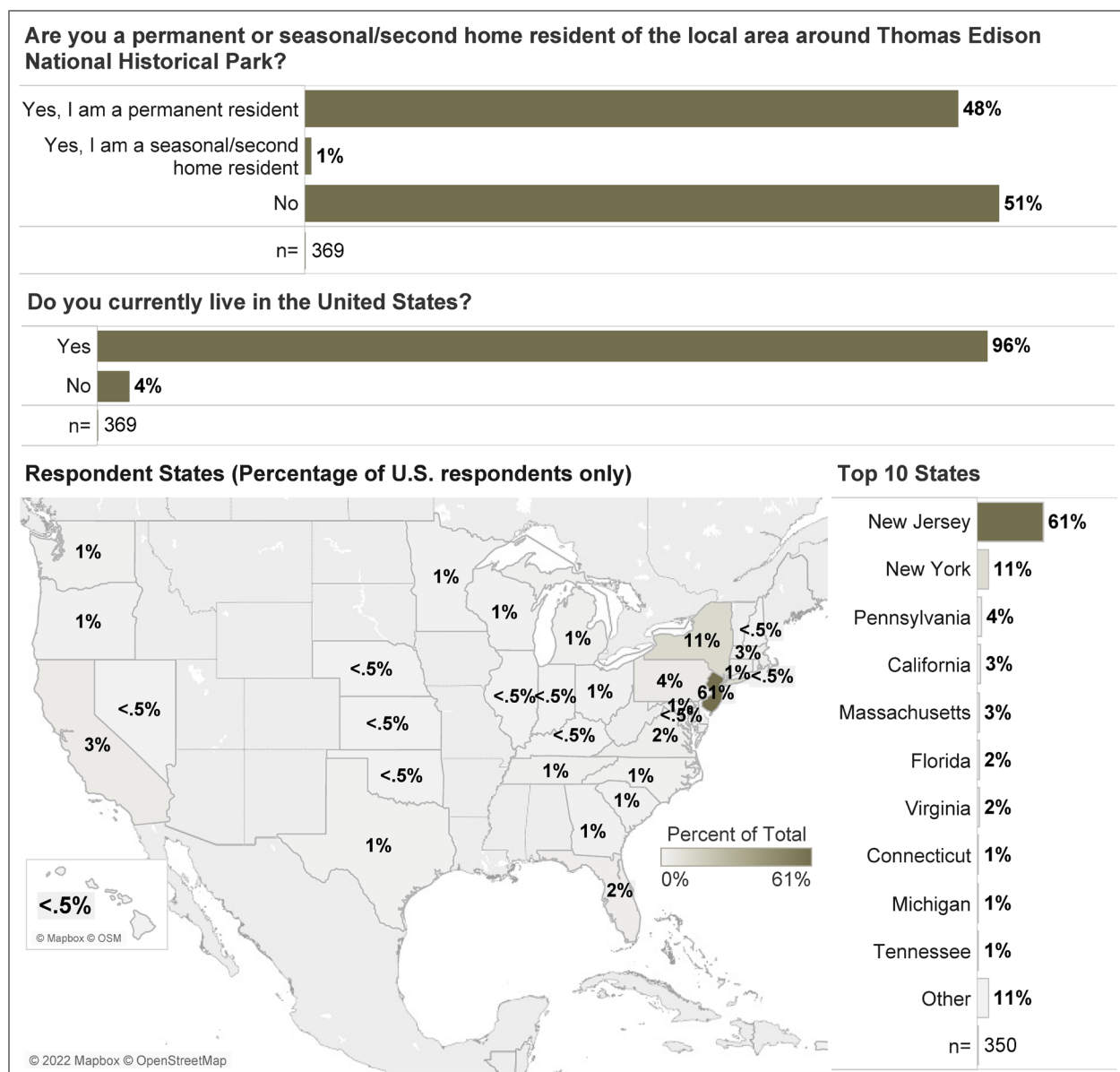


Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to Thomas Edison NHP. NPS

- Just under half of respondents (a combined 49%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Thomas Edison NHP.
- There was a large geographic concentration of visitors from New Jersey (where Thomas Edison NHP is located).
- Among the 96% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 61% reside in New Jersey, followed by 11% in New York.

Question 3: Trip Purpose

If respondents indicated that they were not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area, they were asked about the overall purpose for their trip away from home (Figure 3).

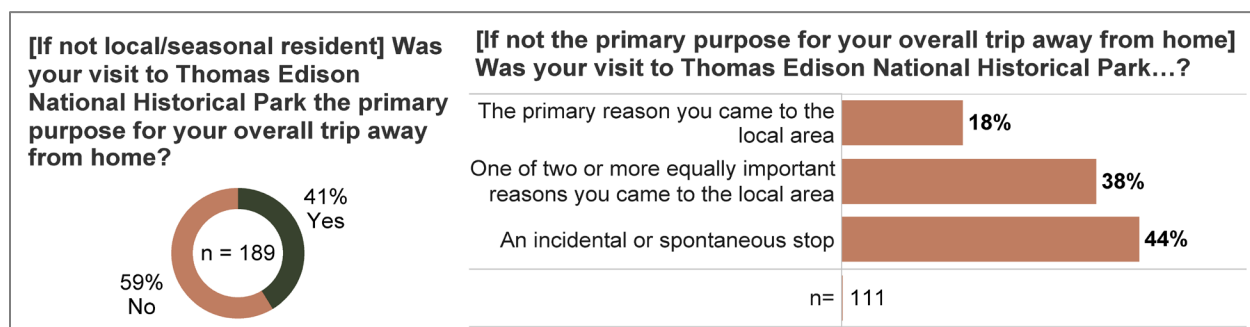


Figure 3. Role of Thomas Edison NHP in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- For a majority of non-local respondents (59%), visiting Thomas Edison NHP was not the primary purpose for their overall trip away from home.
- Among those respondents for whom Thomas Edison NHP was not their primary trip purpose, 44% stated that their visit to Thomas Edison NHP was an incidental or spontaneous stop, while another 38% indicated that it was one of two or more equally important reasons they came to the local area.

Question 4–5: Length of Stay

If respondents indicated that they were not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Thomas Edison NHP, they were 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.

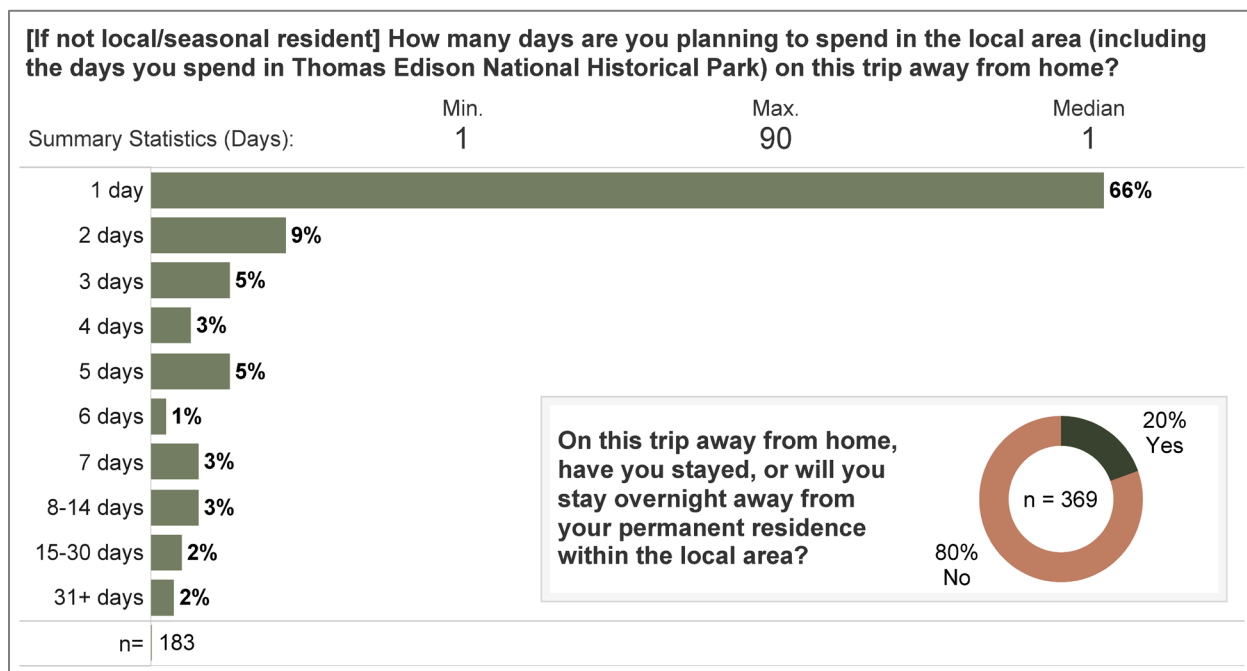


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- Nearly two-thirds of non-local respondents (66%) spent one day in the local area, while 9% spent 2 days, and 5% spent 3 days. The median length of stay was 1 day.
- Additionally, one-fifth of all respondents (20%; 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 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).

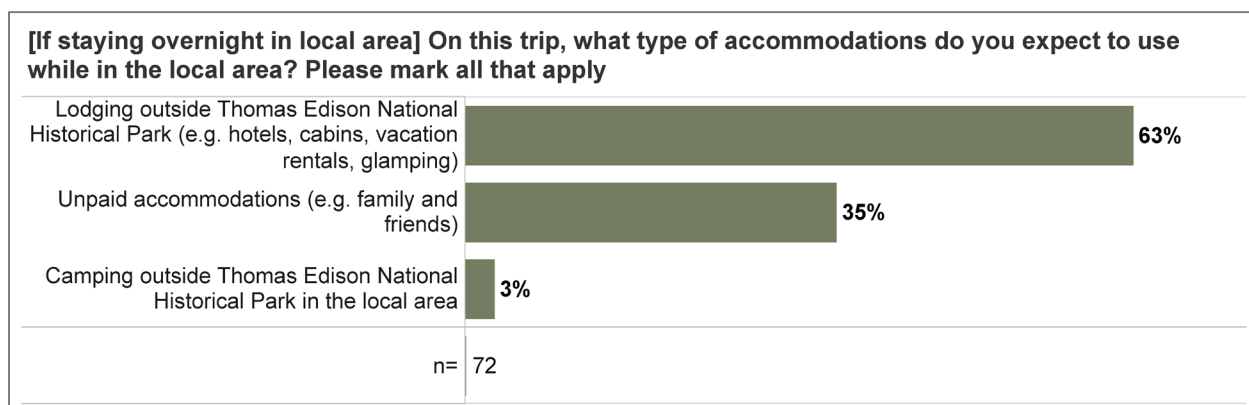


Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- Nearly two-thirds of overnight respondents (63%) stayed in lodging in the local area.
- This was followed in prevalence by unpaid accommodations (35%), and camping in the local area (3%).

