



2022 Socioeconomic Research of Natchez Trace Parkway

Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)



Double Arch Bridge in the autumn.

NPS / JANE FARMER

2022 Socioeconomic Research of Natchez Trace Parkway: Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)

Science Report NPS/SR—2026/494

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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. Natchez Trace Parkway 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 Natchez Trace Parkway 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 perceptions 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 9 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, NPS Next emphases, 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 2015/2016 pilot program and progresses into “Phase Two” of the pilot process at 24 NPS units across the United States. Natchez Trace Parkway was selected as one of these units. Phase Two seeks to further explore visitor demographics and characteristics, applying recommendations from the 2015/2016 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 Natchez Trace Parkway, what they do during their visit, and their spending profile. The results of the study are intended to assist Natchez Trace Parkway managers in understanding current utilization and perceptions 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.



Western painted turtle.

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 Natchez Trace Parkway local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Natchez Trace Parkway consists of Adams, Jefferson, Claiborne, Hinds, Madison, Leake, Attala, Choctaw, Webster, Clay, Chickasaw, Pontotoc, Lee, Itawamba, Prentiss, and Tishomingo counties in Mississippi; Lauderdale, and Colbert counties in Alabama; Lewis, Lawrence, Wayne, Davidson, Williamson, Hickman, and Maury counties in Tennessee. Within Natchez Trace Parkway, the study area was comprised of 13 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.

