



2022 Socioeconomic Research of Fort Laramie National Historic Site

Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)



Aerial view of Fort Laramie National Historic Site.
NPS / JOHN GILPIN

2022 Socioeconomic Research of Fort Laramie National Historic Site: Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)

Science Report NPS/SR—2026/468

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

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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.

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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. Fort Laramie National Historic Site (Fort Laramie) 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 Fort Laramie 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 was also 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. Fort Laramie National Historic Site (Fort Laramie) 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 Fort Laramie National Historic Site, what they do during their visit, and their spending profile. The results of the study are intended to assist Fort Laramie National Historic Site 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.



Tipis across Laramie River in fall at Fort Laramie National Historic Site.
NPS / MIKE EVANS

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.



Photograph of a group of Junior Soldiers folding the flag at Retreat Parade at the annual Fourth of July Celebration held at Fort Laramie National Historic Site.

NPS / CAROL STEVENSON

Study Area

The Fort Laramie local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Fort Laramie consists of Goshen and Platte counties in Wyoming, and Sioux and Scotts Bluff counties in Nebraska. Within Fort Laramie, the study area was comprised of one location. Table 1 shows more details about the primary sampling location.

The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of July 9th to 24th, 2022. A sample of visitors were intercepted while visiting Fort Laramie across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. The majority of 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 Fort Laramie (NPS 2022). If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a Fort Laramie 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—Fort Laramie intercept survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	486
Complete refusals	3
Partial refusals (non-response questions completed)	3
Intercept surveys completed	480
Follow-up surveys distributed	449
Intercept response rate	98.8%
Follow-up acceptance rate	93.5%

During the sampling period, two surveyors were stationed simultaneously at the primary sampling site. Start times varied day-to-day and by location to capture a diverse sample of visitors across Fort Laramie. Two surveyors worked approximately ten 7-hour days (six hours data collection and one-hour lunch break). An additional surveyor was stationed for an additional six days to supplement the sample.

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 Fort Laramie. 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—Fort Laramie follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Outcome	Total
Follow-up surveys distributed	449
Valid follow-up surveys completed	247
Response rate	55.0%

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 99%, 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 Fort Laramie?” Note: p-value = 0.28.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	2.1%	9	3.8%
No	234	97.9%	231	96.3%

Table 5. Non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: p-value = 0.04.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	227	95.0%	216	90.0%
No	12	5.0%	24	10.0%

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 Fort Laramie and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value = 0.03.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	35.1%	62	25.7%
No	155	64.9%	179	74.3%

Using a p-value of 0.05, the distribution of responses among full survey respondents and intercept-only respondents differed significantly for two questions: 1) residency in the U.S., and 2) overnight visitation. Therefore, non-US residents and overnight visitors are not as well represented in the full responses as desired.



“Old Bedlam,” the first building constructed here by the military in 1849, originally used as a bachelor officers’ quarters. The building as it appears today after being restored by the National Park Service in the 1960s.

NPS

Results

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 480 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Fort Laramie National Historic Site from July 9th to 24th, 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.



Photos of historic military reenactors firing a mountain howitzer. Visitors look on as children help swab the barrel after firing.

NPS

Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Fort Laramie. 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.

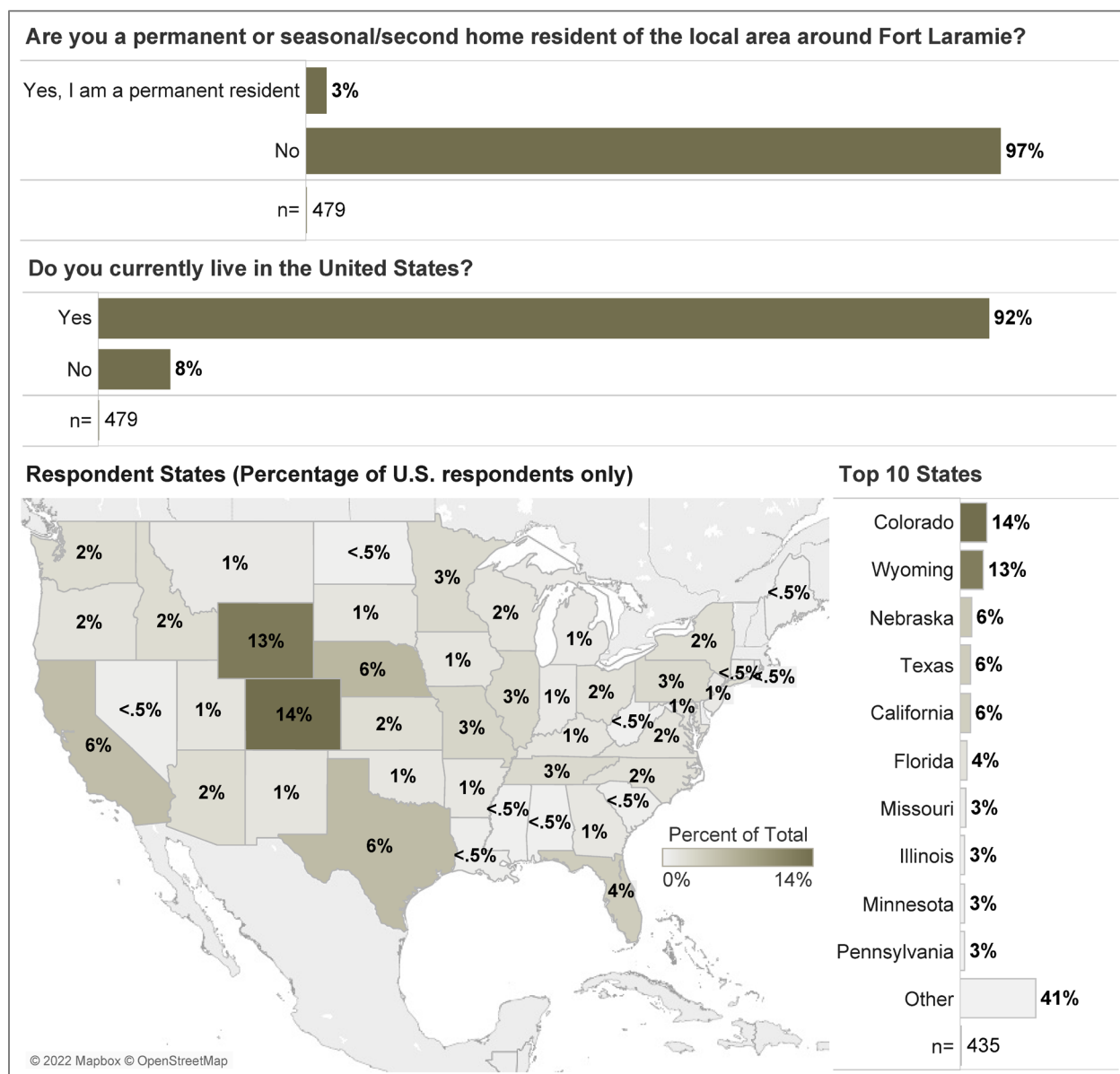


Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to Fort Laramie.
NPS

- A small percentage of respondents (a combined 3%) stated that they were permanent residents of the local area around Fort Laramie.

- There was a large geographic concentration of visitors from Wyoming (where Fort Laramie is located) and Colorado.
- Among the 92% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 14% reside in Colorado, followed by Wyoming (13%), Nebraska (6%), Texas (6%), and California (6%).

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).

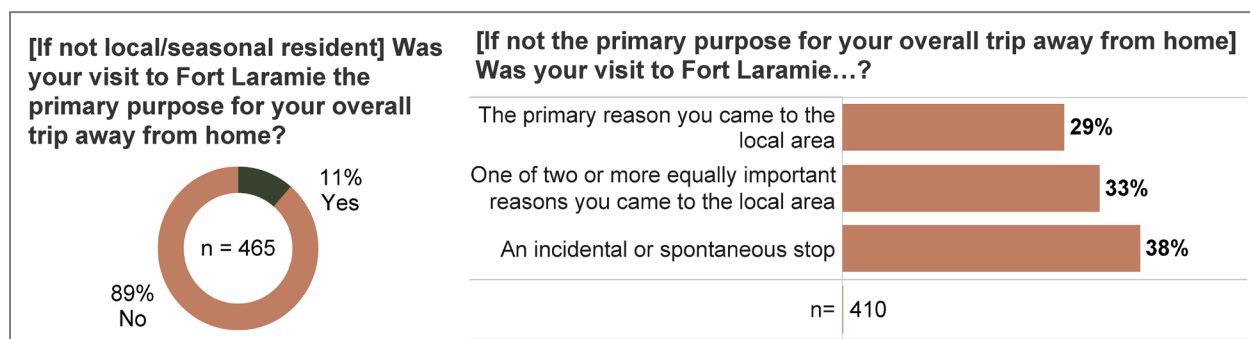


Figure 3. Role of Fort Laramie in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- For the majority of non-local respondents (89%), visiting Fort Laramie was not the primary purpose for their overall trip away from home.
- Among those respondents for whom Fort Laramie was not their primary trip purpose, 38% stated that their visit to Fort Laramie was an incidental or spontaneous stop, while another 33% indicated that it was one of two or more equally important reasons they came to the local area. An additional 29% said it was the primary reason they came to the local area.

Question 4: Length of Stay

If respondents indicated that they were not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Fort Laramie, 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.

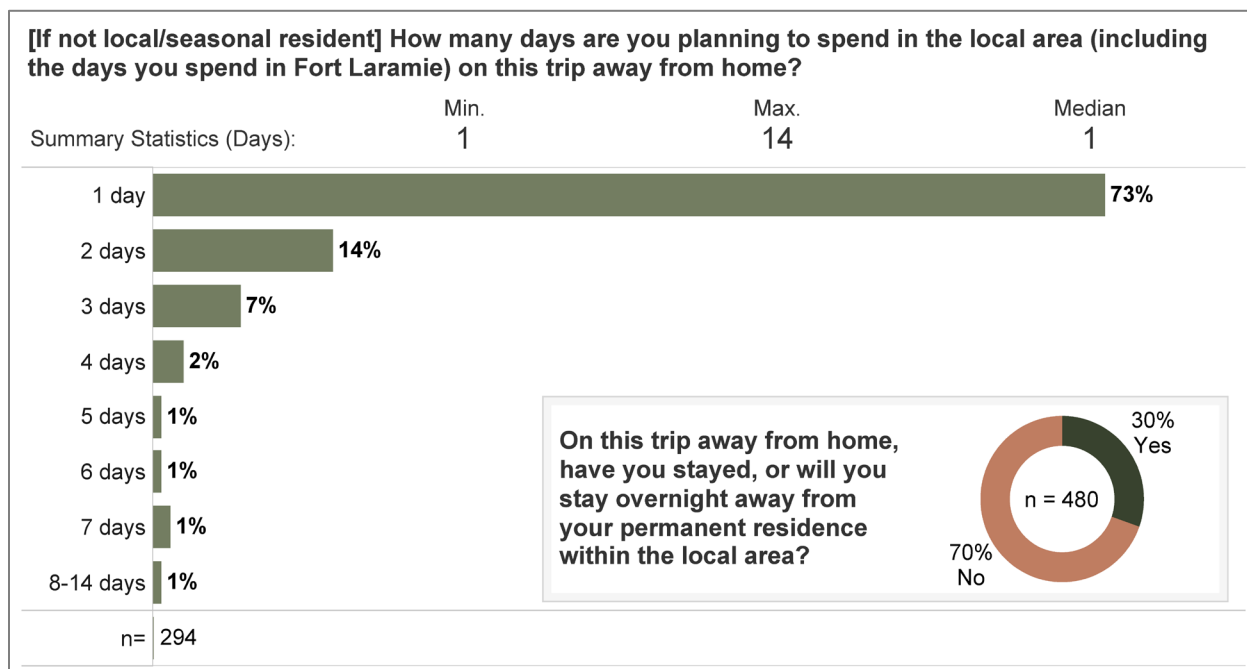


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around Fort Laramie.

NPS

- Over two-thirds of non-local respondents (73%) spent one day in the local area, while 14% spent 2 days, and 7% spent 3 days. The median length of stay was one day.
- Additionally, just under one-third of all respondents (30%; 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).