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

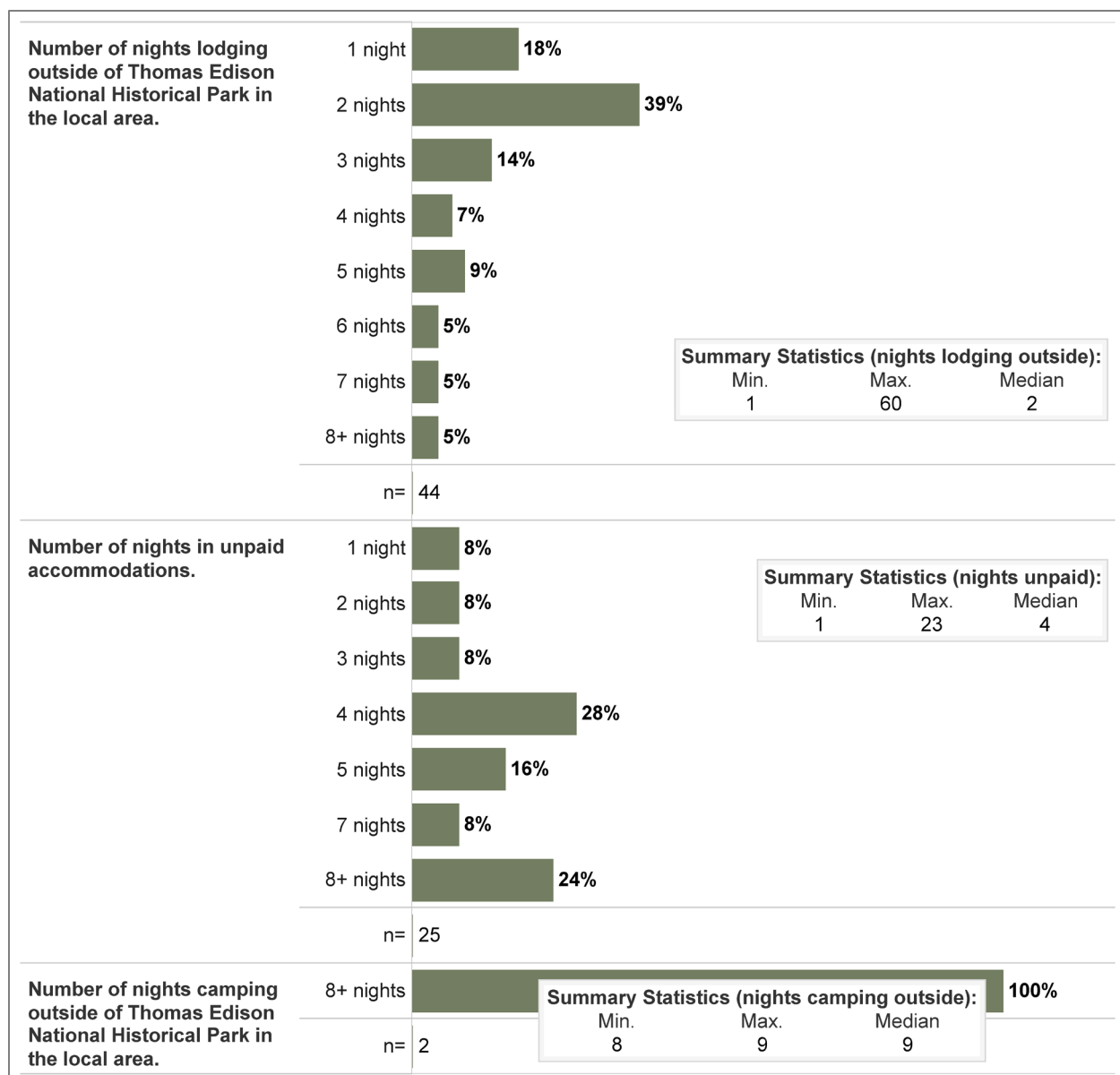


Figure 6. Number of nights spent in the local area around Thomas Edison NHP, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 8](#).

NPS

- Among the 63% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Thomas Edison NHP in the local area (per Figure 5), the median length of stay was 2 nights. A majority (57%) lodged 2 nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 71% spent 3 nights or fewer.
- Among the 35% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), the median length of stay 4 nights. Over three quarters (74%) spent 4 or more nights in unpaid accommodations. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than n = 30.

- Among the 3% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Thomas Edison NHP (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 9 nights. All of the respondents who used this accommodation type stayed 8 or more nights. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than $n = 30$.

Questions 7–9: 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 Thomas Edison NHP (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 visitors were informed not to account for the larger group with whom they may have traveled, such as a school, church, scout, or tour group.

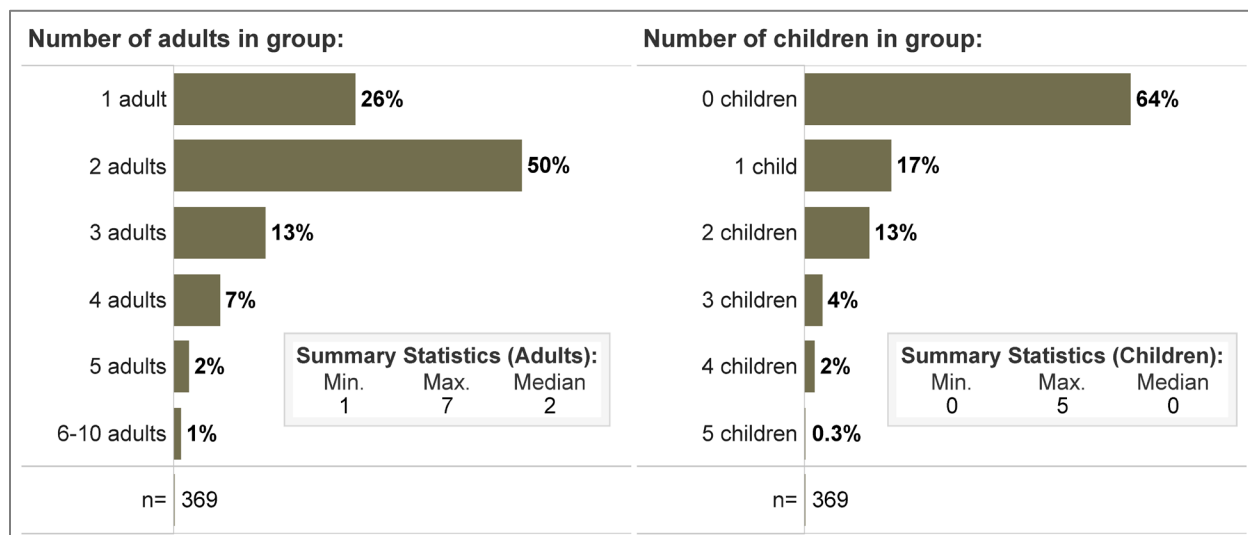


Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 9](#).

NPS

- The median number of adults per group was 2. Half of groups (50%) included 2 adults.
- Most groups (64%) did not include any children.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 8).

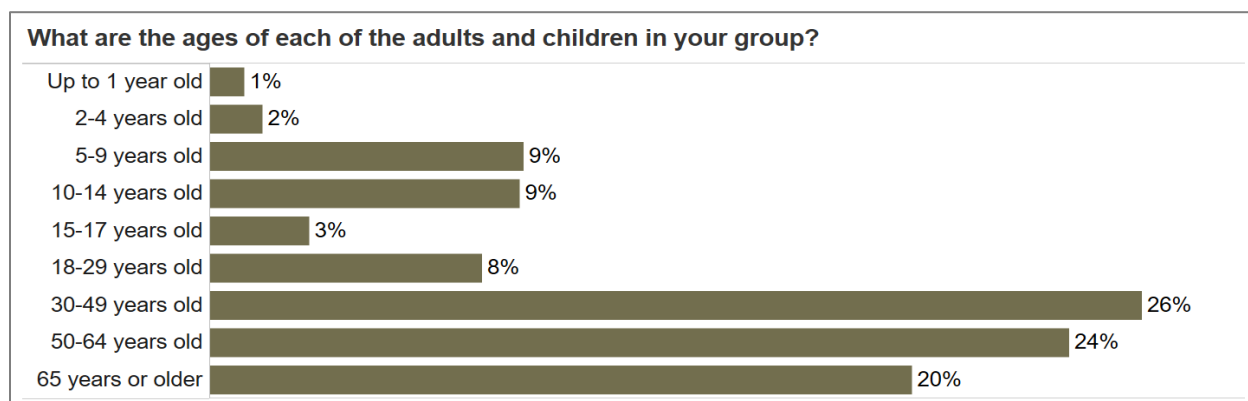


Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 30 to 49 years old (26%), followed by 50 to 64 years old (24%), and 65 years or older (20%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of 24% of group members.

Questions 11–14: Park Use Characteristics

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Thomas Edison NHP 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).

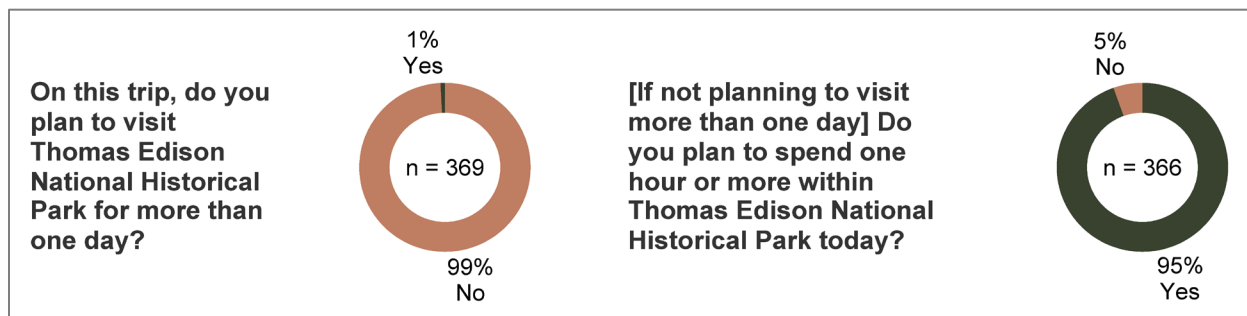


Figure 9. Duration of the respondent's trip to Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

Table 7. Amount of time spent within Thomas Edison NHP.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Thomas Edison NHP today?	20	3	45	30
[If planning to spend less than a day, but one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Thomas Edison NHP today?	346	1	10	2
[If planning to visit at least one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Thomas Edison NHP on this trip?	3	2	2	2
[If planning to visit at least one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	3	2	2	2

- While visiting Thomas Edison NHP, nearly all visitors (99%) did not plan to spend more than one day in the park.
- Among the 99% of visitors who did not spend more than a day in Thomas Edison NHP, most (95%) planned to spend one hour or more in the park. The median length of time spent in the park among this group was 2 hours.
- The remaining 1% of visitors planned to visit for more than one day; among those visitors, the median length of stay was 2 days.
- Those respondents who spent at least one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was 2 days.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the most recent entrance they used to enter Thomas Edison NHP (Figure 10).

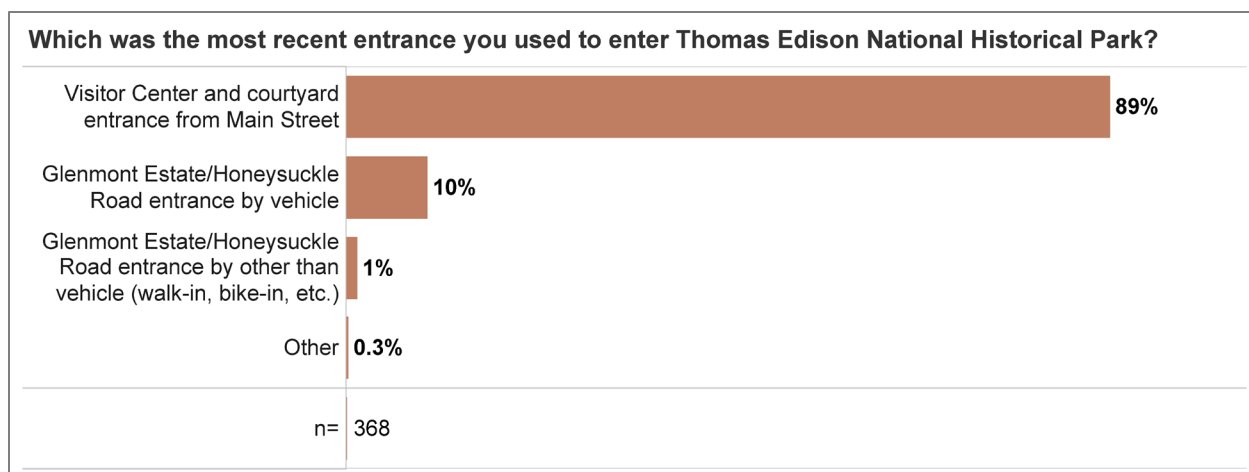


Figure 10. Most recent entrance used to enter Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- The Visitor Center and courtyard entrance from Main Street was the most commonly used entrance to Thomas Edison NHP (89%), while 11% entered via the Glenmont Estate/Honeysuckle Road entrance either by vehicle or some other means (walk-in, bike-in, etc.).