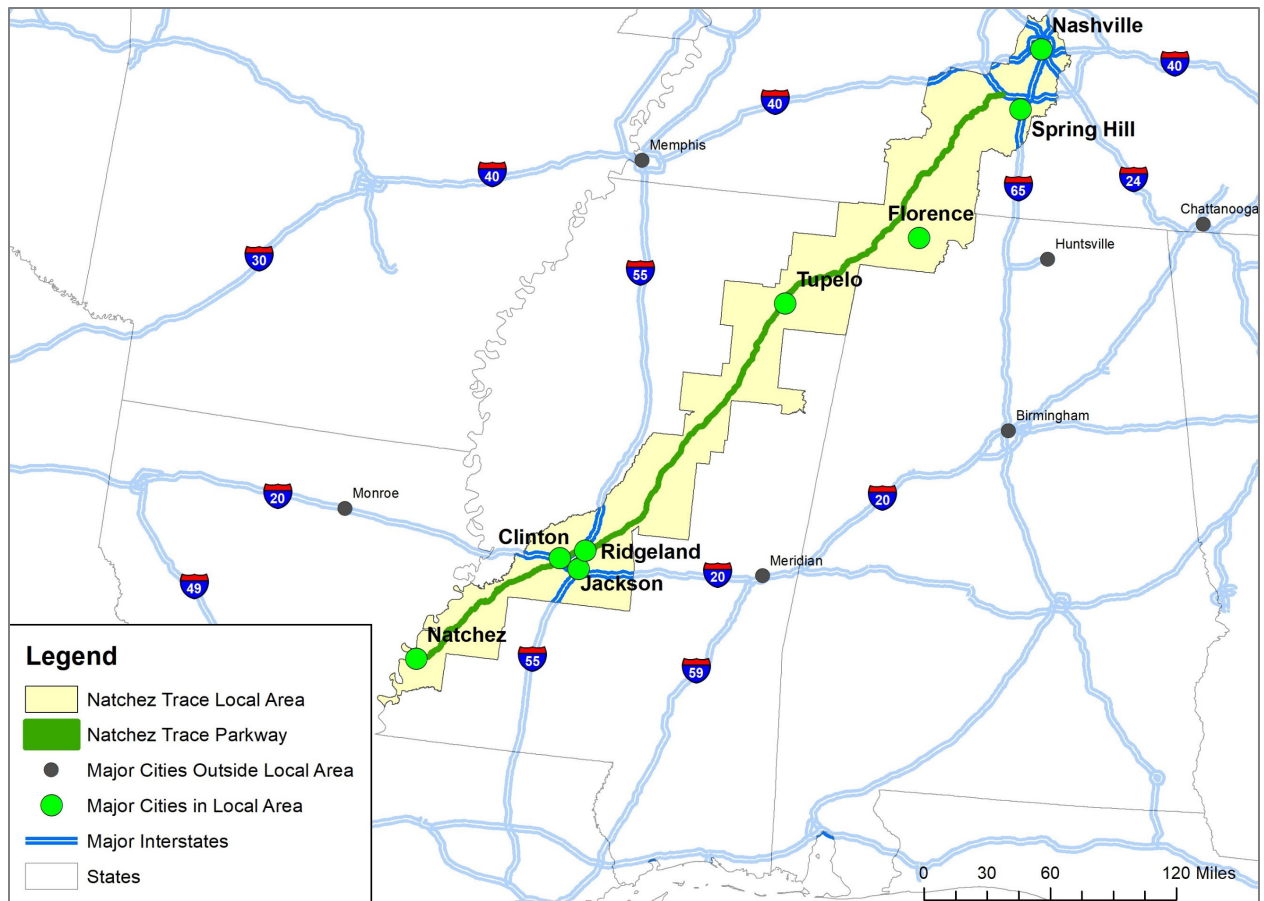


Figure 1. Natchez Trace Parkway local area map.

NPS

Table 1. Information about sampling locations in Natchez Trace Parkway.

Intercept Site	Completed Intercept Surveys		Nearby Attractions
	Number of Surveys	Percent of Surveys	
Birdsong Hollow	51	6.9%	Scenic overlook
Garrison Creek	102	13.8%	Picnic area, restroom, and river access
Meriwether Lewis site	103	13.9%	Historic cabin, picnic area, campground, restroom and commemorative marker
Rock Spring	4	0.5%	Hiking trails
Colbert Ferry	50	6.7%	Picnic area, restrooms, bicycle trail
Pharr Mounds	50	6.7%	Exhibits, restrooms
Parkway Visitor Center (Tupelo)	86	11.6%	Parkway visitor center, hiking, restrooms
Jeff Busby	60	8.1%	Picnic area, campground, restroom
Cypress Swamp	63	8.5%	Natural area, hiking
Reservoir Overlook	68	9.2%	Natural area, hiking

Table 1 (continued). Information about sampling locations in Natchez Trace Parkway.

Intercept Site	Completed Intercept Surveys		Nearby Attractions
	Number of Surveys	Percent of Surveys	
Parkway Information Cabin	41	5.5%	Picnic area, travel information, restroom
Rocky Springs	8	1.1%	Picnic area, campground, hiking, restroom
Mount Locust	55	7.4%	Historic house, travel information, restroom

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 April 23rd to May 8th, 2022. A sample of visitors was intercepted while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway across the designated locations listed in Table 1. 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 Natchez Trace Parkway (NPS 2022). If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a Natchez Trace Parkway 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—Natchez Trace Parkway intercept survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	892
Complete refusals	74
Partial refusals (non-response questions completed)	77
Intercept surveys completed	741
Follow-up surveys distributed	606
Intercept response rate	83.1%
Follow-up acceptance rate	81.8%

During the sampling period, 5 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 Natchez Trace Parkway. Each surveyor worked thirteen 8-hour days (seven hours data collection and one-hour lunch break). Two days were spent traveling to different sections of the 400-mile-long parkway so that visitors traveling on any portion of the parkway had an opportunity to be sampled. Each surveyor had one day off during the 16-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 Natchez Trace Parkway. 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—Natchez Trace Parkway follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Outcome	Total
Follow-up surveys distributed	606
Valid follow-up surveys completed	247
Response rate	40.8%

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 83.1%, 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 Natchez Trace Parkway?” Note: p-value < 0.00001.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	87	35.4%	250	50.5%
No	159	64.6%	245	49.5%

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	242	98.4%	470	94.9%
No	4	1.6%	25	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 Natchez Trace Parkway and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value < 0.00001.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	143	58.1%	199	40.2%
No	103	41.9%	296	59.8%

A chi-square test for homogeneity was performed for each of the three questions to evaluate differences between the groups. 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) Permanent/seasonal residency, and 2) overnight visitation. Therefore, permanent/seasonal residents and overnight visitors are not as well represented in the full responses as desired.

Results

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 741 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Natchez Trace Parkway from April 23rd to May 8th, 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 Natchez Trace Parkway. 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.