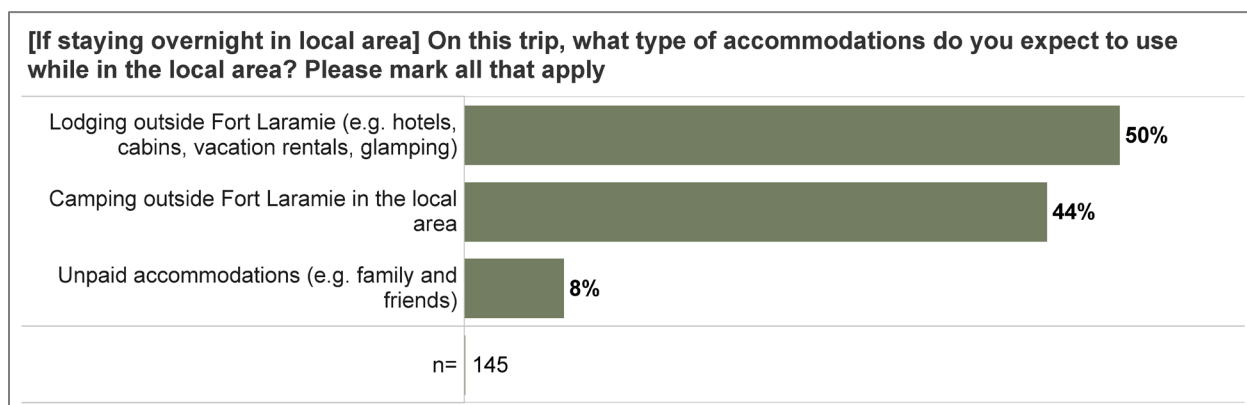


Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around Fort Laramie.

NPS

- Half of overnight respondents (50%) stayed in lodging outside Fort Laramie (e.g., hotels, cabins, vacation rentals, glamping).
- This was followed in prevalence by respondents who camped outside Fort Laramie in the local area (44%), and those who stayed at unpaid accommodations (e.g., family and friends) (8%).

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

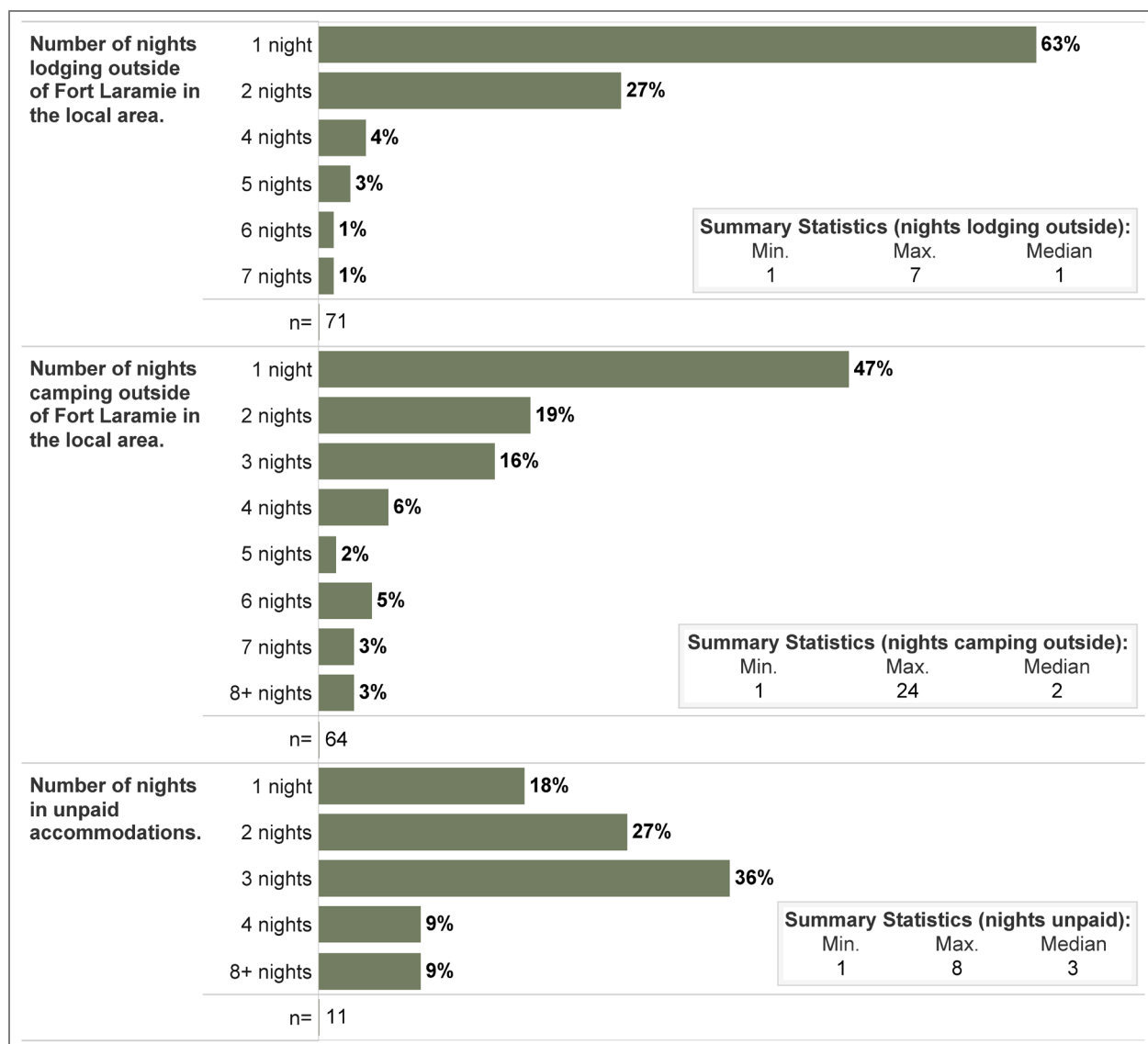


Figure 6. Number of nights spent in the local area around Fort Laramie, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 8](#).

NPS

- Among the 50% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Fort Laramie in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was one night. The majority (90%) lodged 2 nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 94% spent 4 nights or fewer.
- Among the 44% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Fort Laramie (per Figure 5), median length of stay was two nights, though the plurality (47%) stayed just one night.
- Among the 8% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay three nights. Results for this group should be interpreted with caution due to the small size of the sample (i.e., $n < 30$).

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 Fort Laramie (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.

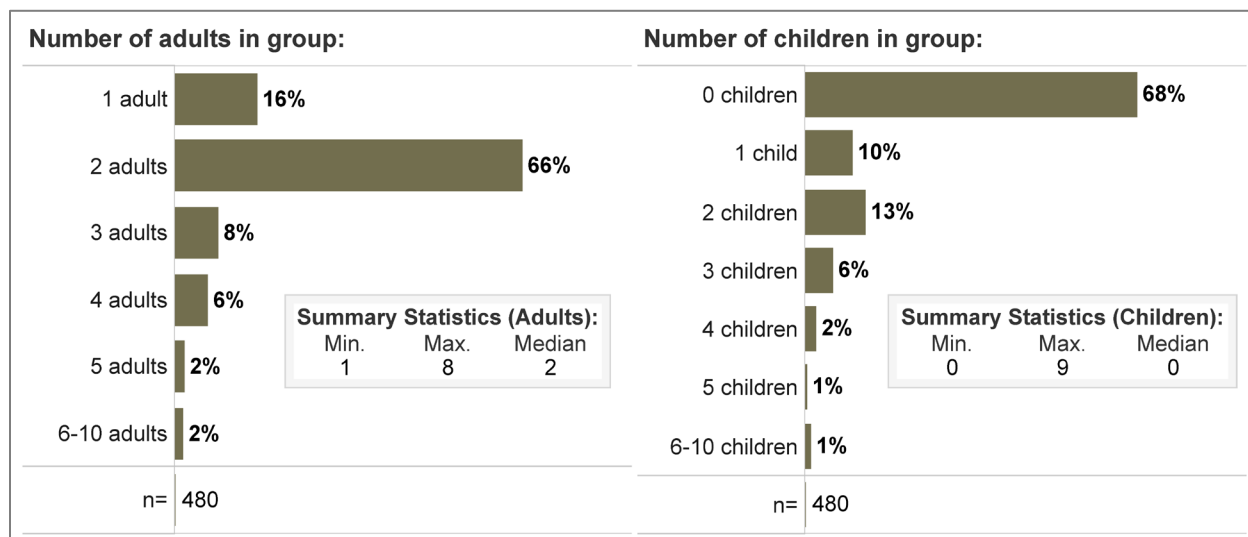


Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 9](#).

NPS

- The median number of adults per group was two. Most groups (66%) included 2 adults.
- Most groups (68%) did not include any children.

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

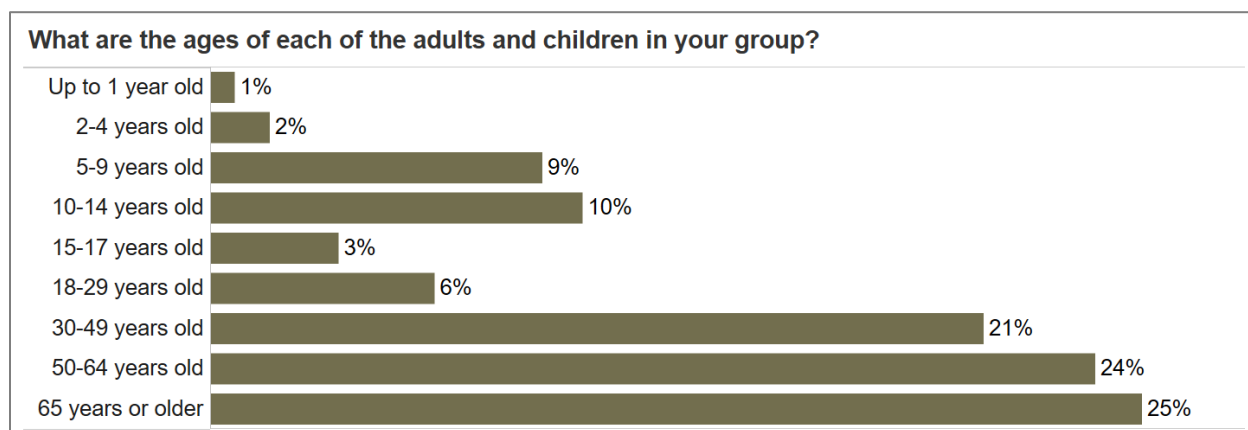


Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Fort Laramie.

NPS

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 65 years or older (25%), followed by 50–64 years old (24%), and 30–49 years old (21%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of 25% of group members.

Questions 11–13: Park Use Characteristics

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Fort Laramie 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).

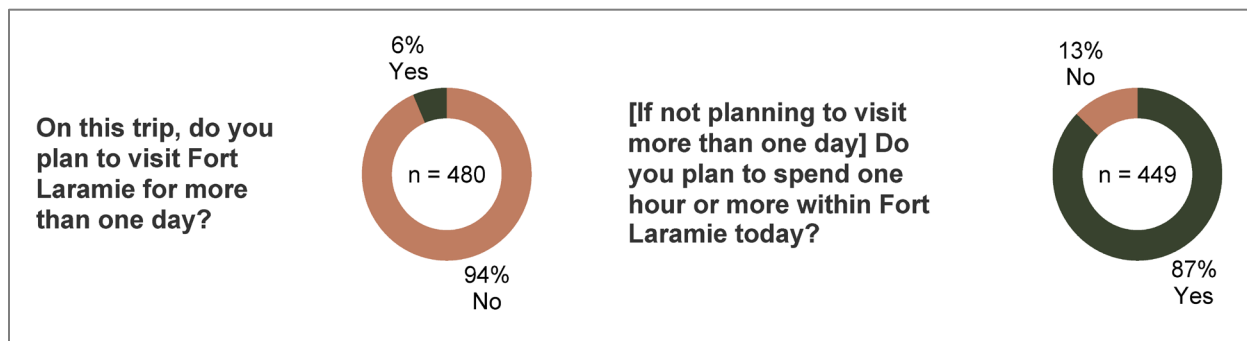


Figure 9. Duration of the respondent's trip to Fort Laramie.