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

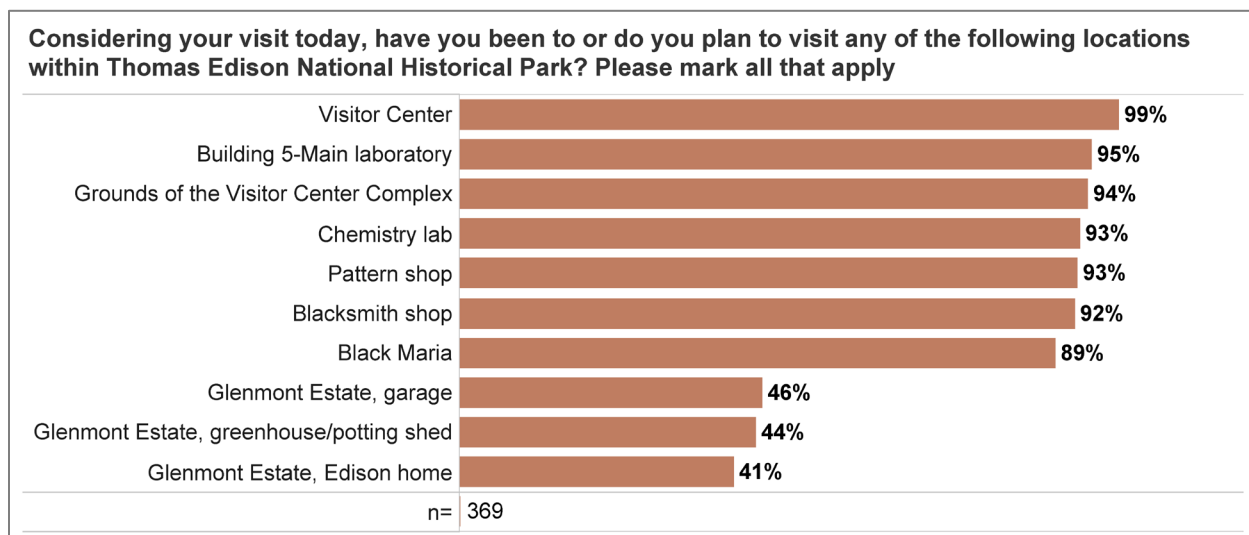


Figure 11. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- The most commonly visited location in Thomas Edison NHP was the Visitor Center (99% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by Building 5-Main laboratory (95%), the grounds of the Visitor Center complex (94%), the Chemistry lab (93%), the pattern shop (93%), the blacksmith shop (92%), and Black Maria (89%).
- Less than half of respondents indicated they visited or planned to visit other listed locations. Glenmont Estate was the least-visited location from the list provided, with 41% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit.

Question 15: Transportation

Visitors were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter Thomas Edison NHP on the day they were surveyed (Figure 12).

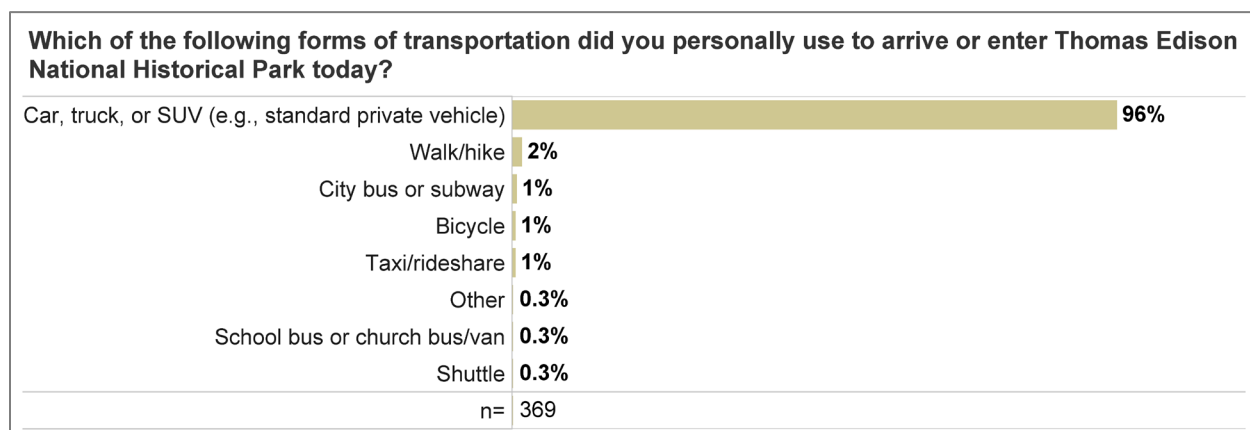


Figure 12. Form of transportation used to enter Thomas Edison NHP on the day of the survey.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (96%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Thomas Edison NHP on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by walking/hiking (2%), and city bus or subway, bicycle, or taxi/rideshare (1% each).

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).

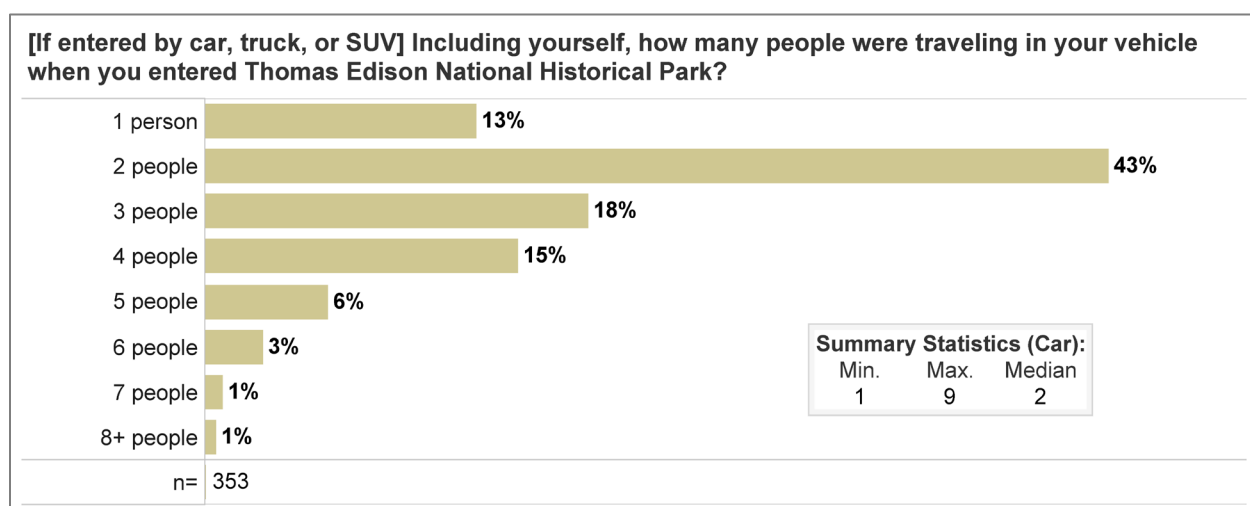


Figure 13. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 10](#).

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (43%) traveling by car reported 2 people. The next common group size was 3 people (18%), followed by 4 people (15%).

Question 17: Previous Visits to Thomas Edison NHP

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

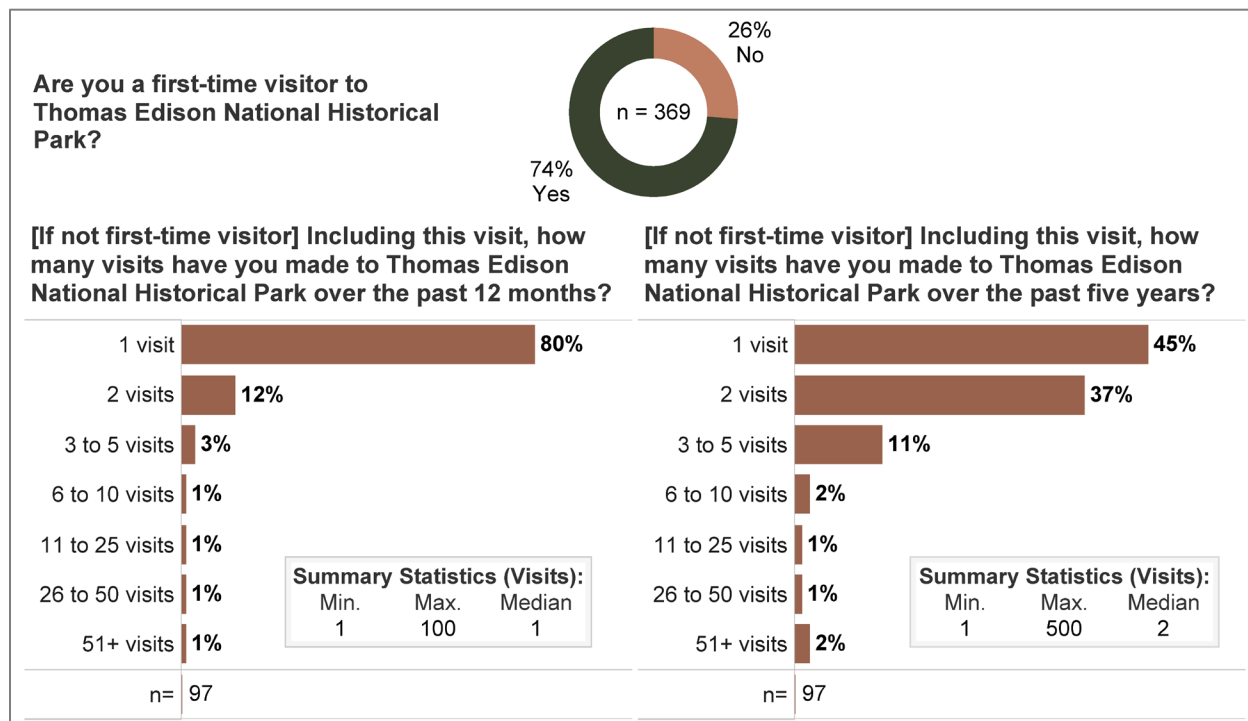


Figure 14. Previous visits to Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- Most respondents (74%) were on their first ever trip to Thomas Edison NHP.
- Among the 26% of respondents who were repeat visitors, the majority (80%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- However, the majority of repeat visitors (55%) had visited at least one prior time in the past 5 years.
- The median number of visits made in the past 5 years was 2, including the current trip; 4% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past 5 years.

Question 18: 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).

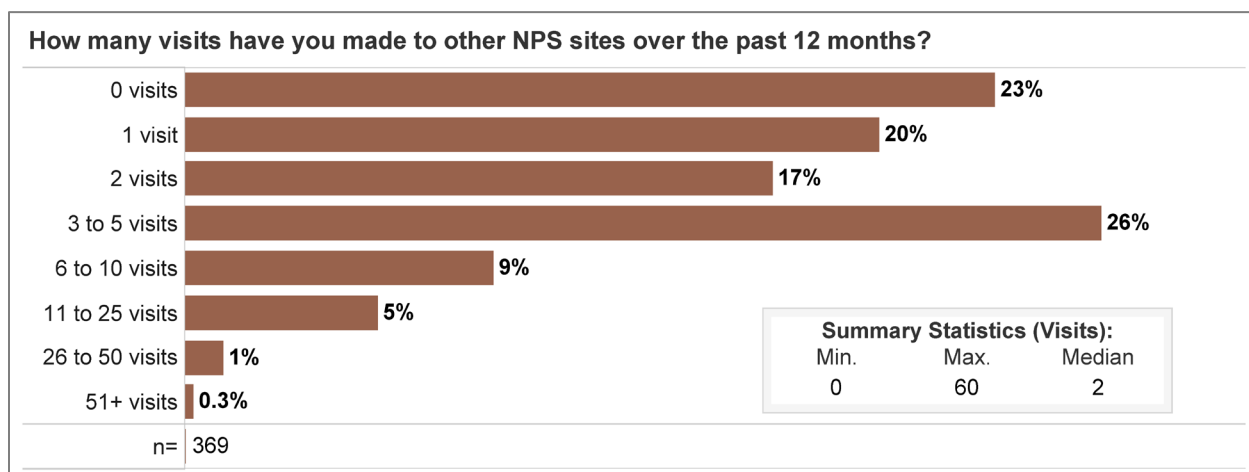


Figure 15. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- More than three-quarters (77%) 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 2, though a combined 41.3% had made 3 or more visits in the past year.