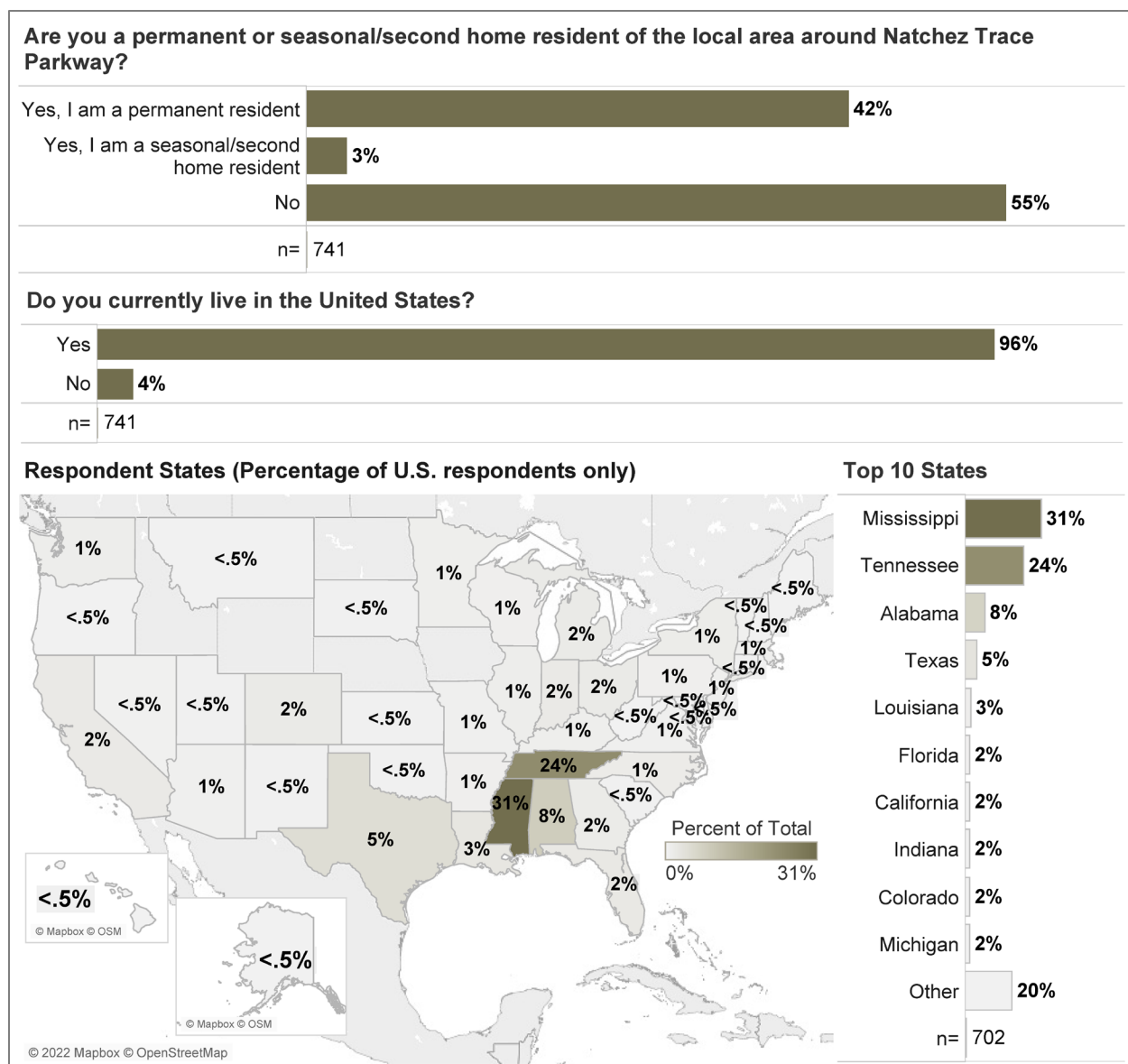


Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (a combined 45%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Natchez Trace Parkway.
- There was a large geographic concentration of visitors from Mississippi and Tennessee (where Natchez Trace Parkway is located).
- Among the 96% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 31% reside in Mississippi, followed by Tennessee (24%), Alabama (8%), and Texas (5%).

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).