NPS

Table 7. Amount of time spent within Fort Laramie.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Fort Laramie today?	57	2	45	30
[If planning to spend less than a day, but one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Fort Laramie today?	390	1	5	2
[If planning to visit at least one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Fort Laramie on this trip?	31	1	24	1
[If planning to visit at least one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	31	1	2	1

- While visiting Fort Laramie, most visitors (94%) did not plan to spend more than one day in the park.
- Among the 94% of visitors who did not spend more than a day in Fort Laramie, the majority (87%) planned to spend one hour or more in the park. The median length of time spent in the park among this group was two hours.
- The remaining 6% of visitors planned to visit for more than one day; among those visitors, the median length of stay was one day.
- 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 one day.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within Fort Laramie and asked to indicate if they had been to or planned to visit them that day (Figure 10).

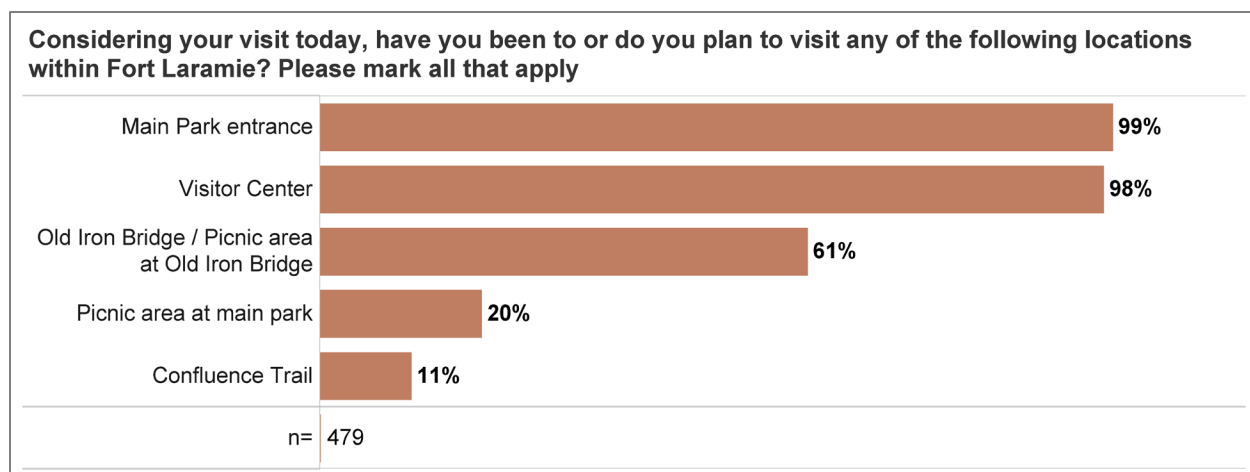


Figure 10. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Fort Laramie.

NPS

- The most commonly visited location in Fort Laramie was the Main Park entrance (99% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by Visitor Center (98%) and Old Iron Bridge/Picnic area (61%).
- Confluence Trail was the least-visited location from the list provided, with only 11% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit.

Question 14: Transportation

Visitors were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter Fort Laramie on the day they were surveyed (Figure 11).

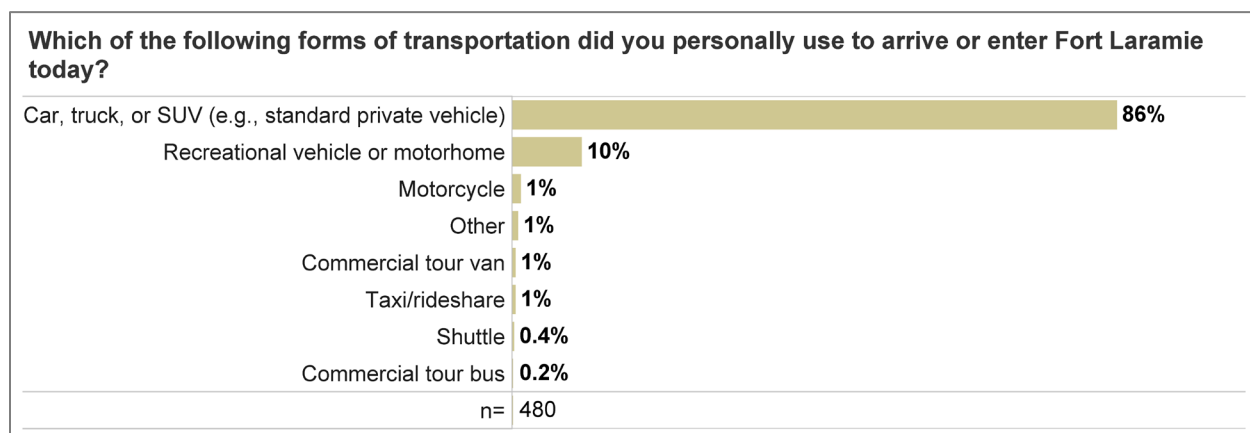


Figure 11. Form of transportation used to enter Fort Laramie on the day of the survey.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (86%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Fort Laramie on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by use of a recreational vehicle or motorhome (10%).

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 12).

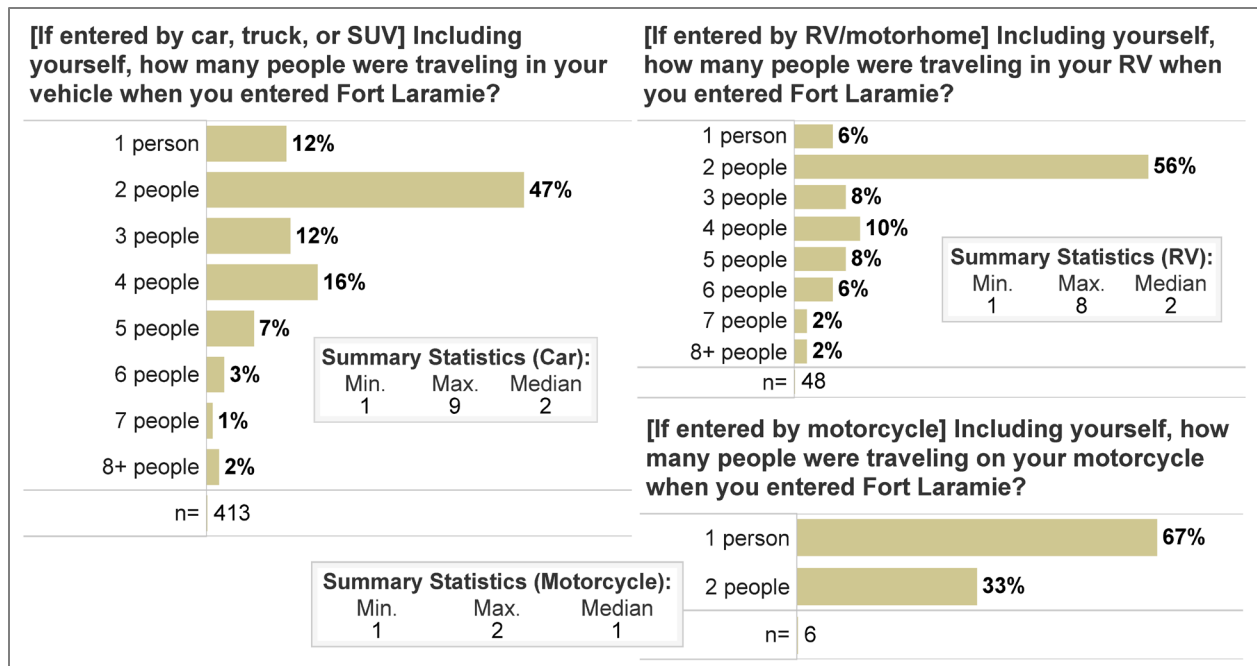


Figure 12. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 10](#).

NPS

- The plurality of respondents (47%) traveling by car reported two people. The next common group size was four people (16%), followed by three people or solo travelers (12% each).
- Over half of respondents entering Fort Laramie by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of two people (56%), followed by four people (10%).
- Most motorcyclists (67%) were traveling on their own.

Question 16: Previous Visits to Fort Laramie

Respondents were asked if they were first time visitors to Fort Laramie. Repeat visitors were then asked how many visits they have made to Fort Laramie in the last 12 months and the last five years (Figure 13).

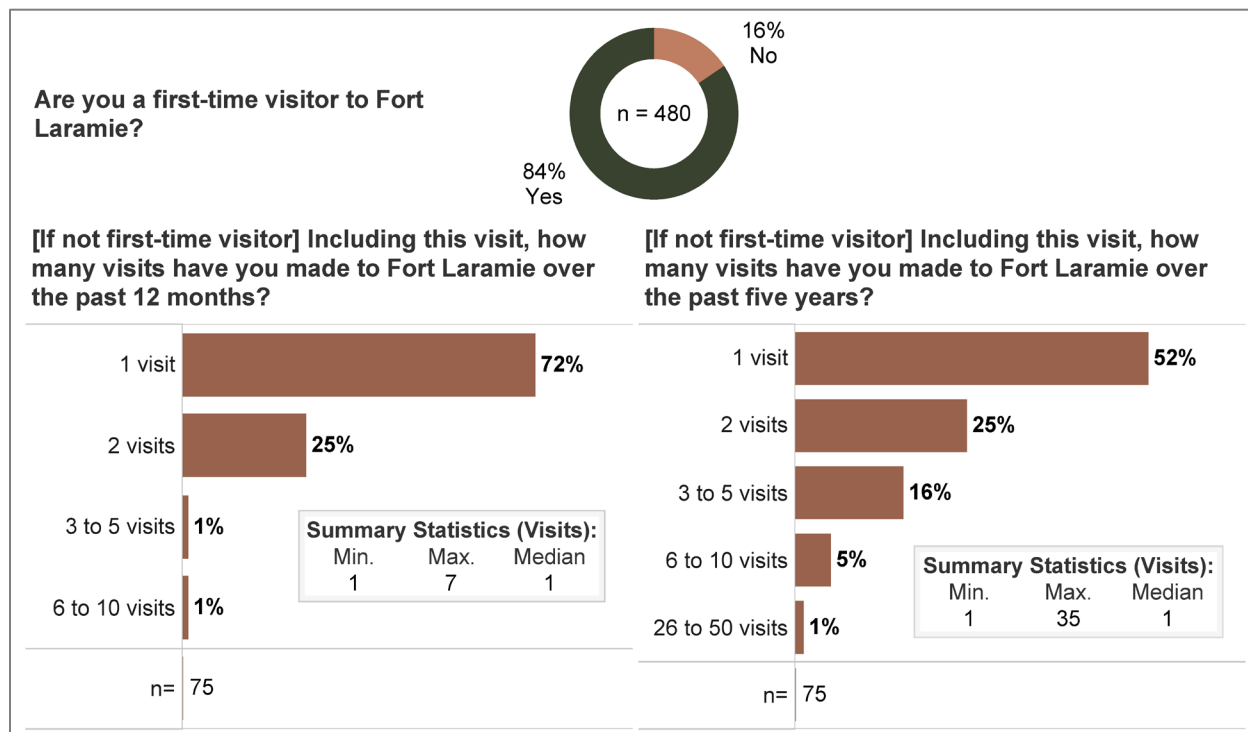


Figure 13. Previous visits to Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- Most respondents (84%) were on their first ever trip to Fort Laramie.
- Among the 16% of respondents who were repeat visitors, the majority (72%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- Almost half of repeat visitors (48%) had visited more than one time in the past 5 years.
- The median number of visits made in the past 5 years was one, including the current trip; about 1% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past 5 years.

Question 17: 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 14).