Follow-Up Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 114 follow-up visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in Thomas Edison National Historical Park in summer of 2022. 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 Thomas Edison NHP

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

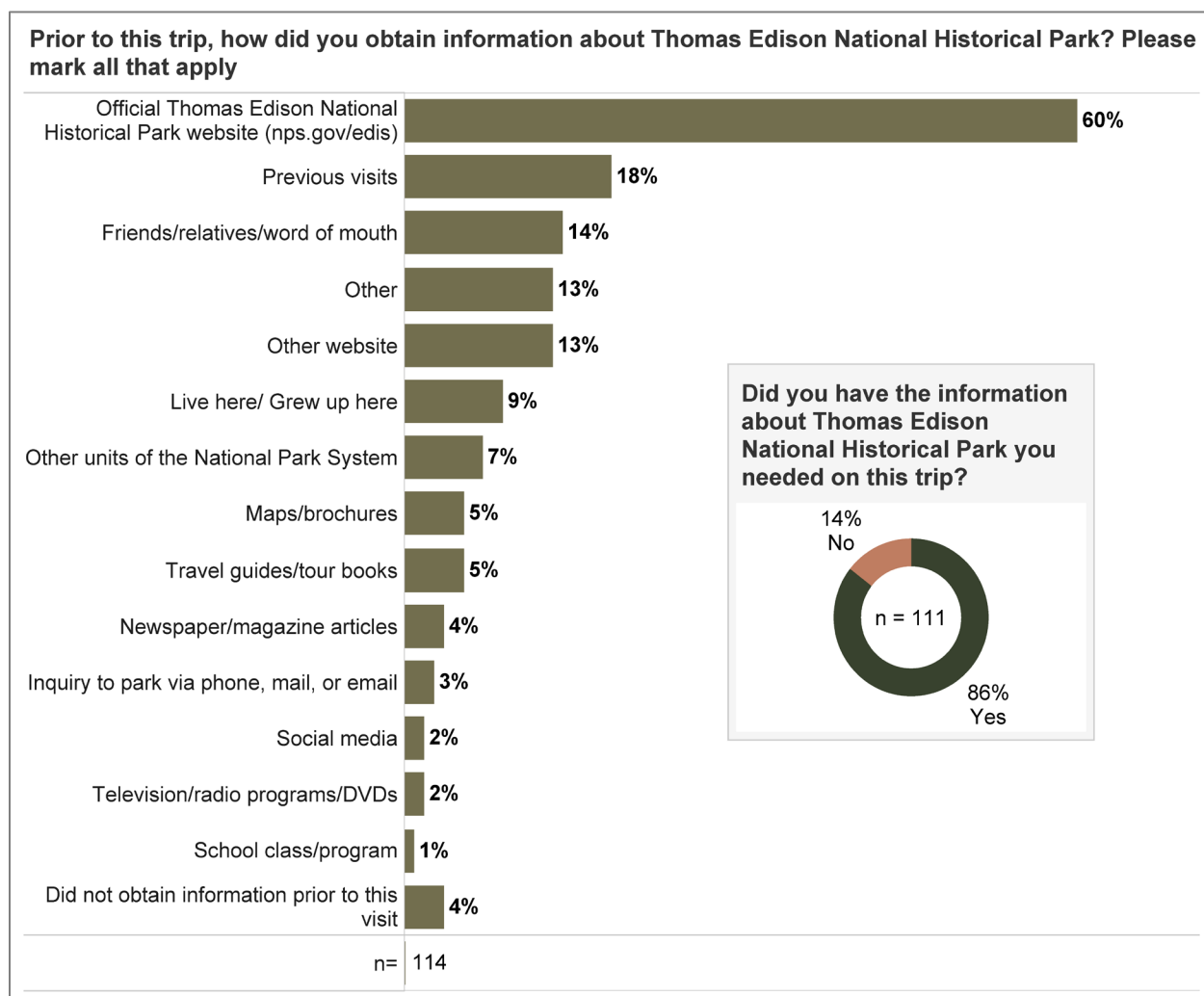


Figure 16. Sources used to obtain information about Thomas Edison NHP prior to the trip.

NPS

- The most used resource was the official Thomas Edison National Historical Park website, with 60% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was previous visits (18%), followed by friends/relatives/word of mouth (14%), other websites (13%), and an “other” source of information not listed (13%).
- In a follow-up question, 86% of respondents said that they had the information about Thomas Edison NHP that they needed on their trip, while 14% 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. These comments are provided as an accompanying document for review.

Question 3: Transportation

While in the intercept survey, respondents indicated a mode of transportation they used to enter the park on the day of the intercept, the follow-up survey asked respondents to select all forms of transportation they personally used to travel from their home to Thomas Edison NHP on their trip (Figure 17).

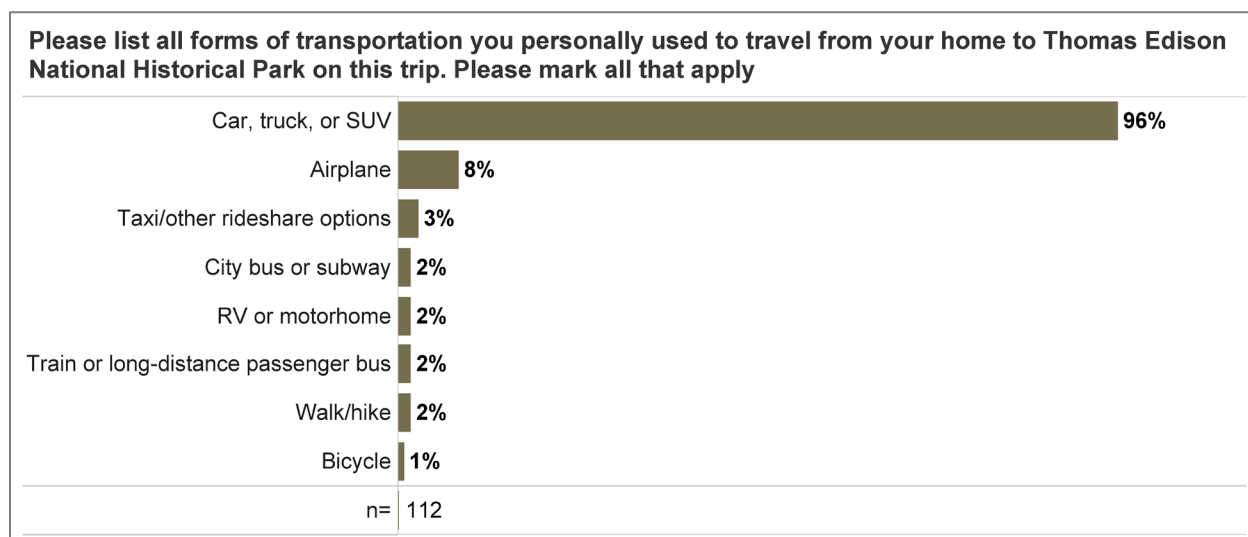


Figure 17. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Thomas Edison NHP on the recent trip.
NPS

- Nearly all respondents (96%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Thomas Edison NHP.
- The second most common mode of travel was an airplane (8%), followed by taxi/other rideshare options (3%).

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to Thomas Edison NHP on the day of the survey (Figure 18).

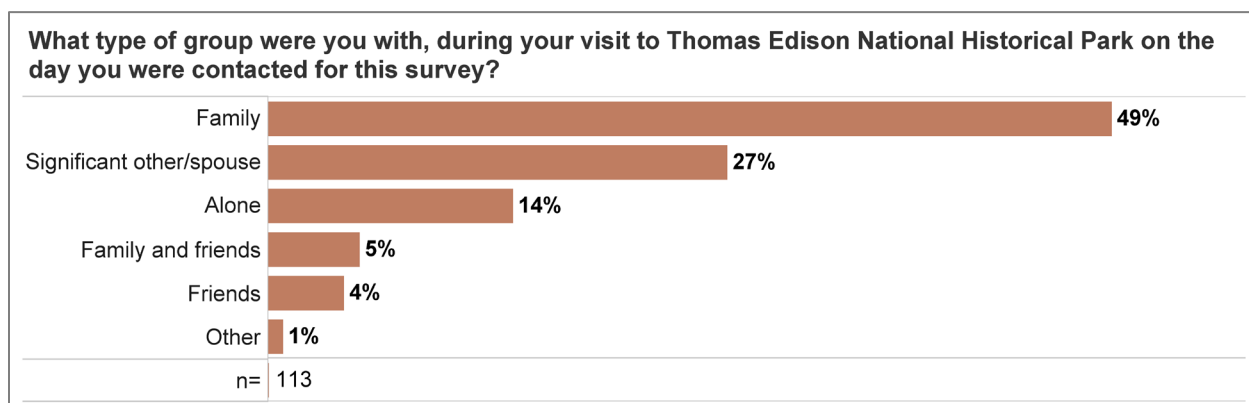


Figure 18. Travel party composition during Thomas Edison NHP visit.

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (49%) visited Thomas Edison NHP with their family on the day of the survey.
- Just over a quarter of respondents (27%) explored Thomas Edison NHP with their significant other or spouse, and another 14% visited the park alone.

Question 10: Entrance Fees

Respondents were asked to indicate which type of entrance fees applied to them personally on their most recent trip to Thomas Edison NHP (Figure 19).

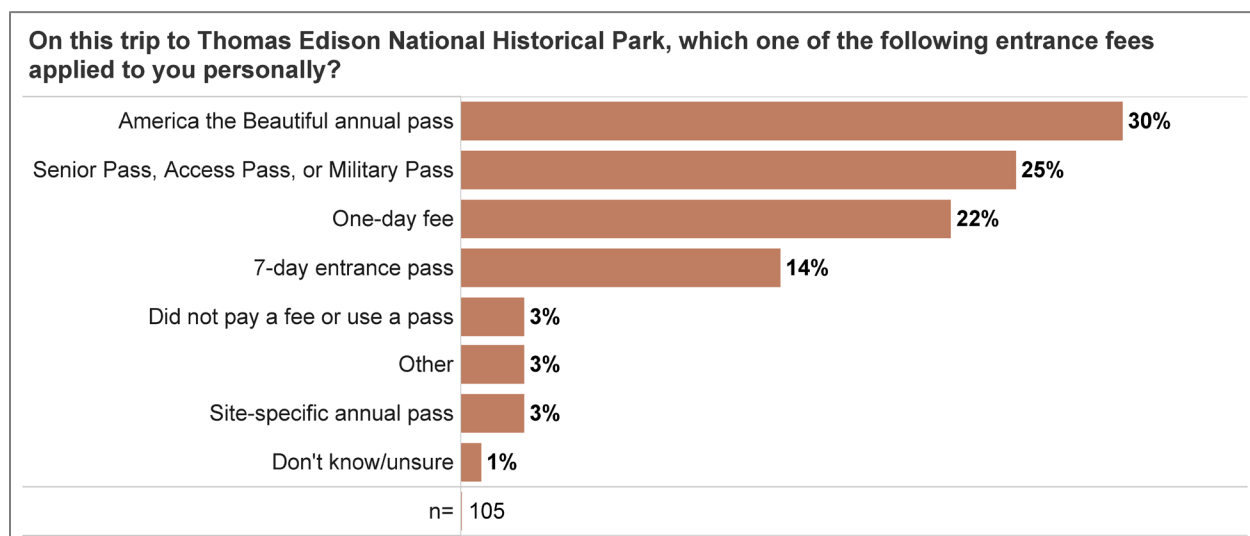


Figure 19. Entrance fees to enter Thomas Edison NHP on the most recent trip.

NPS

- Nearly one-third of respondents (30%) reported using an America the Beautiful annual pass, and another 25% entered using a Senior Pass, Access Pass, or Military Pass.
- In contrast, 39% of respondents entered using a Thomas Edison NHP-specific pass or fee (i.e., annual pass, 7-day, or single-day entrance fee).

Questions 12–14: Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked if they visited other National Park Service sites on their trip away from home (Figure 20).