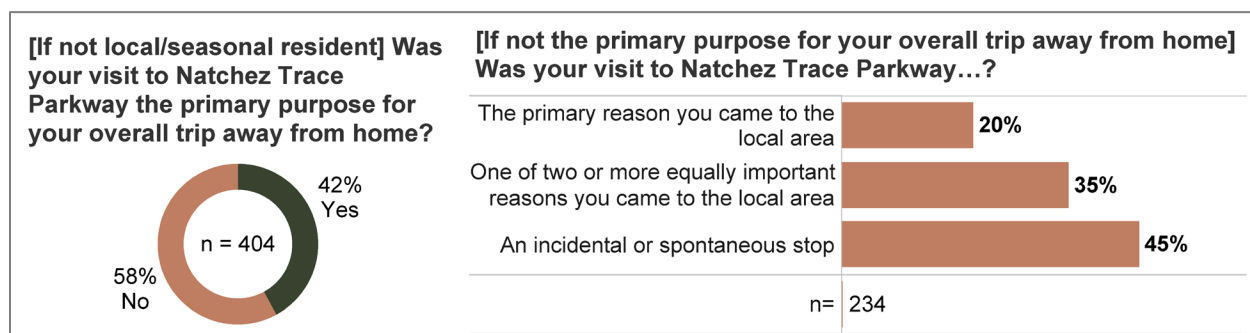


Figure 3. Role of Natchez Trace Parkway in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- For more than half of non-local respondents (58%), visiting Natchez Trace Parkway was not the primary purpose for their overall trip away from home.
- Among those respondents for whom Natchez Trace Parkway was not their primary trip purpose, 45% stated that their visit to Natchez Trace Parkway was an incidental or spontaneous stop, while another 35% indicated that it was one of two or more equally important reasons 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 Natchez Trace Parkway, 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.

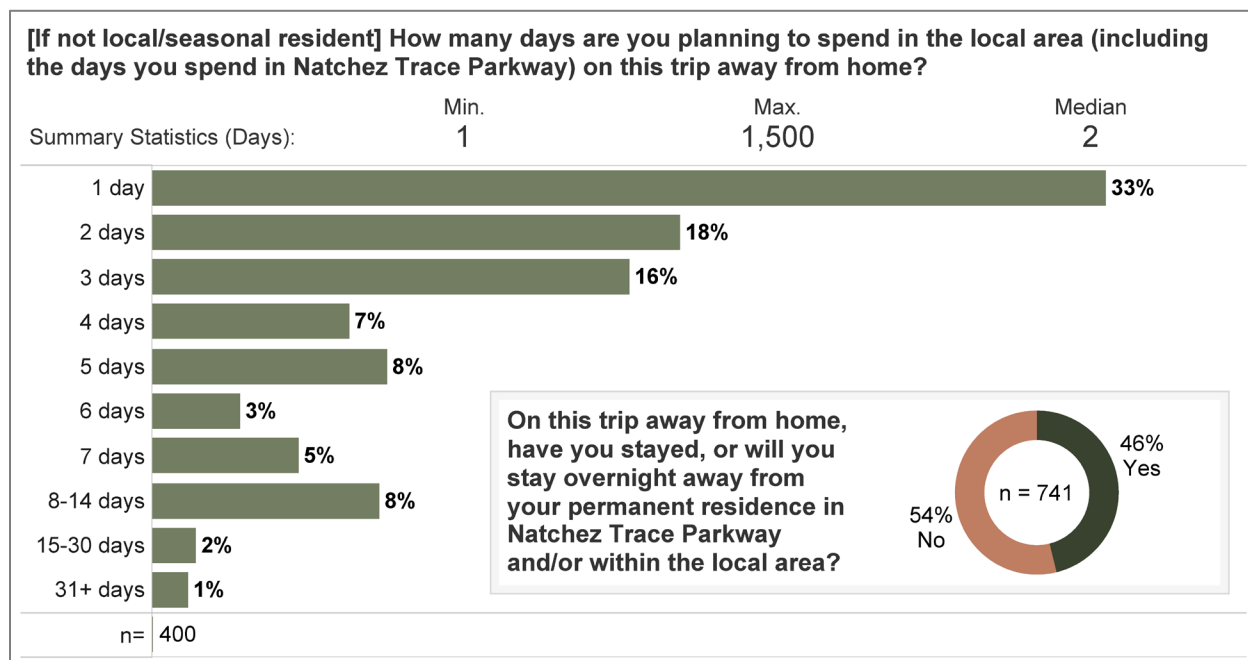


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- One-third of non-local respondents (33%) spent one day in the local area, while 18% spent 2 days, and 16% spent 3 days. The median length of stay was 2 days.
- Additionally, nearly half of all respondents (46%; 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).