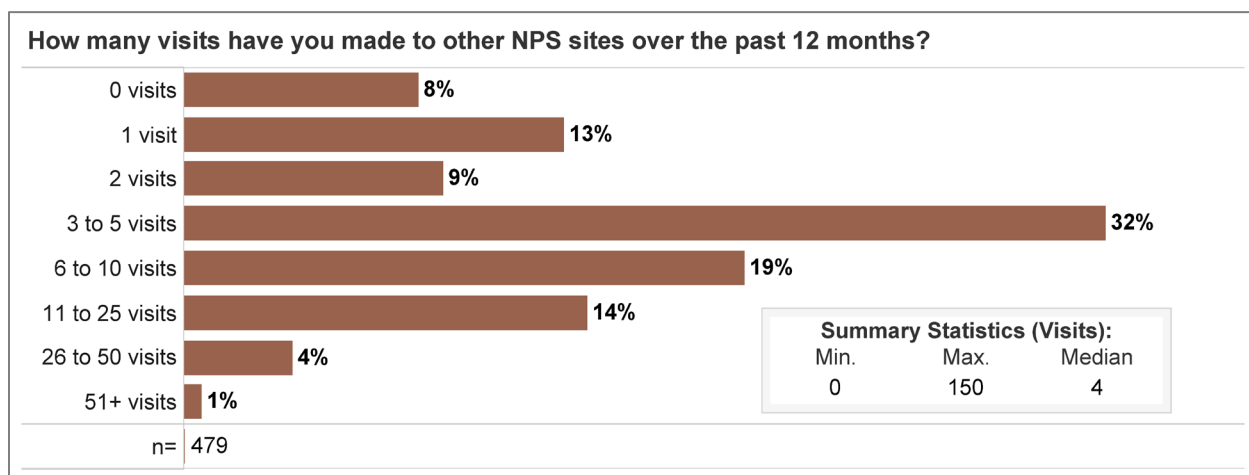


Figure 14. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- The highest proportion of respondents (32%) had made 3–5 visits 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 four, though a combined 70% had made 3 or more visits in the past year.

Follow-Up Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 247 follow-up visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in Fort Laramie National Historic Site 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 Fort Laramie

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about Fort Laramie prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 15).

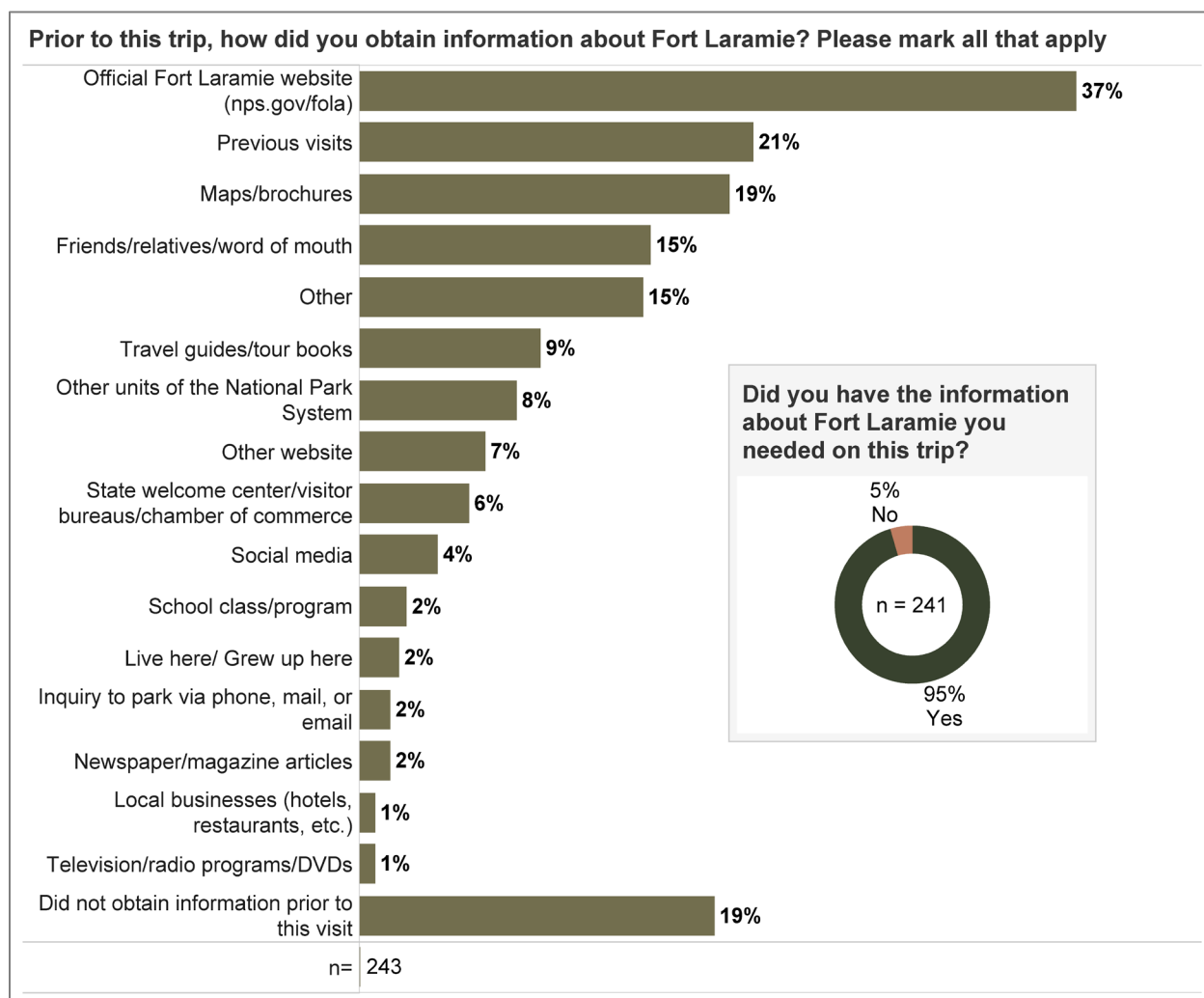


Figure 15. Sources used to obtain information about Fort Laramie prior to the trip.

NPS

- The most used resource was the official Fort Laramie website (nps.gov/foia), with 37% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was previous visits (21%), followed by maps/brochures (19%), friend/relatives/word of mouth (15%), and other sources (15%).
- In a follow-up question, 95% of respondents said that they had the information about Fort Laramie that they needed on their trip, while 5% 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 Fort Laramie on their trip (Figure 16).

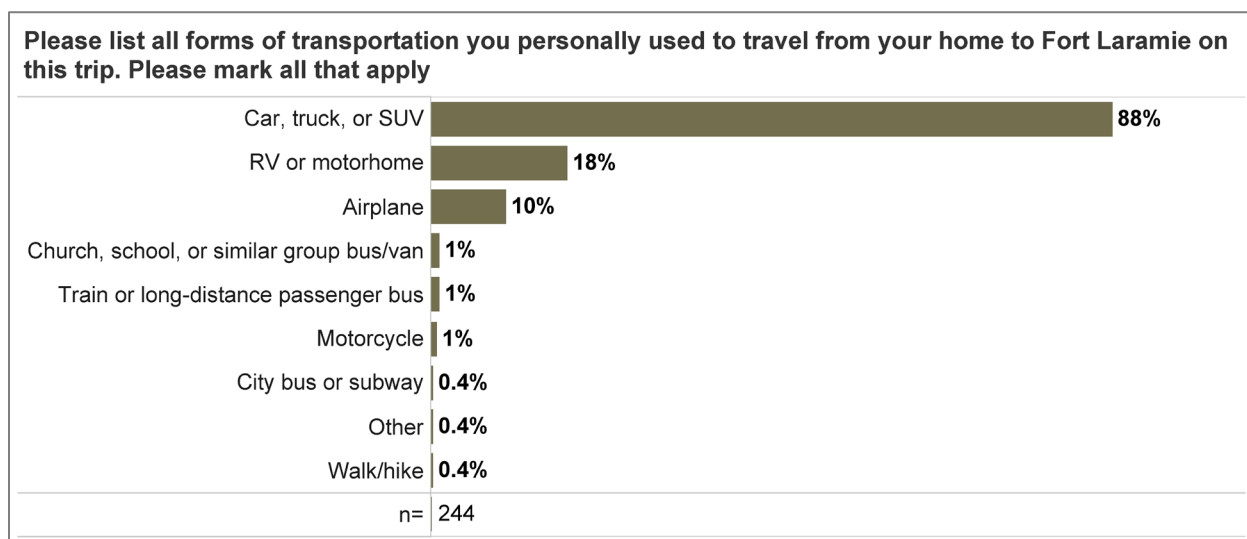


Figure 16. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Fort Laramie on the recent trip.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (88%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Fort Laramie.
- The second most common mode of travel was an RV or motorhome (7%), followed by an airplane (10%).

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to Fort Laramie on the day of the survey (Figure 17).

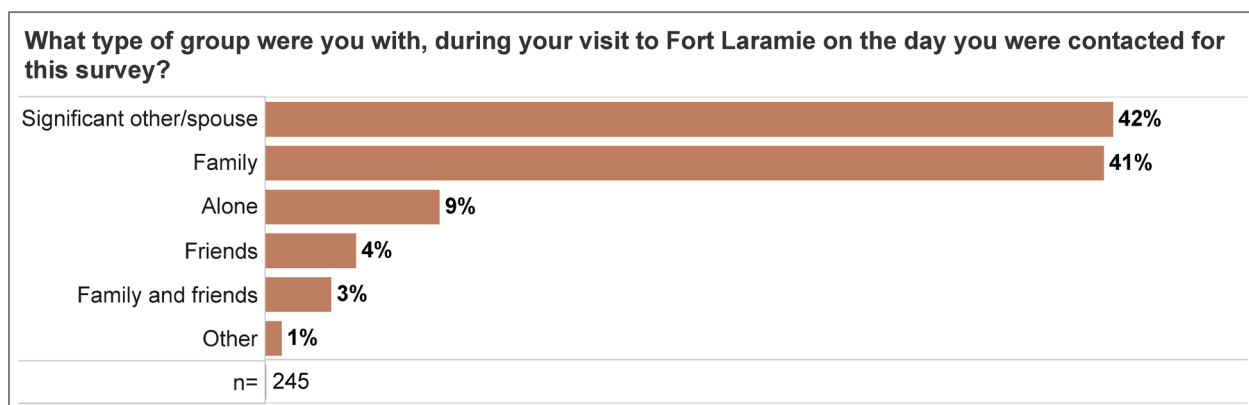


Figure 17. Travel party composition during Fort Laramie visit.

NPS

- The highest proportion of respondents (42%) visited Fort Laramie with their significant other or spouse on the day of the survey. This was followed closely by those respondents who visited Fort Laramie with their family (41%).
- A small percentage of respondents (9%) explored Fort Laramie alone, and another 4% visited the park with their friends.

Question 10: Entrance Fees

Respondents were asked to indicate which type of entrance fees applied to them personally on their most recent trip to Fort Laramie ² (Figure 18).

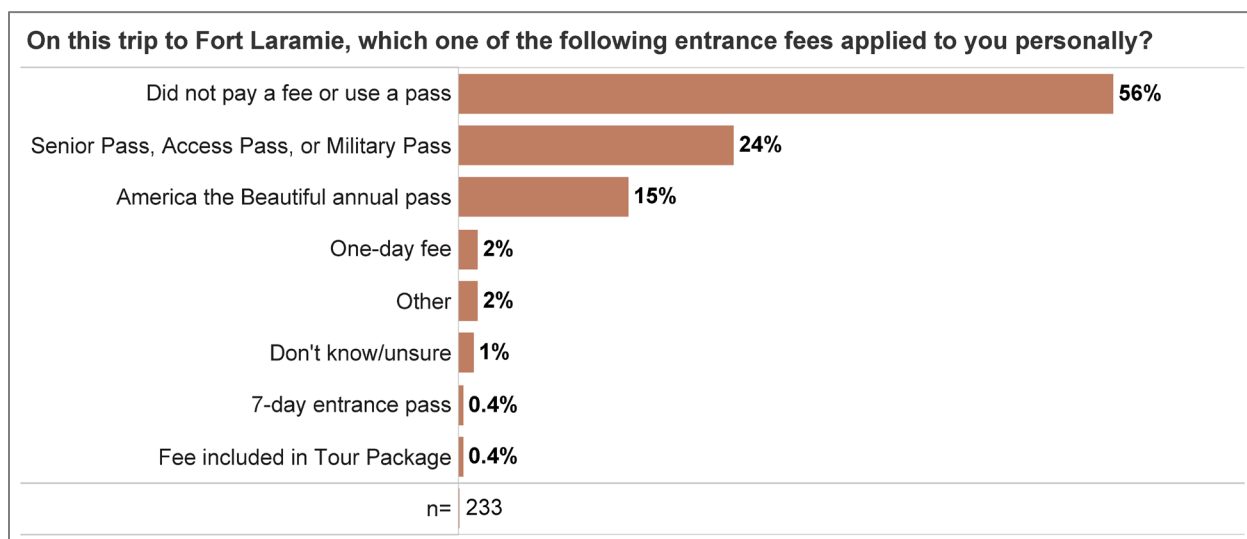


Figure 18. Entrance fees to enter Fort Laramie on the most recent trip.