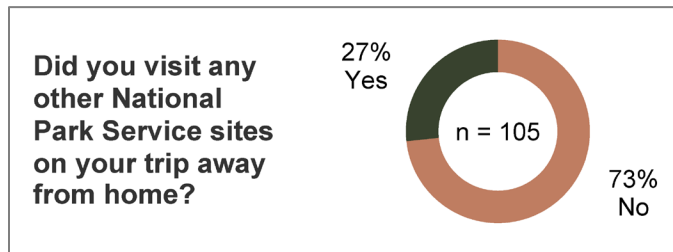


Figure 20. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- About a quarter (27%) of all respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 73% identified Thomas Edison NHP 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). These comments are provided in an accompanying document.

Survey respondents were then asked to identify all activities that they participated in while visiting Thomas Edison NHP, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 21).

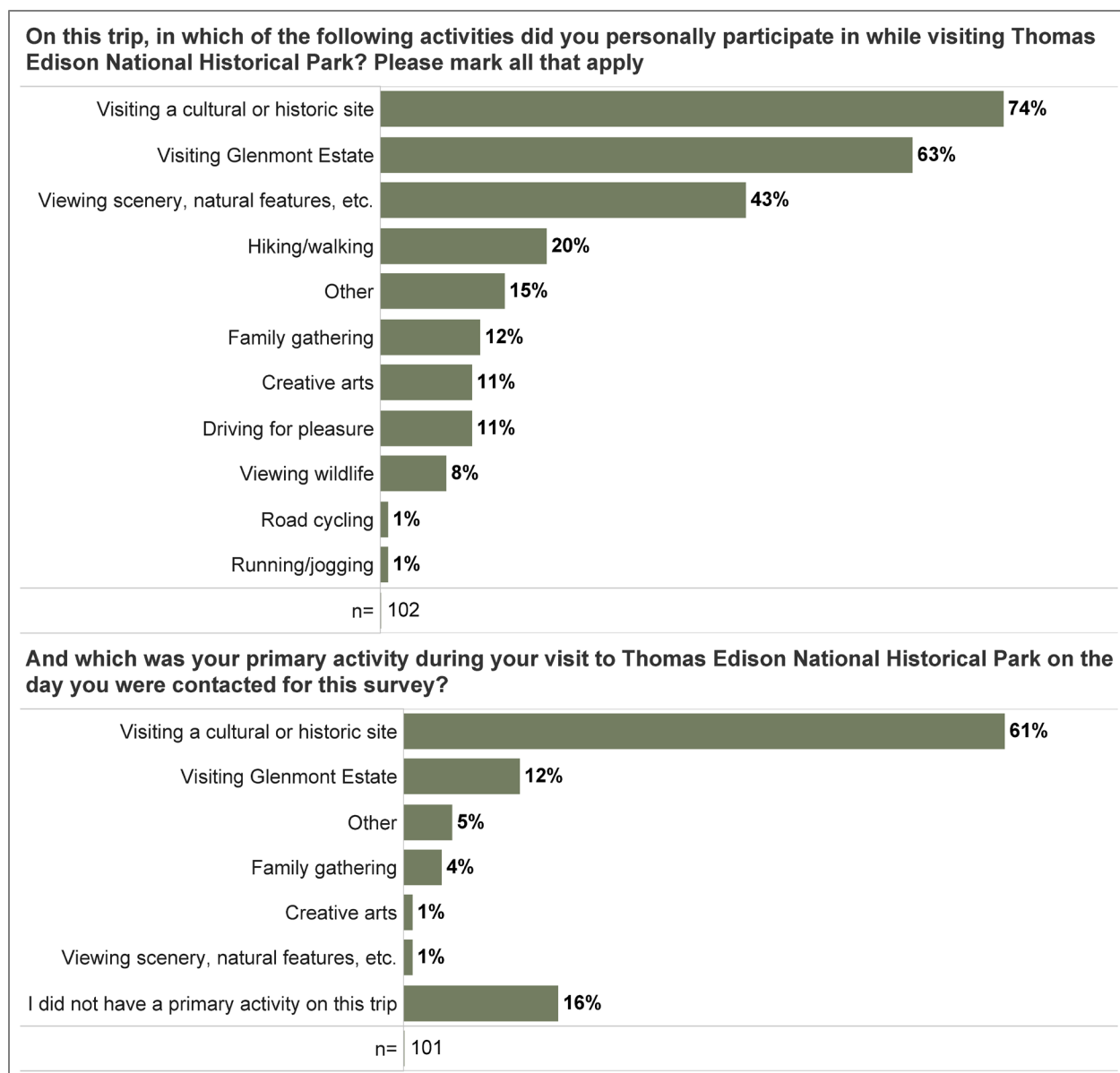


Figure 21. Participation in activities at Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- Most visitors reported visiting a cultural or historic site (74%), and visiting Glenmont Estate (63%).
- Running/jogging and road cycling were uncommon activities (reported by 1% of respondents).
- The majority of respondents (61%) reported visiting a cultural or historic site as their primary activity, followed by visiting Glenmont Estate (12%).

Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reasons to visit Thomas Edison NHP on their trip, then asked which of those was the most important reason for them to visit Thomas Edison NHP (Figure 22).

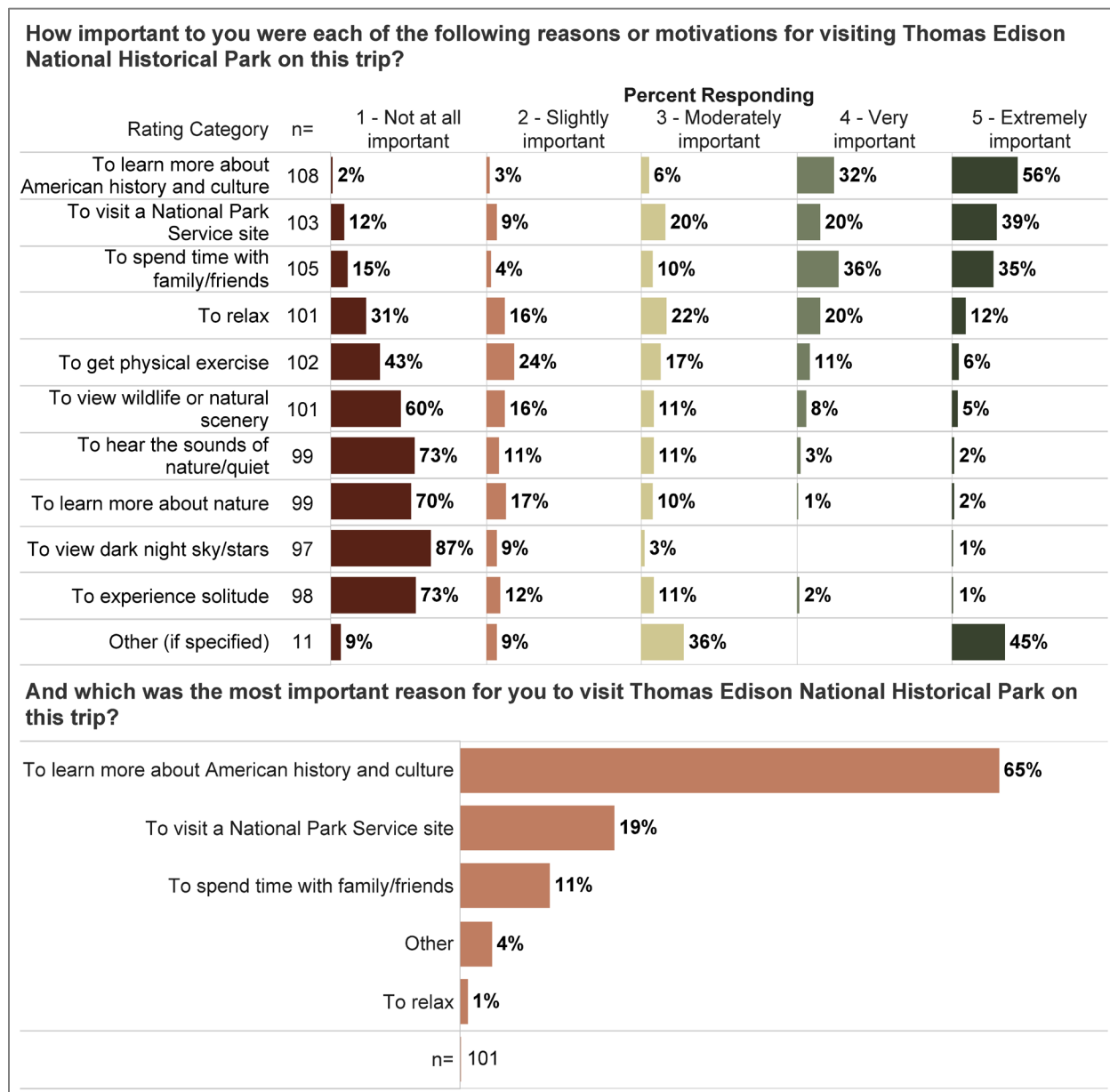


Figure 22. Reasons or motivations to visit Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- Most visitors chose “to learn more about American history and culture” (56%) as an extremely important reason for their trip to Thomas Edison NHP.

- Other important reasons were “to visit a National Park Service site” and “to spend time with family/friends” (39% and 35% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons were “to view dark night sky/stars” and “to experience solitude” (only 1% of respondents, reported them as extremely important, and 87% and 73% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).
- The most common response about the most important reason was “to learn more about American history and culture” (65%), followed by “to visit a National Park Service site” (19%), and “to spend time with family/friends” (11%).

Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services that they personally participated in in Thomas Edison NHP during their trip (Figure 23).

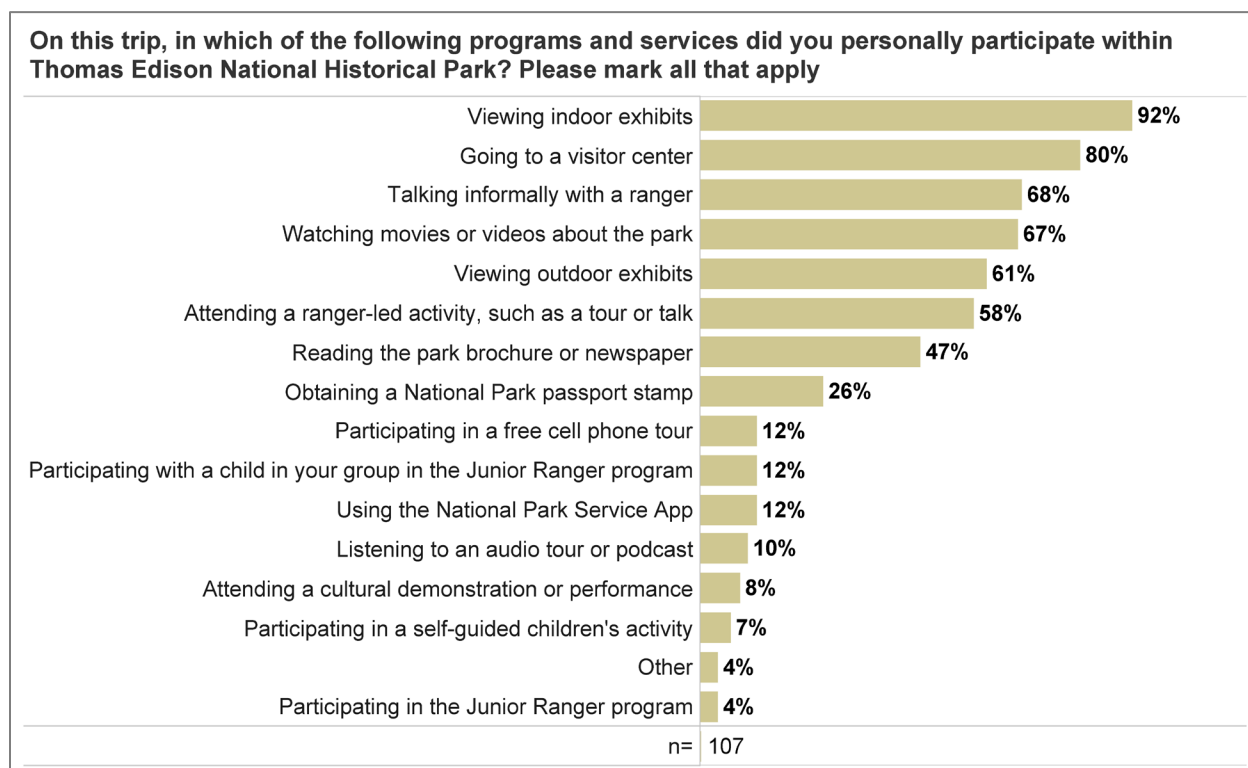


Figure 23. Programs participated while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- The two most-used programs were viewing indoor exhibits and going to the visitor center, with 92% and 80% of respondents respectively reporting participating in each of them.
- Several other programs were engaged in by over half of respondents: talking informally with a ranger (68%), watching movies or videos about the park (67%), viewing outdoor exhibits (61%), and attending a ranger-led activity, such as a tour or talk (58%).