NPS

- Over half of respondents (56%) reported that they did not pay a fee or use a pass while visiting Fort Laramie, and another 24% entered using a Senior Pass, Access Pass, or Military Pass.

² Fort Laramie does not charge an entrance fee. However, this question was asked as part of the standard survey fielded at units across the NPS system.

Questions 12–14: Trip Characteristics

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

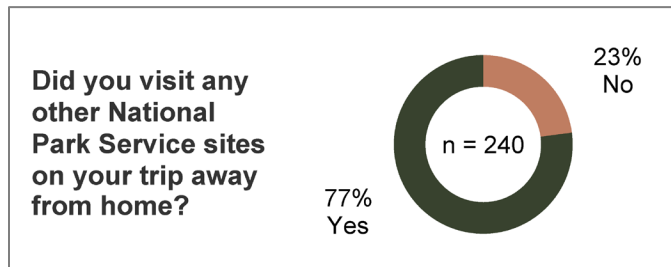


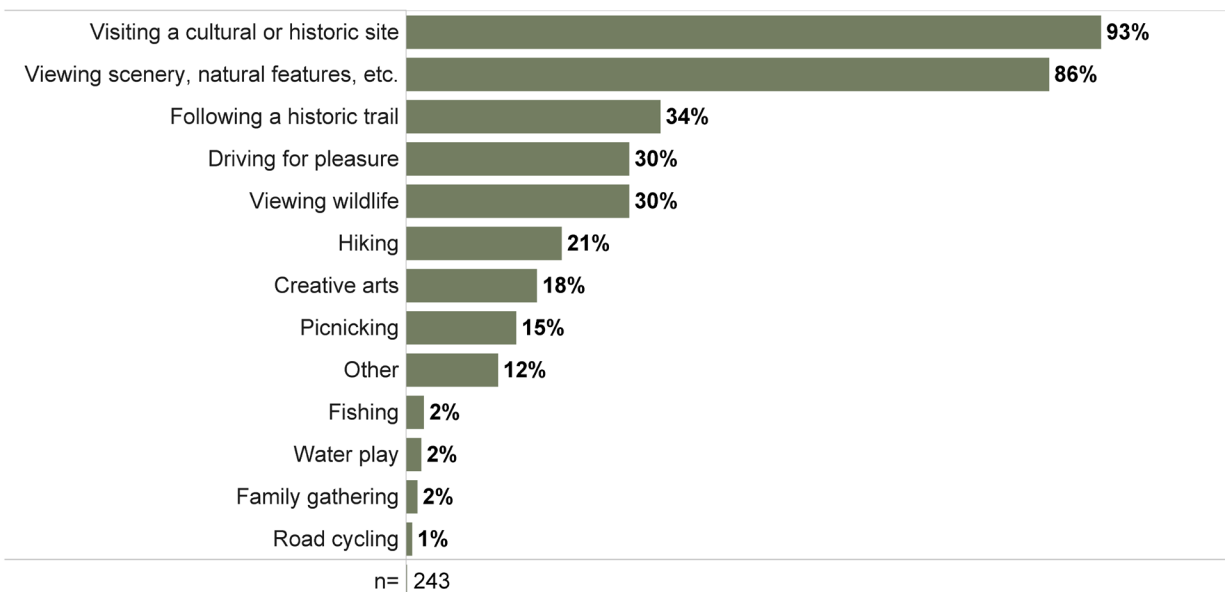
Figure 19. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (77%) had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 23% identified Fort Laramie 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 Fort Laramie, 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 Fort Laramie? Please mark all that apply



And which was your primary activity during your visit to Fort Laramie on the day you were contacted for this survey?

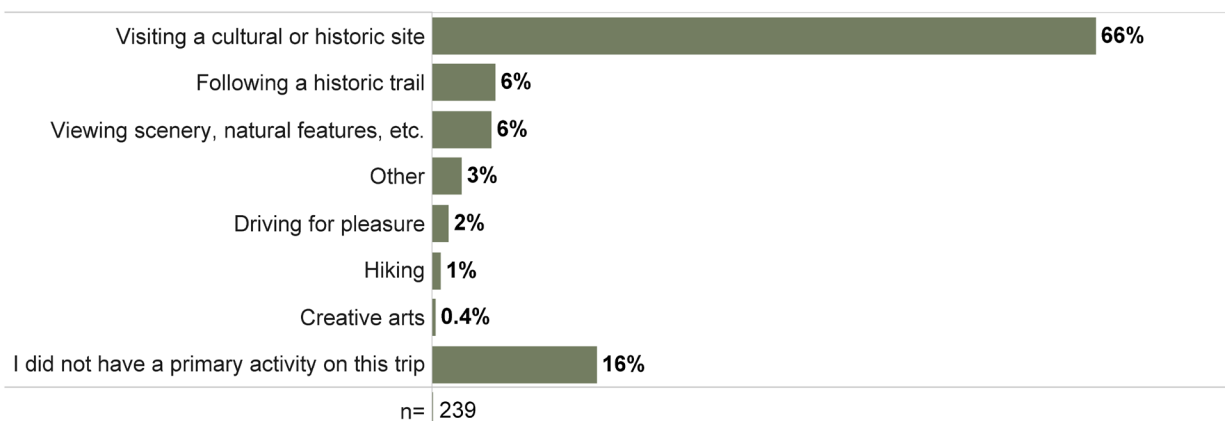


Figure 20. Participation in activities at Fort Laramie.

NPS

- Almost all visitors reported visiting a cultural or historic site (93%), while 86% reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc., and 34% reported following a historic trail.
- Fishing, water play, family gathering, and road cycling were all uncommon activities (reported by 2% or fewer of respondents).
- The majority of respondents (66%) reported visiting a cultural or historic site as their primary activity, followed by following a historic trail and viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (6% each).

Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit

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

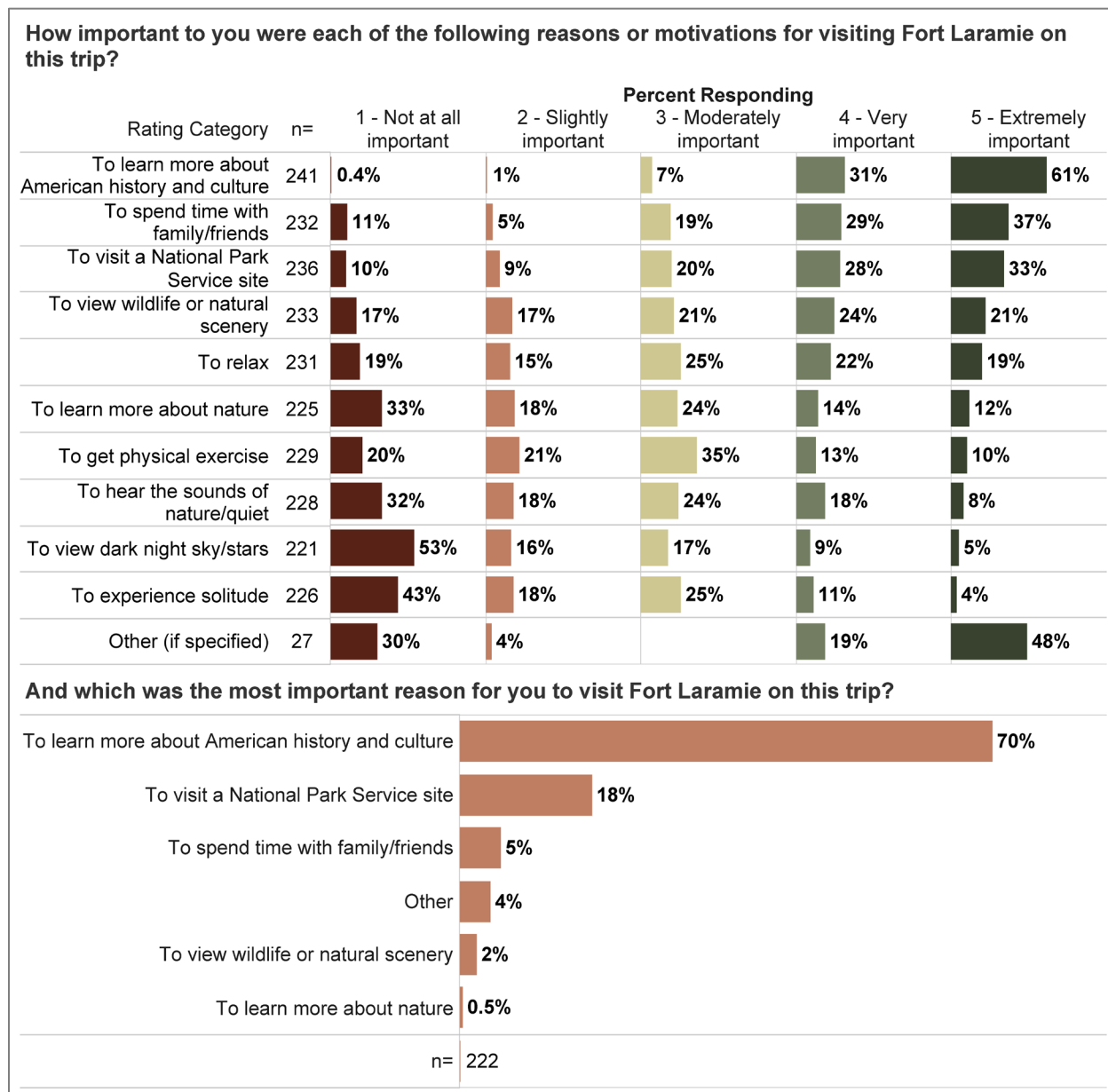


Figure 21. Reasons or motivations to visit Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- Most visitors chose learning more about American history and culture (61%) as extremely important reason for their trip to Fort Laramie.

- Other important reasons were to spend time with family and friends, and to visit a National Park Service site (37% and 33% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Of the reasons listed, the least important reasons were to view dark night sky/stars and to experience solitude (only 5% and 4% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 53% and 43% 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 (70%), followed by visiting a National Park Service site (18%), and spending time with family/friends (5%).

Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services that they personally participated in in Fort Laramie during their trip (Figure 22).

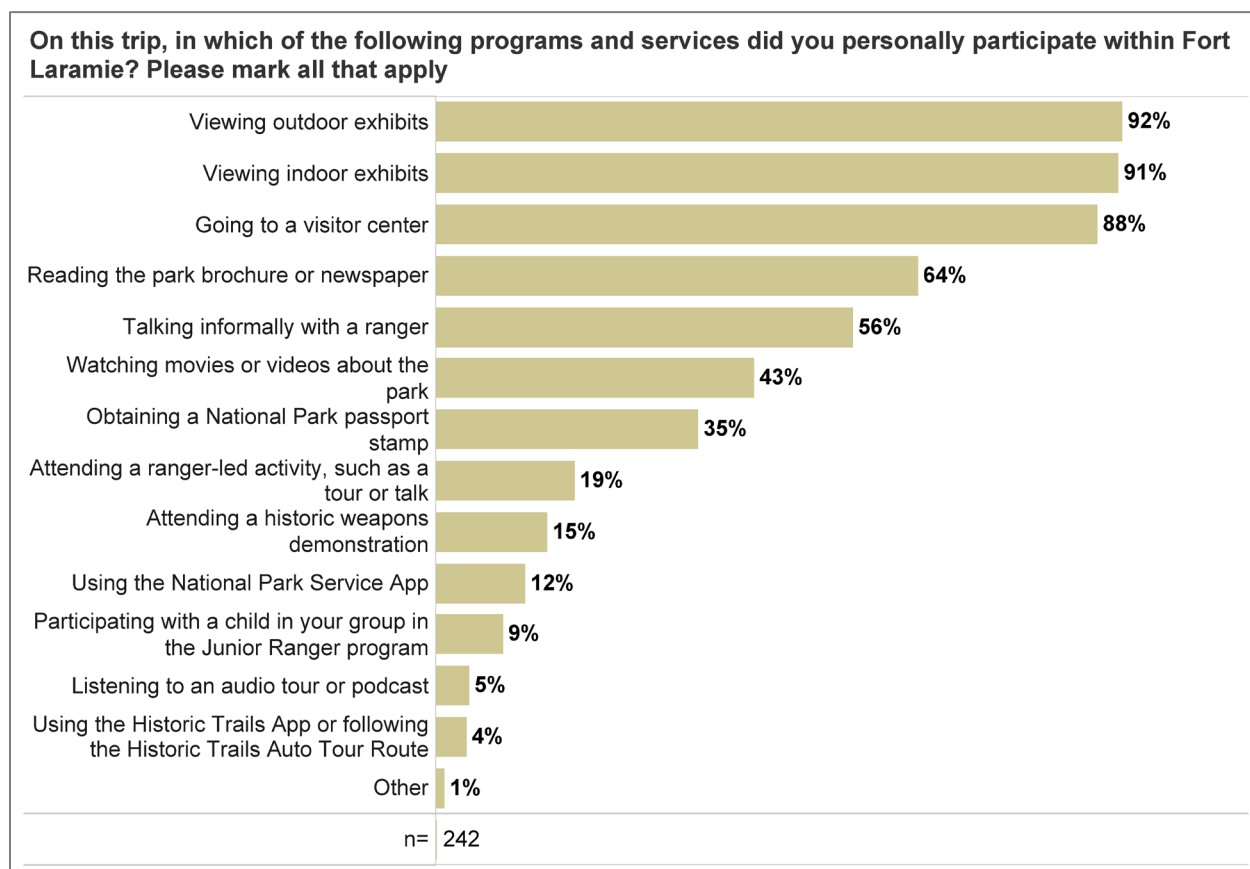


Figure 22. Programs participated while visiting Fort Laramie.

NPS

- The two most-used programs were viewing outdoor exhibits and viewing indoor exhibits, with the majority of respondents (over 90%) reporting participating in each of them.
- Several other programs were engaged in by over half of respondents: going to a visitor center (88%), reading the park brochure or newspaper (64%), and talking informally with a ranger (56%).

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).

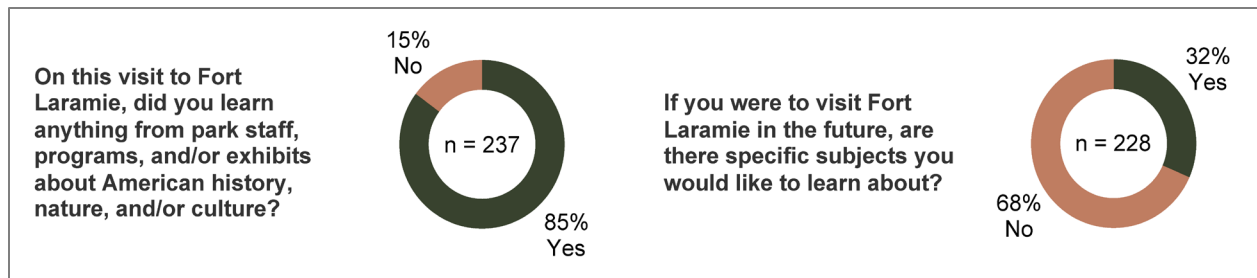


Figure 23. Learning.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (85%) reported that they learned something from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- About a third of respondents (32%) reported that if they were to visit Fort Laramie 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 Fort Laramie (Figure 24).

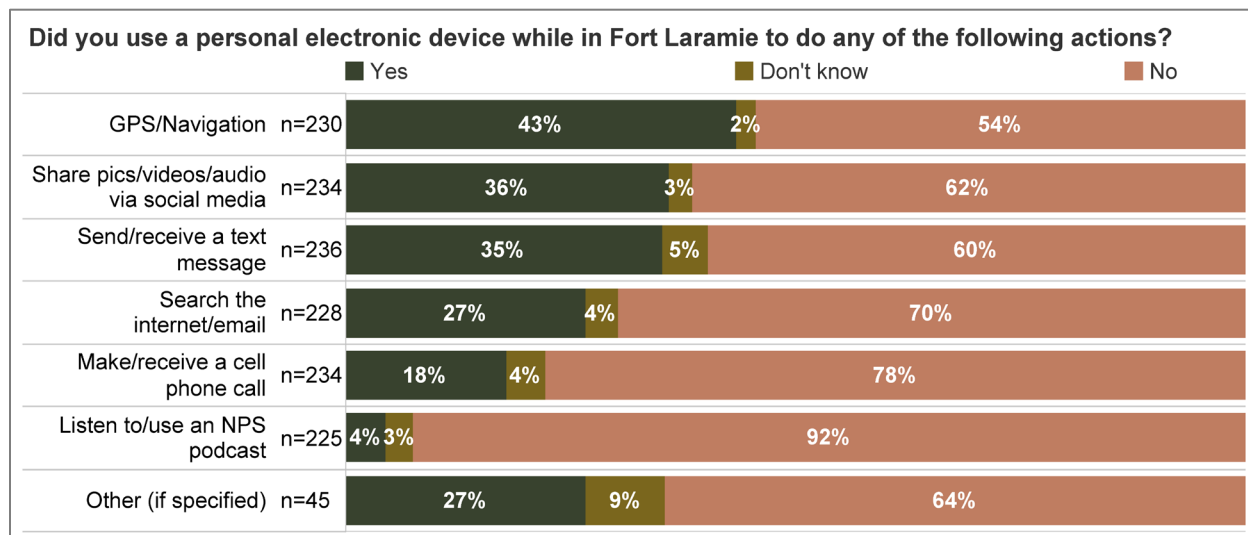


Figure 24. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- Less than half of respondents (43%) reported using GPS/navigation, and slightly over a third of respondents reported sharing pics/videos/audio via social media (36%) and sending/receiving a text message (35%).
- Conversely, only 4% 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).

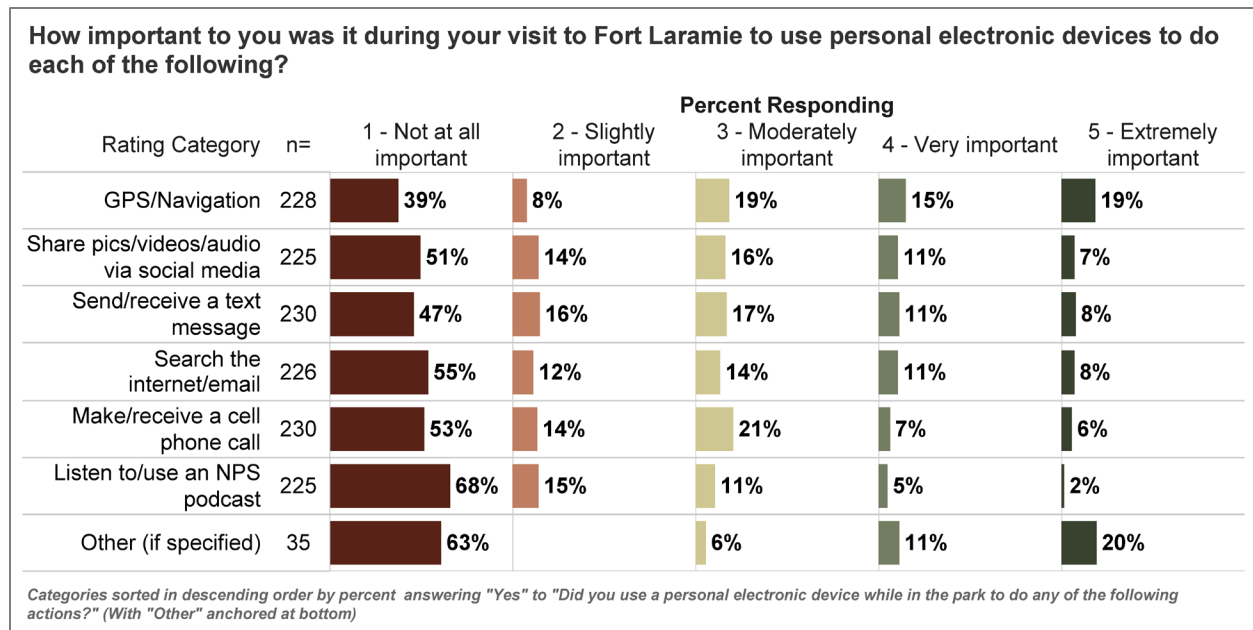


Figure 25. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- The most important device use was GPS/navigation (19% of respondents rated it as extremely important).
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important by only 2% of respondents, and not at all important by 68% of respondents.

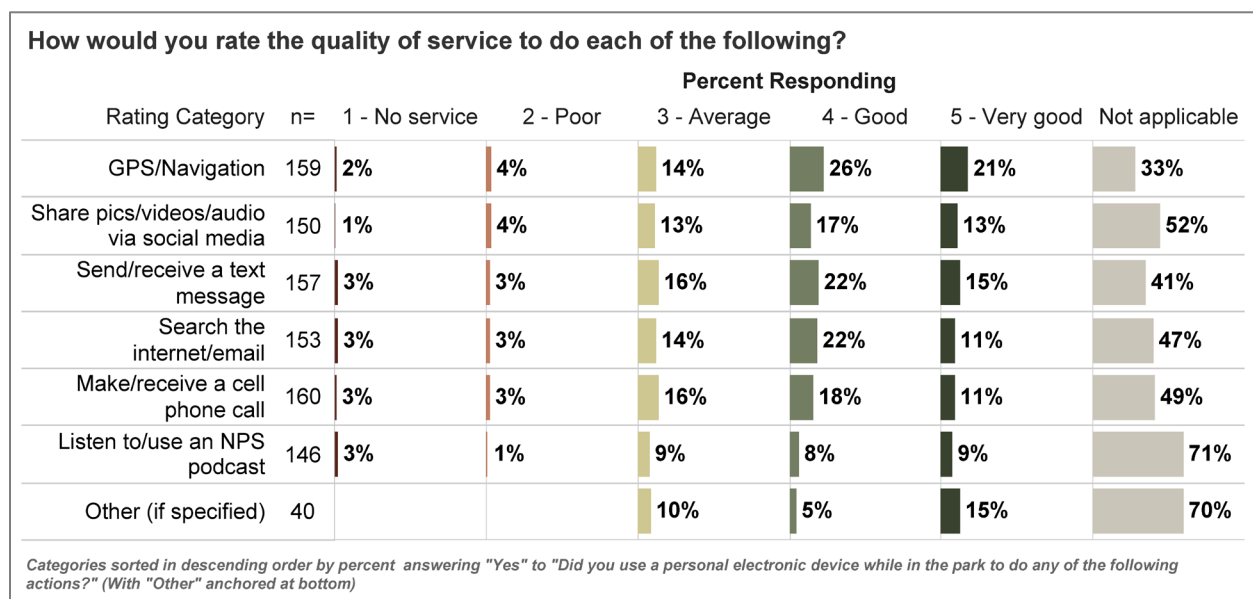


Figure 26. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Fort Laramie. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- GPS/navigation was rated as very good or good by 21% and 26% of respondents respectively. However, 2% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- A small percentage of respondents (ranged from 1% to 3%, depending on the service) reported that they had no service when attempting to use one of the services from the list provided. For all the options listed, respondents were more likely to report the service as very good or not applicable as opposed to reporting no service.

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 Fort Laramie. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 27).