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 24).

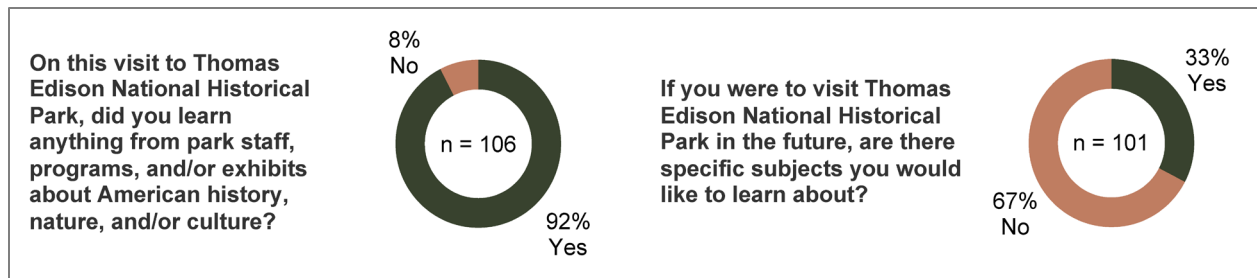


Figure 24. Learning.

NPS

- Most respondents (92%) reported that they learned something from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- About one-third of respondents (33%) reported that if they were to visit Thomas Edison NHP 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. These comments are provided as an accompanying document for review.

Questions 20–21: 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 Thomas Edison NHP (Figure 25).

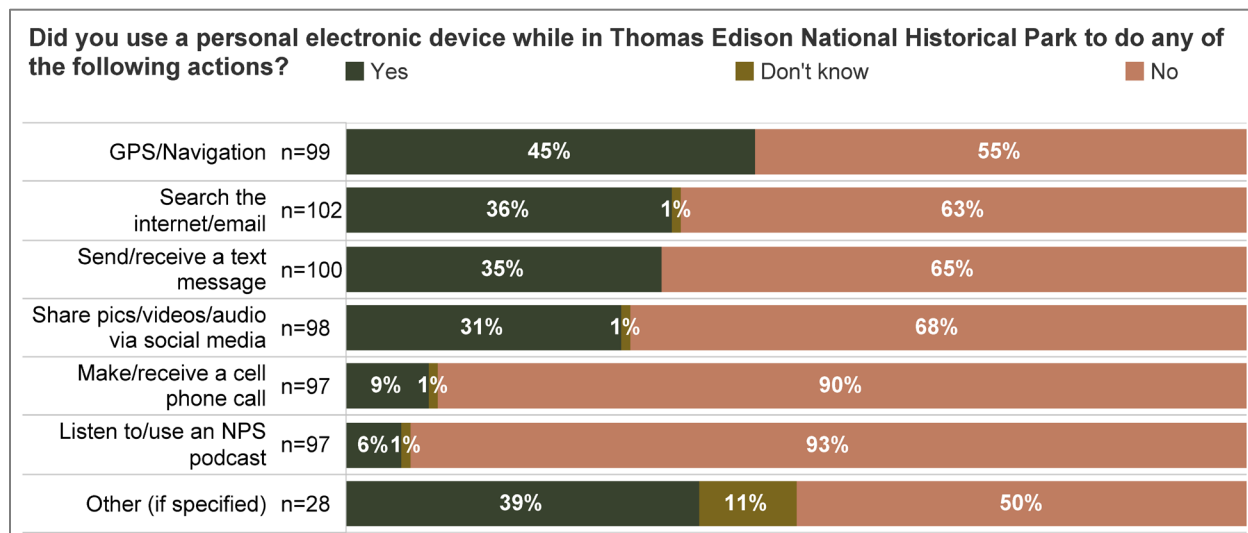


Figure 25. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (45%) reported using GPS/navigation, and over one-third of respondents (36%) reported searching the internet or email.
- Conversely, only 6% 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 26), and the quality of their service (Figure 27).

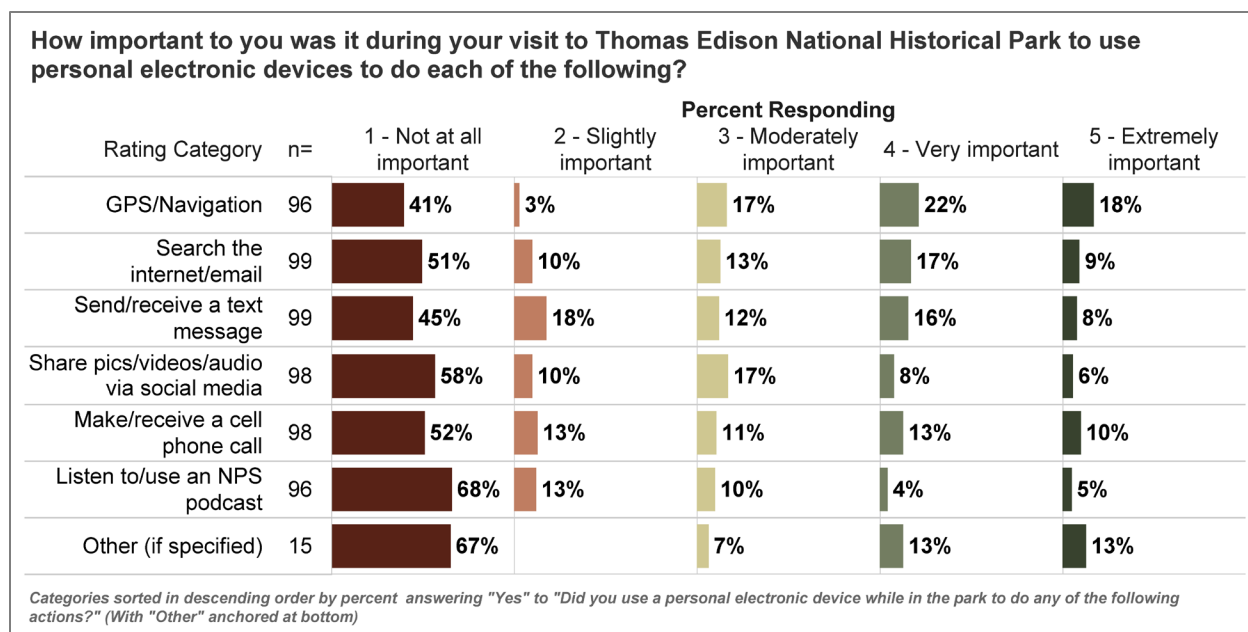


Figure 26. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- The most important device uses were GPS/navigation and searching the internet or email (18% and 9% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important only by 5% of respondents, and not at all important by 68% of respondents.

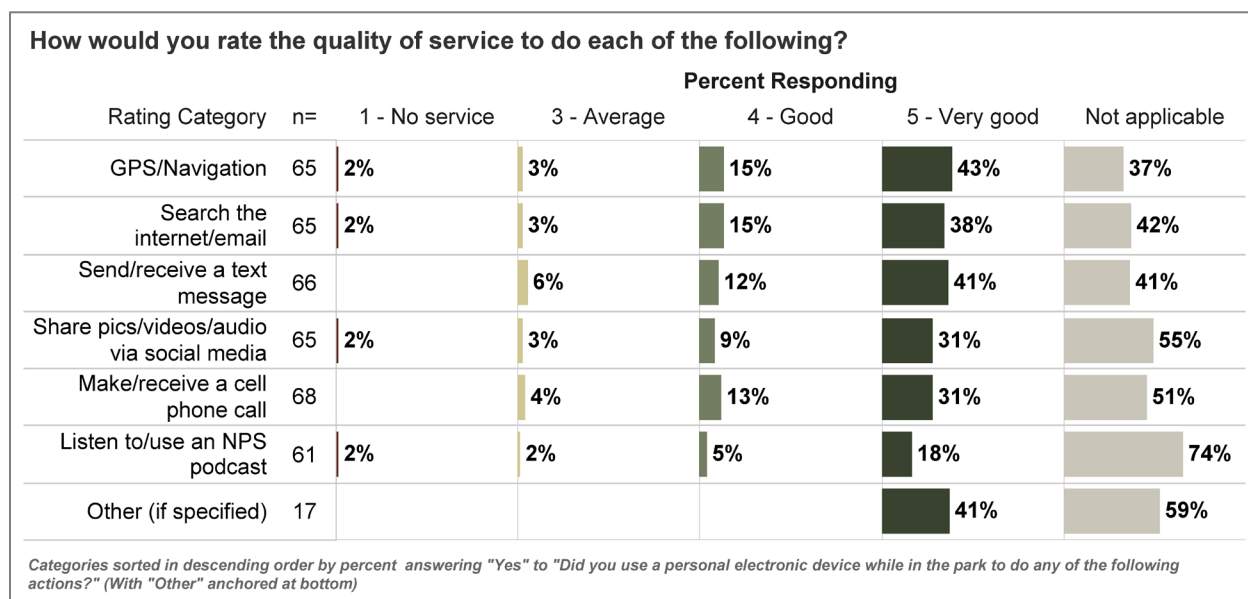


Figure 27. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- GPS/navigation was rated as very good or good by 43% and 15% of respondents, respectively. However, 2% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- A very small proportion of respondents (2%) reported that they also had no service to search the internet or email, share pictures, videos, or audio via social media, and listen to or use an NPS podcast.
- However, substantial percentages of visitors (ranging from 18% to 38%, depending on the service) rated these services as very good.

Question 22: 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 Thomas Edison NHP. If such condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 28).

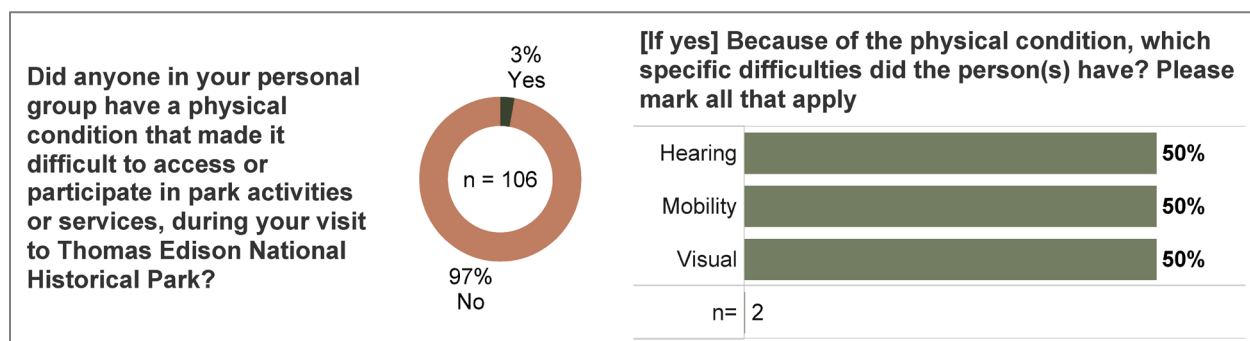


Figure 28. Physical difficulties while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

NPS

- The majority of 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 Thomas Edison NHP.
- Among the 3% of visitors who identified at least one difficulty, 50% reported hearing, mobility, and visual issues in their group.