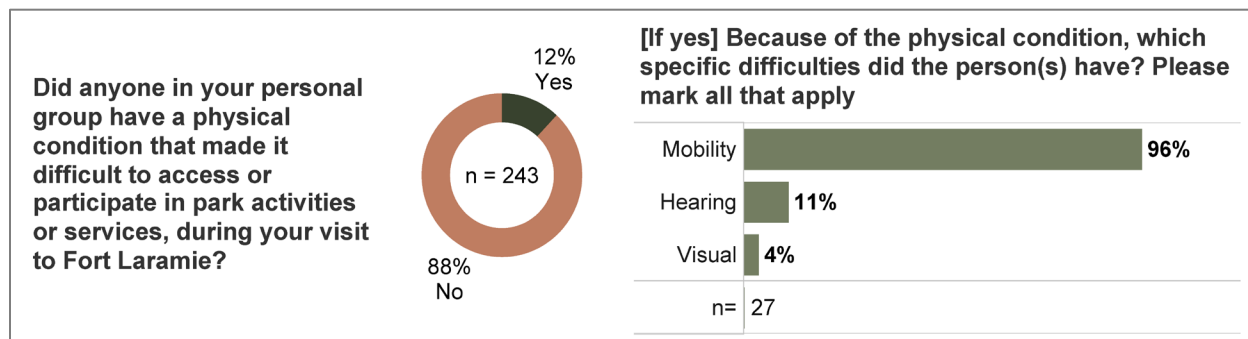


Figure 27. Physical difficulties while visiting Fort Laramie.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (88%) 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 Fort Laramie.
- Among the 12% of visitors who identified at least one difficulty, 96% reported mobility issues in their group, with small portions also reporting hearing and/or visual difficulties.

Questions 25–28: Visitor Experience

Respondents were asked if their visit to Fort Laramie met their expectations (Figure 28).

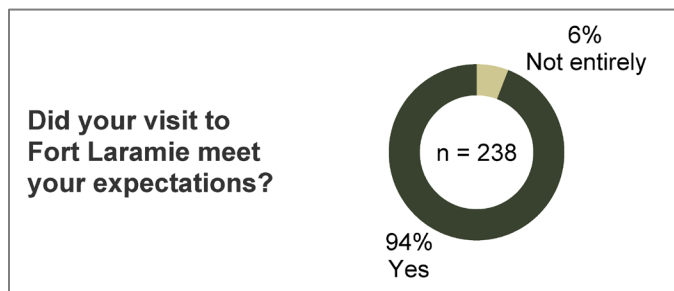


Figure 28. Meeting Fort Laramie expectations.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (94%) reported that their visit to Fort Laramie met their expectations, while 6% of respondents said it did not meet their expectations entirely, and no respondents indicated that it did not meet their expectations at all.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, respondents who indicated that Fort Laramie 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 Fort Laramie and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 29).

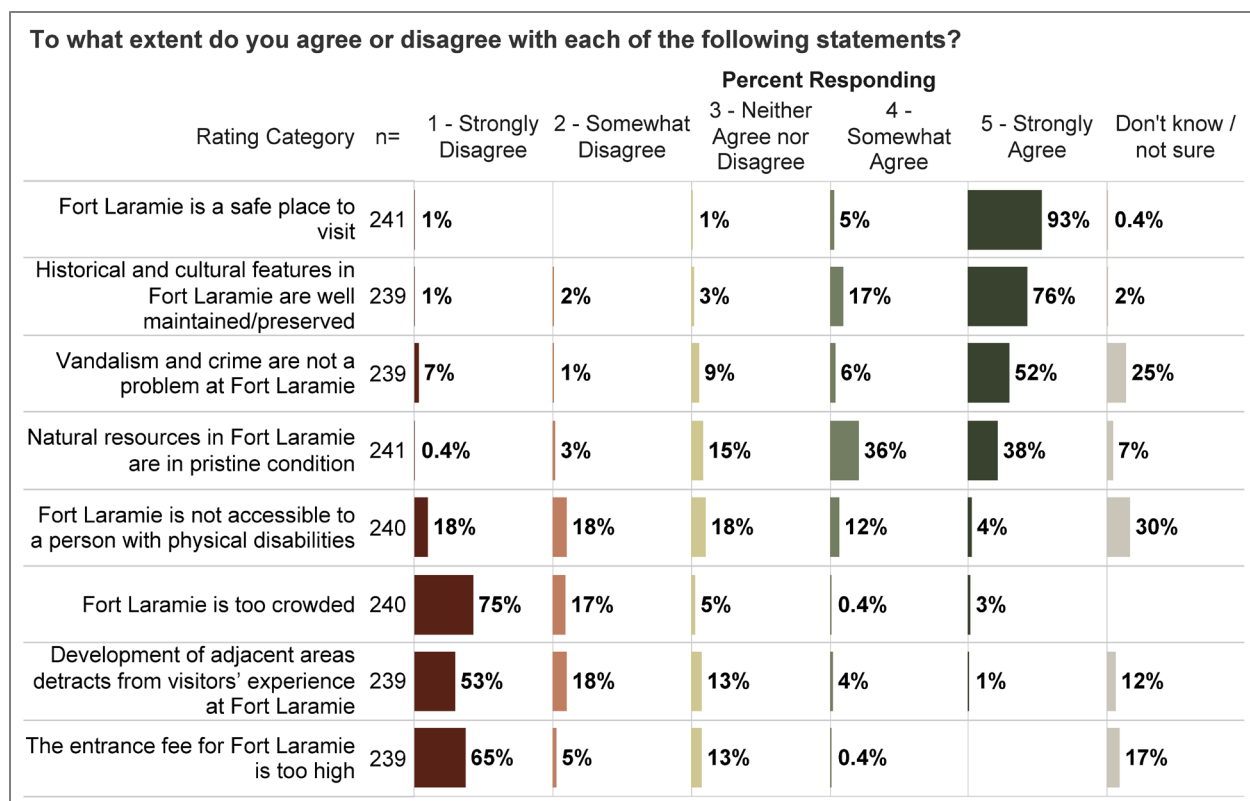


Figure 29. Rating Fort Laramie experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “Fort Laramie 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 Fort Laramie are well maintained/preserved” and “Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Fort Laramie” (93% and 58% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “Fort Laramie is too crowded”, “Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors’ experience at Fort Laramie”, and “The entrance fee for Fort Laramie is too high” received the least support, with 5% or less of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and over half of respondents strongly disagreeing with each of them.

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

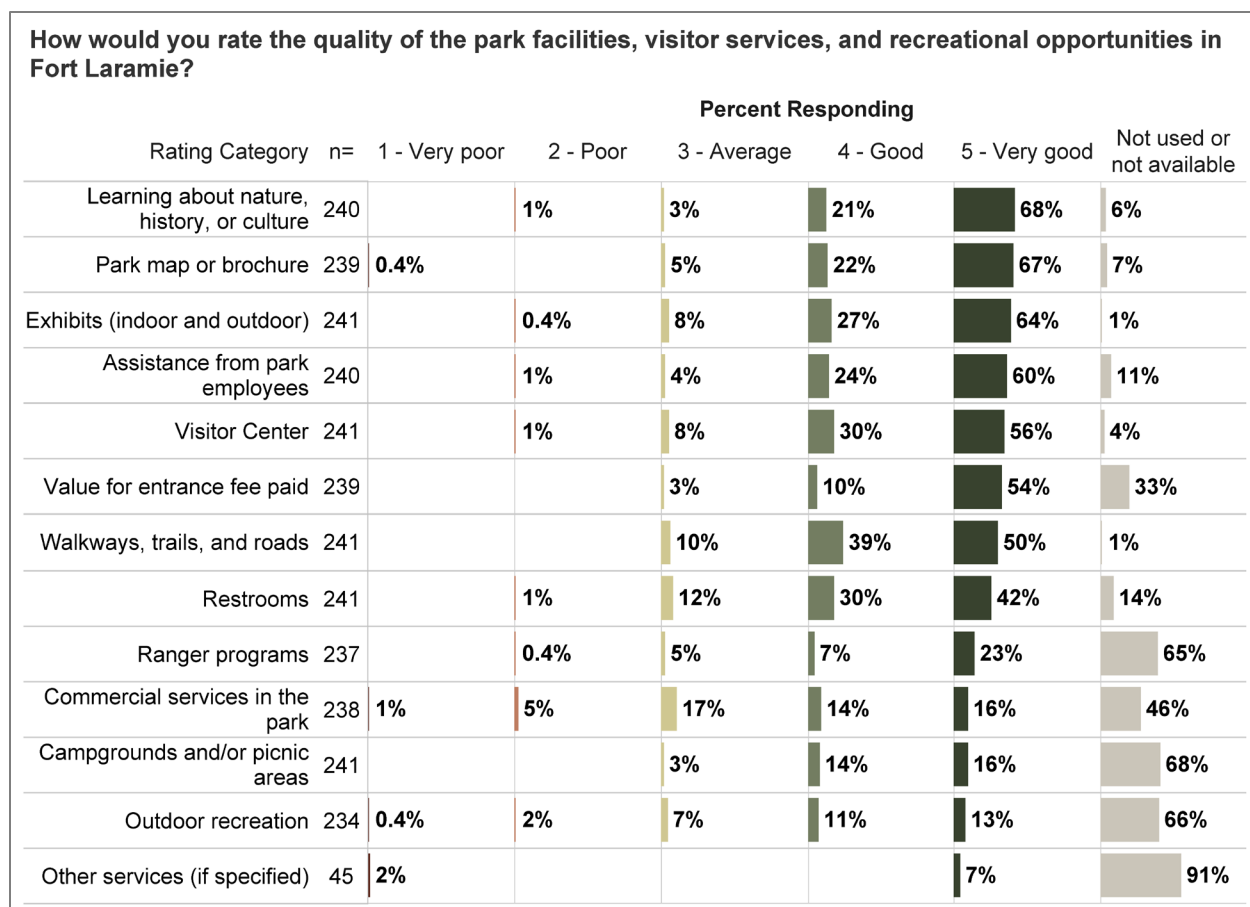


Figure 30. Rating the quality of Fort Laramie facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- Over half of visitors (ranging from 50% to 68%) rated learning about nature, history, or culture, park map or brochure, exhibits (indoor and outdoor), assistance from park employees, visitor center, value for entrance fee paid, and walkways, trails, and roads as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of visitors rated restrooms, ranger programs, commercial services in the park, campground and/or picnic areas, and outdoor recreation as very good. For most of 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 the overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 31).

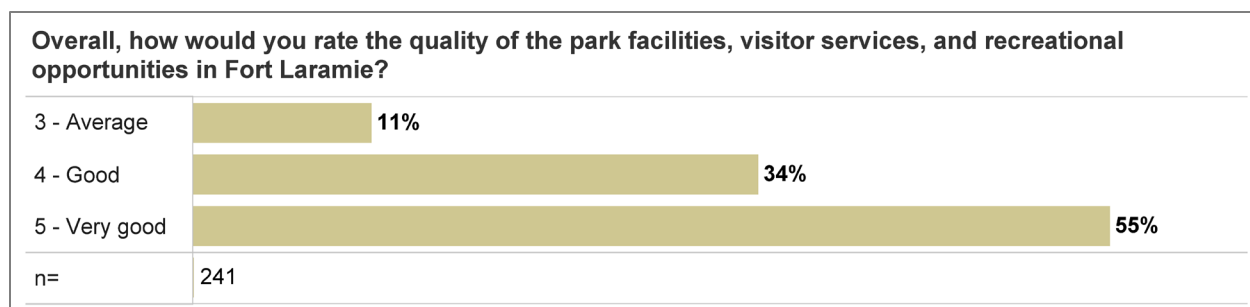


Figure 31. Rating overall quality of Fort Laramie facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.
NPS

- In general, over half of respondents (55%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Fort Laramie as very good, and another 34% rated them as good.
- Only 11% of respondents rated the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities as average, and nobody reported them as poor or very poor.



Selling 19th-century wares to 21st-century customers.

NPS

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 32 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent gender, age, and education.