Questions 25–28: Visitor Experience

Respondents were asked if their visit to Thomas Edison NHP met their expectations (Figure 29).

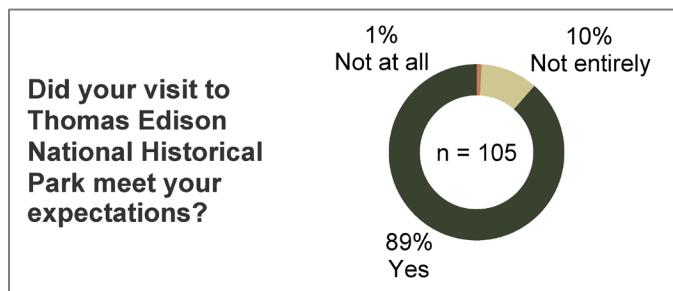


Figure 29. Meeting Thomas Edison NHP expectations.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (89%) reported that their visit to Thomas Edison NHP met their expectations, while 10% of respondents said it did not meet their expectations entirely, and 1% of respondents indicated that it did not meet their expectations at all.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, respondents who indicated that Thomas Edison NHP did not meet their expectations were asked to elaborate. These comments are provided as an accompanying document for review.

Respondents were then given several statements about Thomas Edison NHP and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 30).

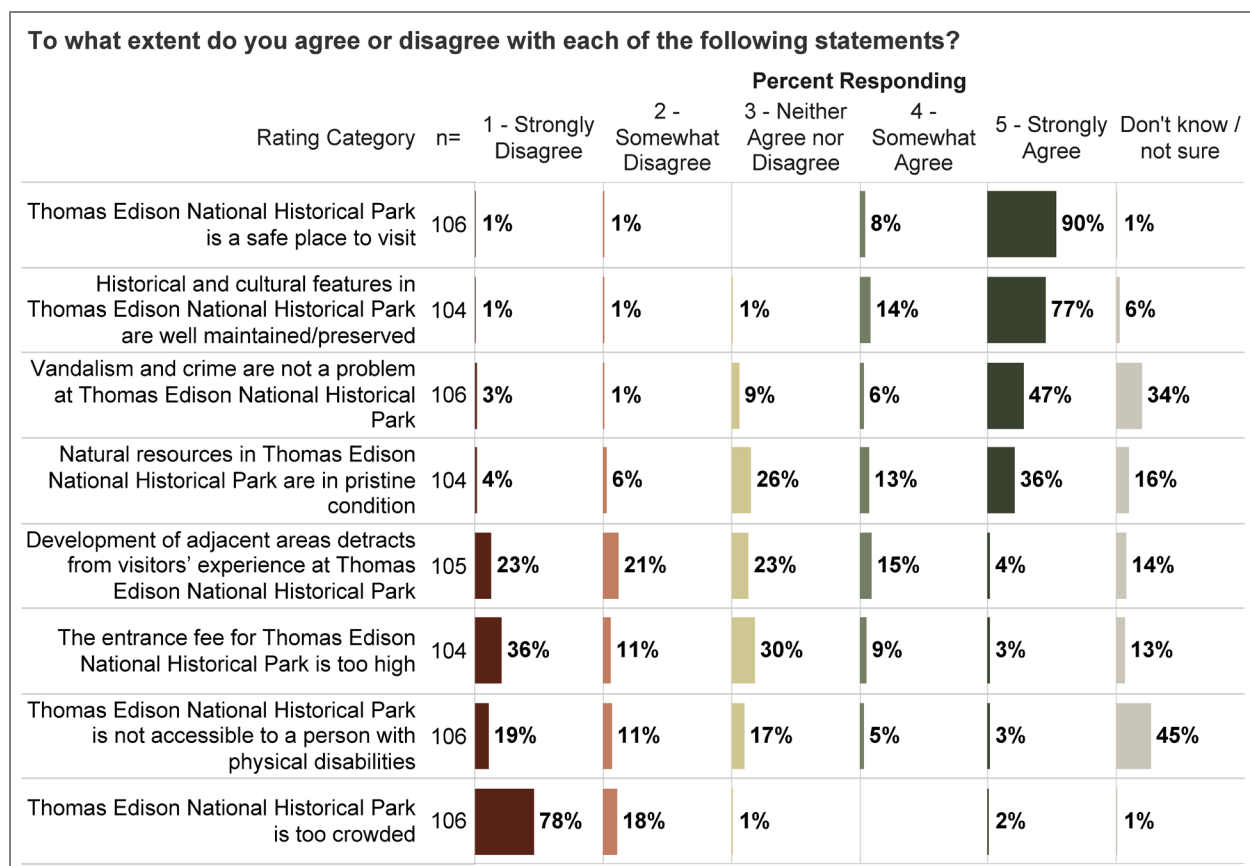


Figure 30. Rating Thomas Edison NHP experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “Thomas Edison National Historical Park is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 98% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “historical and cultural features in Thomas Edison National Historical Park are well maintained/preserved” and “vandalism and crime are not a problem as Thomas Edison National Historical Park” (91% and 53% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “Thomas Edison National Historical Park is too crowded” received the least support, with only 2% of respondents, either somewhat or strongly agreeing with this statement, and nearly three-quarters of respondents (78%) strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Thomas Edison NHP (Figure 31).

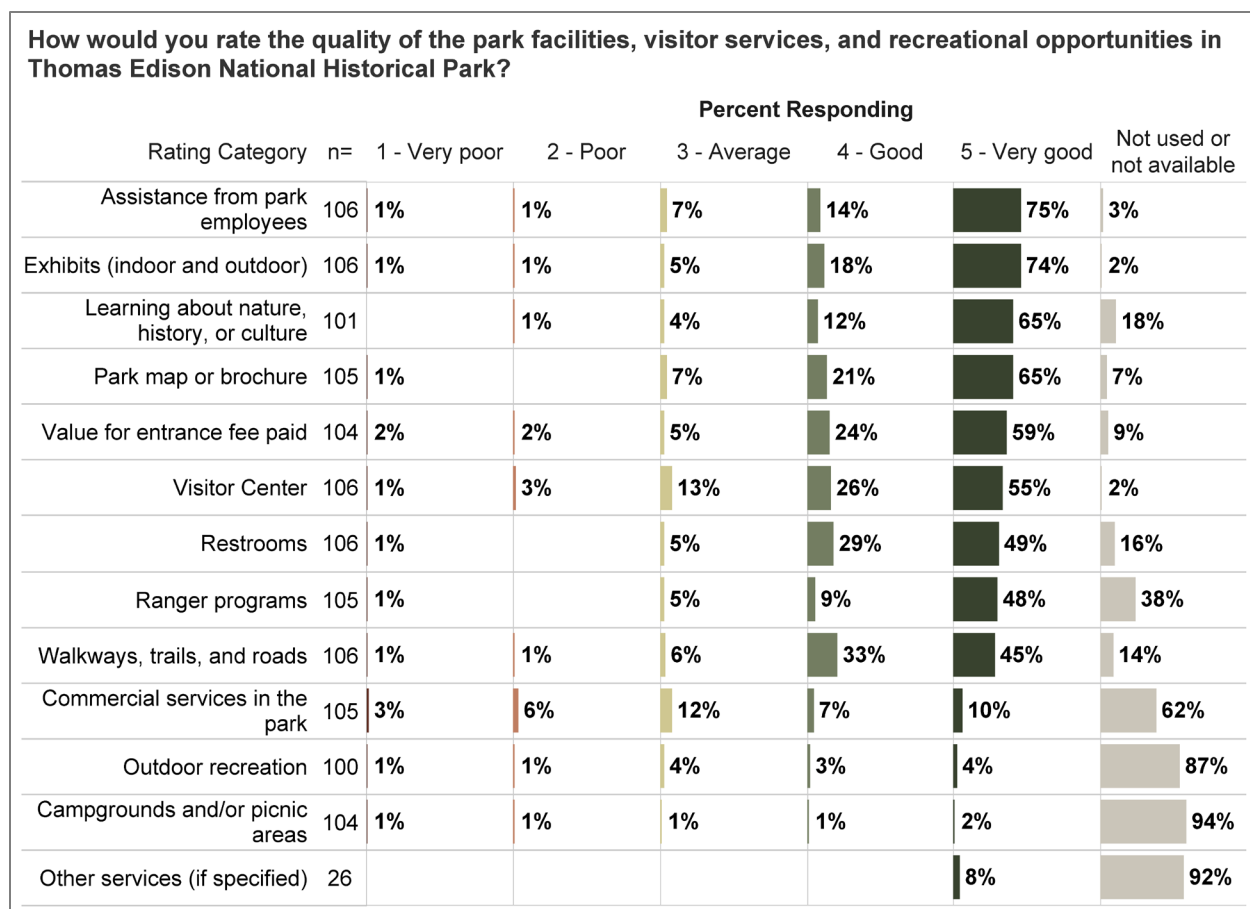


Figure 31. Rating the quality of Thomas Edison NHP facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- Over half of visitors (ranging from 55% to 75%) rated the visitor center, value for entrance fee paid, park map or brochure, learning about nature, history, or culture, exhibits (indoor and outdoor) and assistance from park employees as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of visitors rated restrooms, ranger programs, walkways, trails and roads, commercial services in the park, outdoor recreation, and campgrounds and/or picnic areas as very good. For these ratings categories, visitors were most likely to say that they were either not available, or they did not use them.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 32).

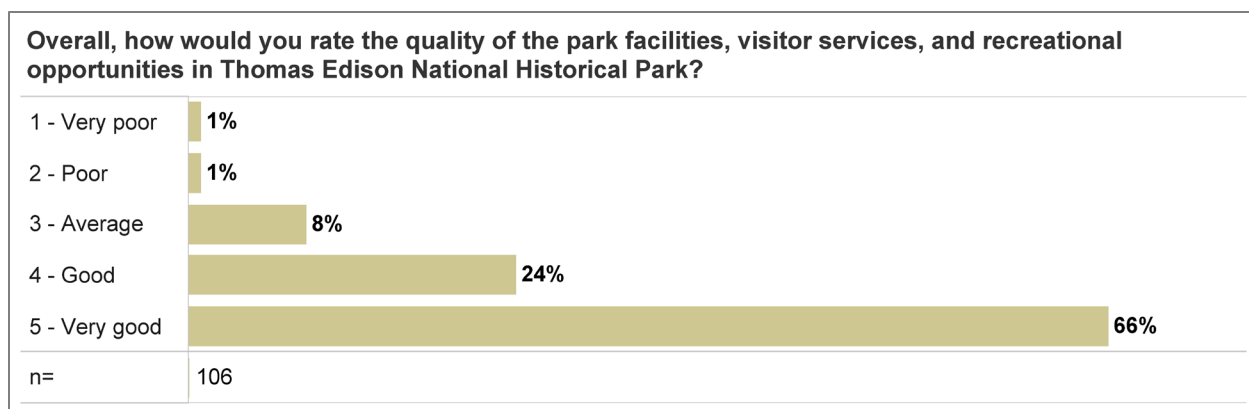


Figure 32. Rating overall quality of Thomas Edison NHP facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

NPS

- In general, about two-thirds of respondents (66%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Thomas Edison NHP as very good, and another 24% rated them as good.
- Just about 1 in 10 visitors rated the overall quality as average or below.

Questions 31–39: Background/Demographics

In the final section of the follow-up survey, respondents were asked various questions about their personal and household demographics. Figure 33 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent gender, age, and education.