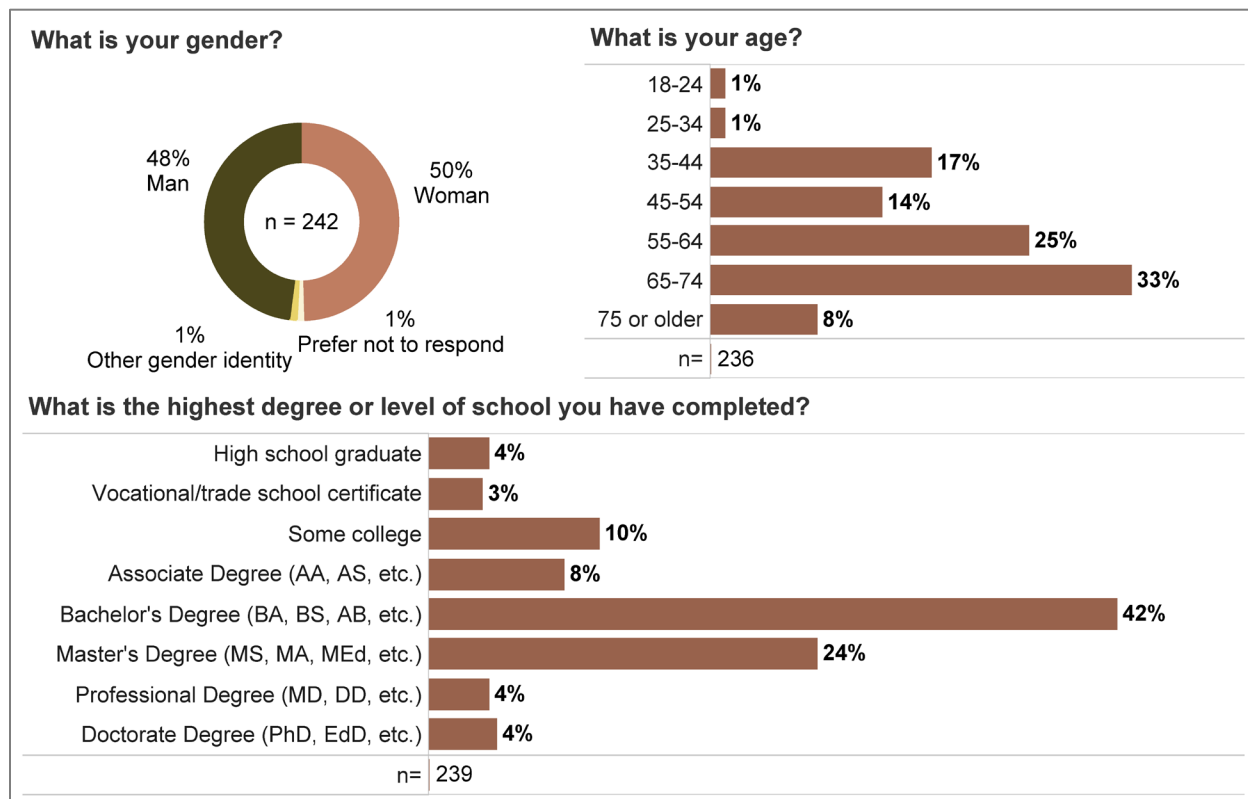


Figure 32. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.

NPS

- Follow-up survey respondents were slightly more likely to be women than men, though the sample was relatively balanced (50% vs. 48%). Another 1% had another gender identity, while 1% preferred not to disclose their gender identity.
- The most common age categories were 65–74 years old (33%), 55–64 years old (25%), and 35–44 years old (17%). The least represented age groups were 18–24 years old and 25–34 years old (only 1% each of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents were highly educated, with a combined 82% having finished some college degree, and a plurality (42%) holding a bachelor's degree.

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

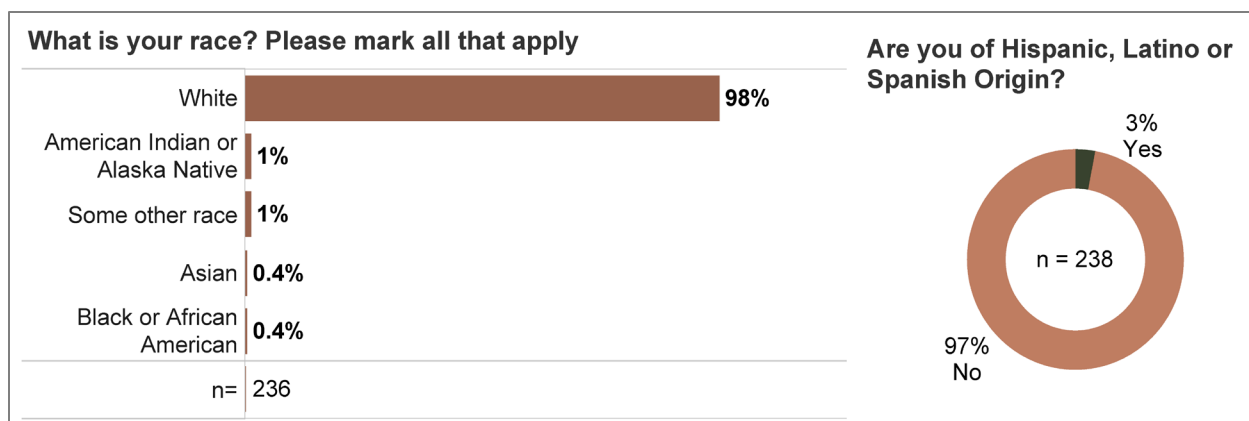


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (98%) were White, while 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native, and another 1% were some other race.
- Most respondents (97%) 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).

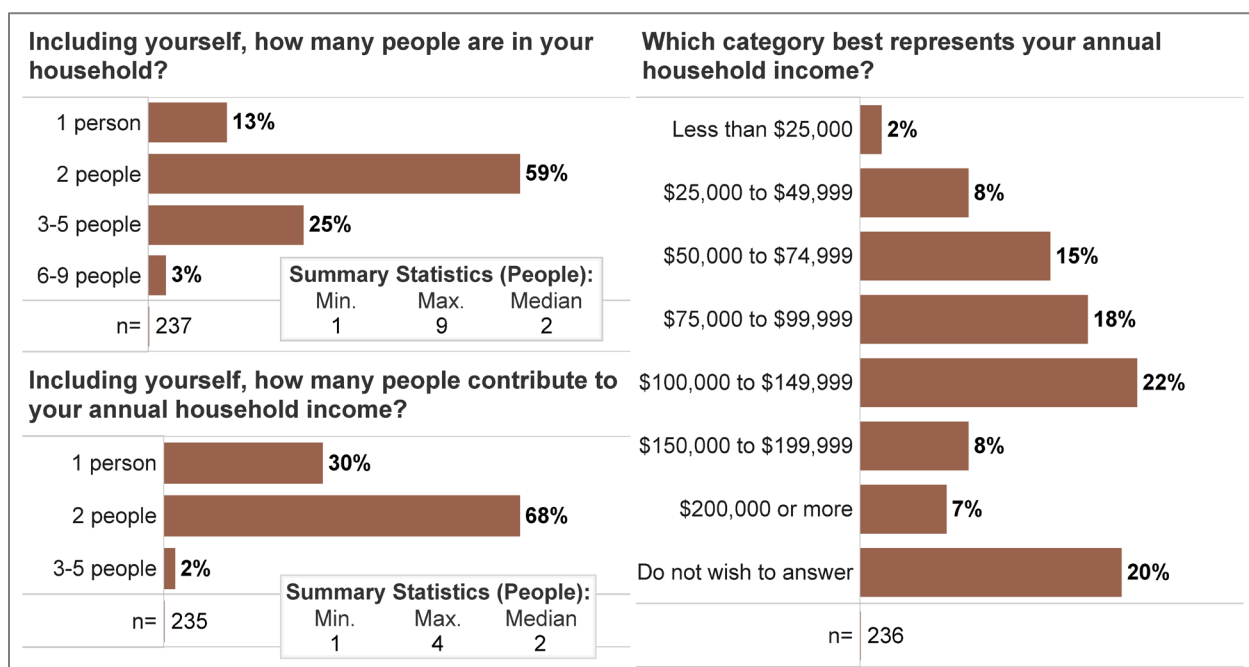


Figure 34. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- Over half of respondents (59%) had two people in their household, followed by 3–5 people (another 25%).
- Roughly one-fifth of respondents (22%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and 7% earned \$200,000 or more.
- Most respondents (68%) came from a dual-income household.

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

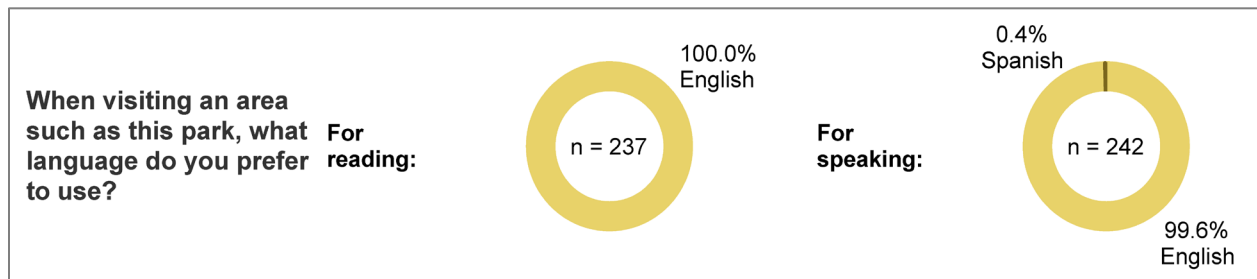


Figure 35. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- While 3% of respondents were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, the overwhelming majority of respondents (over 99%) preferred to use English both for reading and speaking when visiting an area such as Fort Laramie
- Only 0.4% of respondents preferred Spanish for speaking.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2022. 2022 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Fort Laramie National Historic Site: Visitor Intercept and Post-Trip Surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2318663>

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 Fort Laramie, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Camping outside Fort Laramie	64	1	24	2
Lodging outside Fort Laramie	7	1	7	1
Unpaid accommodations	11	1	8	3

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

Group Composition	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Adults	480	1	8	2
Children	480	0	9	0

Table 10. Data from [Figure 12](#). Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering Fort Laramie.

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 Fort Laramie?	413	1	9	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Fort Laramie?	48	1	8	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Fort Laramie?	6	1	2	1

Table 11. Data from [Figure 13](#). Previous visits to Fort Laramie.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Fort Laramie over the past 12 months?	75	1	7	1
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Fort Laramie over the past five years?	75	1	35	1

Table 12. Data from [Figure 14](#). 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?	479	0	150	4

Table 13. Data from [Figure 21](#). Reasons or motivations to visit Fort Laramie.

Rating Category	n
To visit a National Park Service site	236
To experience solitude	226
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	228
To learn more about nature	225
To learn more about American history and culture	241
To spend time with family/friends	232
To get physical exercise	229
To view wildlife or natural scenery	233
To relax	231
To view dark night sky/stars	221
Other (if specified)	27

Table 14. Data from [Figure 24](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Fort Laramie.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	234
Send/receive a text message	236
Search the internet/email	228
GPS/Navigation	230
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	234
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	225
Other (if specified)	45

Table 15. Data from [Figure 25](#). The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Fort Laramie.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	230
Send/receive a text message	230
Search the internet/email	226
GPS/Navigation	228
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	225
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	225
Other (if specified)	35

Table 16. Data from [Figure 26](#). Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Fort Laramie.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	160
Send/receive a text message	157
Search the internet/email	153
GPS/Navigation	159
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	150
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	146
Other (if specified)	40

Table 17. Data from [Figure 29](#). Rating Fort Laramie experience.

Rating Category	n
Fort Laramie is a safe place to visit	241
Fort Laramie is too crowded	240
Natural resources in Fort Laramie are in pristine condition	241
The entrance fee for Fort Laramie is too high	239
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Fort Laramie	239
Fort Laramie is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	240
Historical and cultural features in Fort Laramie are well maintained/preserved	239
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Fort Laramie	239

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

Rating Category	n
Visitor Center	241
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	241
Restrooms	241
Walkways, trails, and roads	241
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	241
Assistance from park employees	240
Park map or brochure	239
Ranger programs	237
Value for entrance fee paid	239
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	238
Other services (if specified)	45
Learning about nature, history, or culture	240
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	234

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

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	237	1	9	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	235	1	4	2

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Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 150
Fort Collins, CO 80525