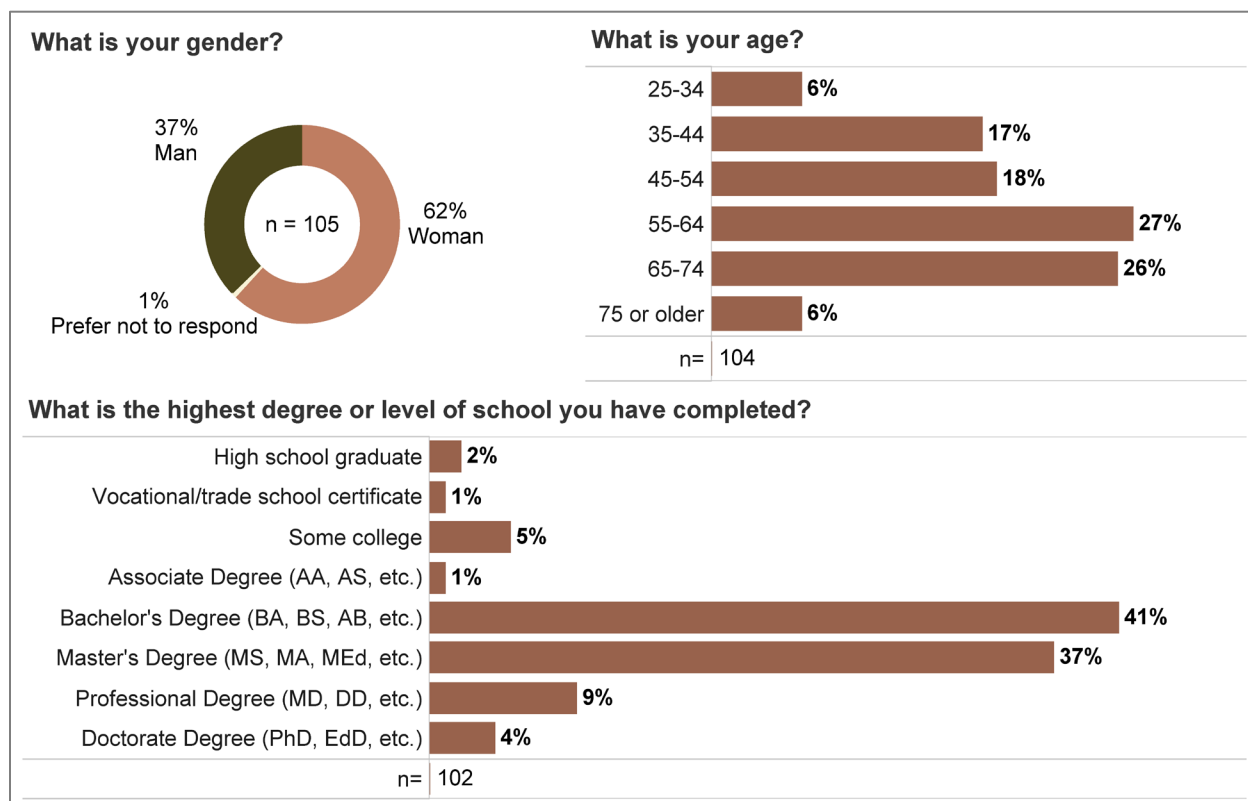


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.

NPS

- Follow-up survey respondents were more likely to be women than men (62% vs 37%). Another 1% preferred not to disclose their gender identity.
- The most common age categories were 55 to 64 (27%), 65 to 74 (26%). The least represented age groups were 75 and older, and 25 to 34 (only 6% of the participants surveyed indicated they belonged in each age category).
- Most survey respondents were highly educated, with a combined 92% having some college degree, and half (50%) holding a master's degree or higher.

Respondents were also asked to identify their race(s) and if they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Figure 34).

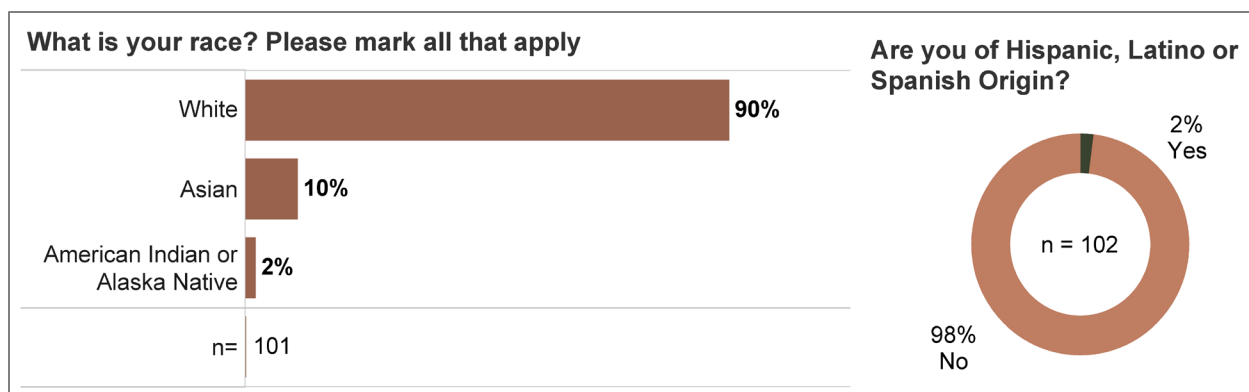


Figure 34. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (90%) were White, while 10% were Asian.
- Most respondents (98%) 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 35).

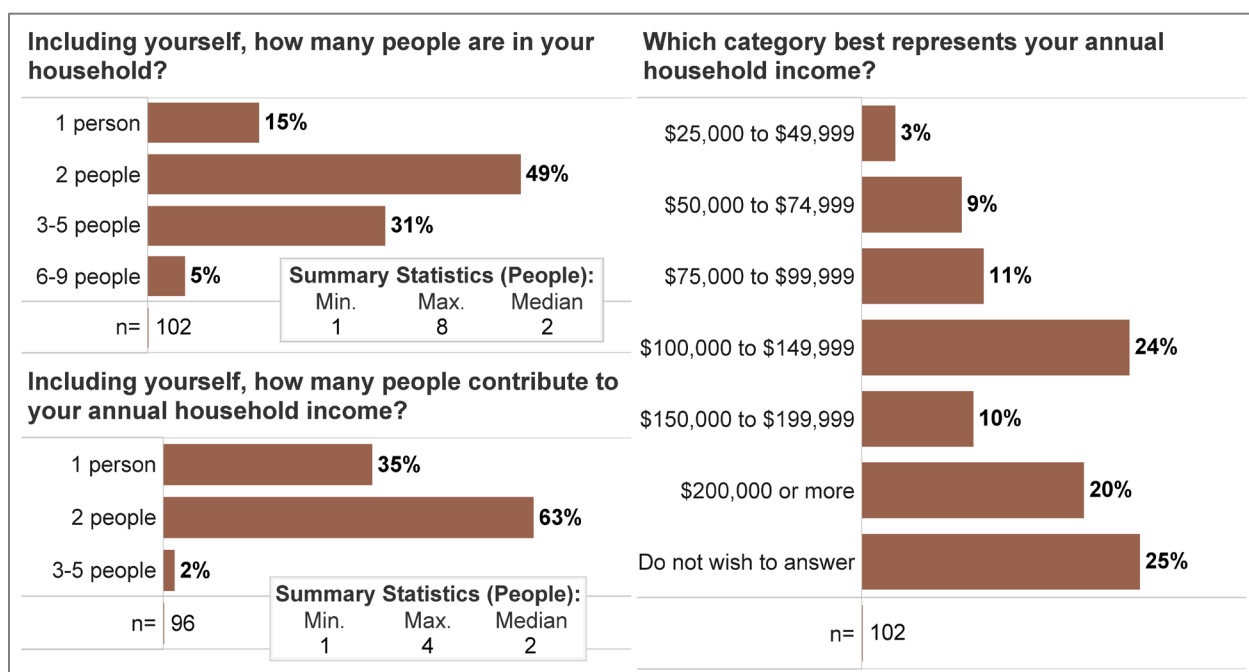


Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (49%) had 2 people in their household, followed by 3 to 5 people (another 31%).

- In addition to being highly educated, Thomas Edison NHP visitors are also relatively affluent. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and another 25% earned \$200,000 or more.
- Most respondents (63%) came from a dual-income household.

Finally, respondents were asked about their language preference (Figure 36).

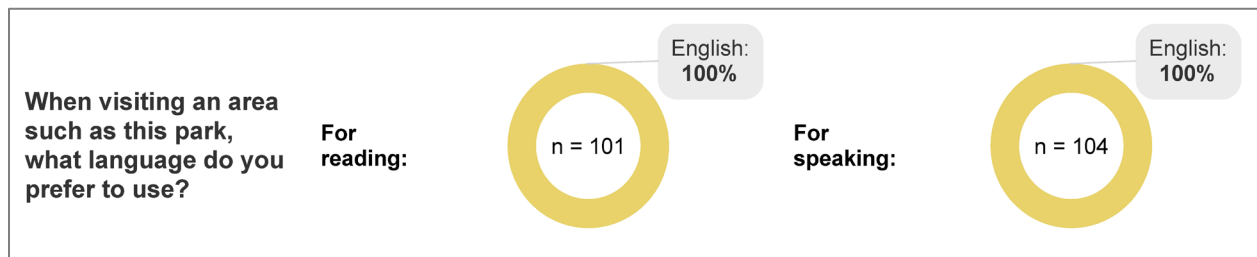


Figure 36. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- While 2% of respondents were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, all respondents (100%) preferred to use English both for reading and speaking when visiting an area such as Thomas Edison NHP.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2022. 2022 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Thomas Edison National Historical: Visitor Intercept and Post-Trip Surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2318661>

Appendix A: Accessible Tables

This appendix contains accessible tables with data from figures found in the body of the report (Tables 8–19). Table captions include hyperlinks to the corresponding figures.

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

Accommodation Type	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Camping outside Thomas Edison NHP	2	8	9	9
Lodging outside Thomas Edison NHP	44	1	60	2
Unpaid accommodations	25	1	23	4

Table 9. Data from [Figure 7](#). Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

Group Composition	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Adults	369	1	7	2
Children	369	0	5	0

Table 10. Data from [Figure 13](#). Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering Thomas Edison NHP.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered Thomas Edison NHP?	353	1	9	2

Table 11. Data from [Figure 14](#). Previous visits to Thomas Edison NHP.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Thomas Edison NHP over the past 12 months?	97	1	100	1
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Thomas Edison NHP over the past five years?	97	1	500	2

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

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
How many visits have you made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months?	369	0	60	2

Table 13. Data from [Figure 22](#). Reasons or motivations to visit Thomas Edison NHP.

Rating Category	n
To visit a National Park Service site	103
To experience solitude	98
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	99
To learn more about nature	99
To learn more about American history and culture	108
To spend time with family/friends	105
To get physical exercise	102
To view wildlife or natural scenery	101
To relax	101
To view dark night sky/stars	97
Other (if specified)	11

Table 14. Data from [Figure 25](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	97
Send/receive a text message	100
Search the internet/email	102
GPS/Navigation	99
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	98
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	97
Other (if specified)	28

Table 15. Data from [Figure 26](#). The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	98
Send/receive a text message	99
Search the internet/email	99
GPS/Navigation	96
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	98
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	96
Other (if specified)	15

Table 16. Data from [Figure 27](#). Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Thomas Edison NHP.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	68
Send/receive a text message	66
Search the internet/email	65
GPS/Navigation	65
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	65
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	61
Other (if specified)	17

Table 17. Data from [Figure 30](#). Rating Thomas Edison NHP experience.

Rating Category	n
Thomas Edison NHP is a safe place to visit	106
Thomas Edison NHP is too crowded	106
Natural resources in Thomas Edison NHP are in pristine condition	104
The entrance fee for Thomas Edison NHP is too high	104
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Thomas Edison NHP	106
Thomas Edison NHP is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	106
Historical and cultural features in Thomas Edison NHP are well maintained/preserved	104
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Thomas Edison NHP	105

Table 18. Data from [Figure 31](#). Rating the quality of Thomas Edison NHP facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	n
Visitor Center	106
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	106
Restrooms	106
Walkways, trails, and roads	106
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	104
Assistance from park employees	106
Park map or brochure	105
Ranger programs	105
Value for entrance fee paid	104
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	105

Table 18 (continued). Data from [Figure 31](#). Rating the quality of Thomas Edison NHP facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	n
Other services (if specified)	26
Learning about nature, history, or culture	101
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	100

Table 19. Data from [Figure 35](#). Household demographics: annual household income and household size.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	102	1	8	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	96	1	4	2

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Science Report NPS/SR—2026/466
<https://doi.org/10.36967/2318784>

Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 150
Fort Collins, CO 80525