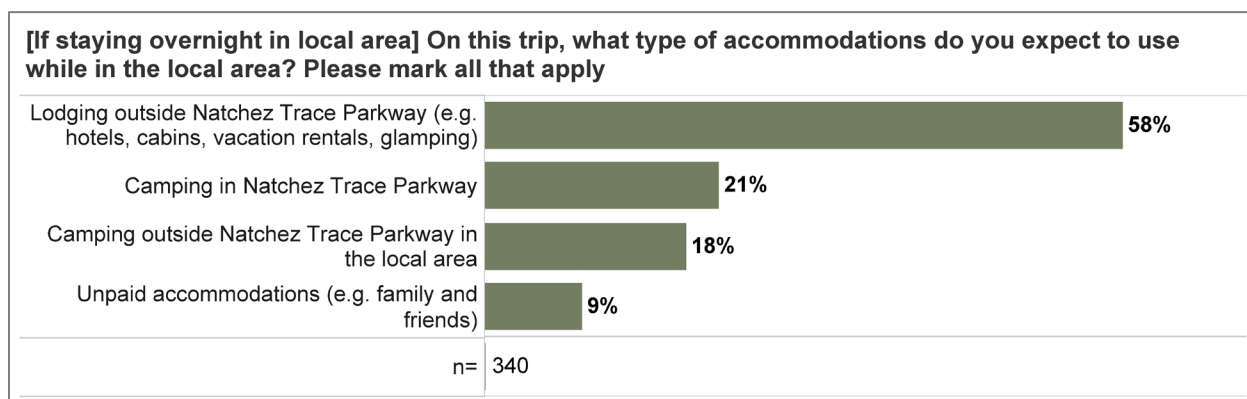


Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- More than half of overnight respondents (58%) stayed in lodging outside the park (e.g., hotels, cabins, vacation rentals, glamping).
- This was followed in prevalence by camping in a parkway campground (21%), and camping outside the parkway (18%).

Respondents who camped in Natchez Trace Parkway were asked in which campground(s) they had stayed or planned to stay (Figure 6).

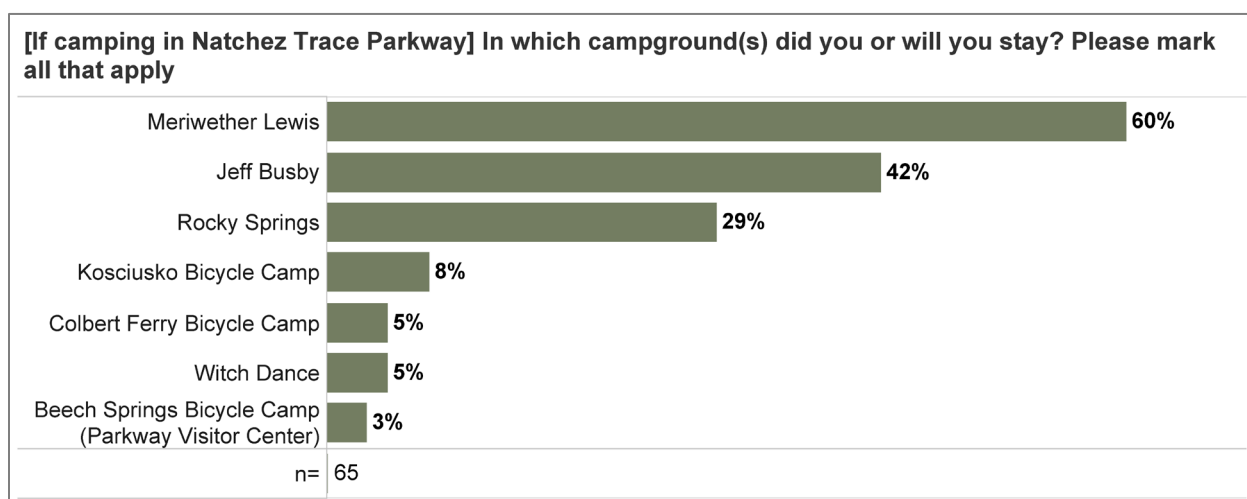


Figure 6. Campground use within Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- Six out of ten who camped in a parkway campground (60%) stayed in the campground at the Meriwether Lewis site.

- This was followed in prevalence by the campground at Jeff Busby (42%), and the campground at Rocky Springs (29%).

Respondents were then asked to indicate the number of nights they spent or would spend in each accommodation type (Figure 7).

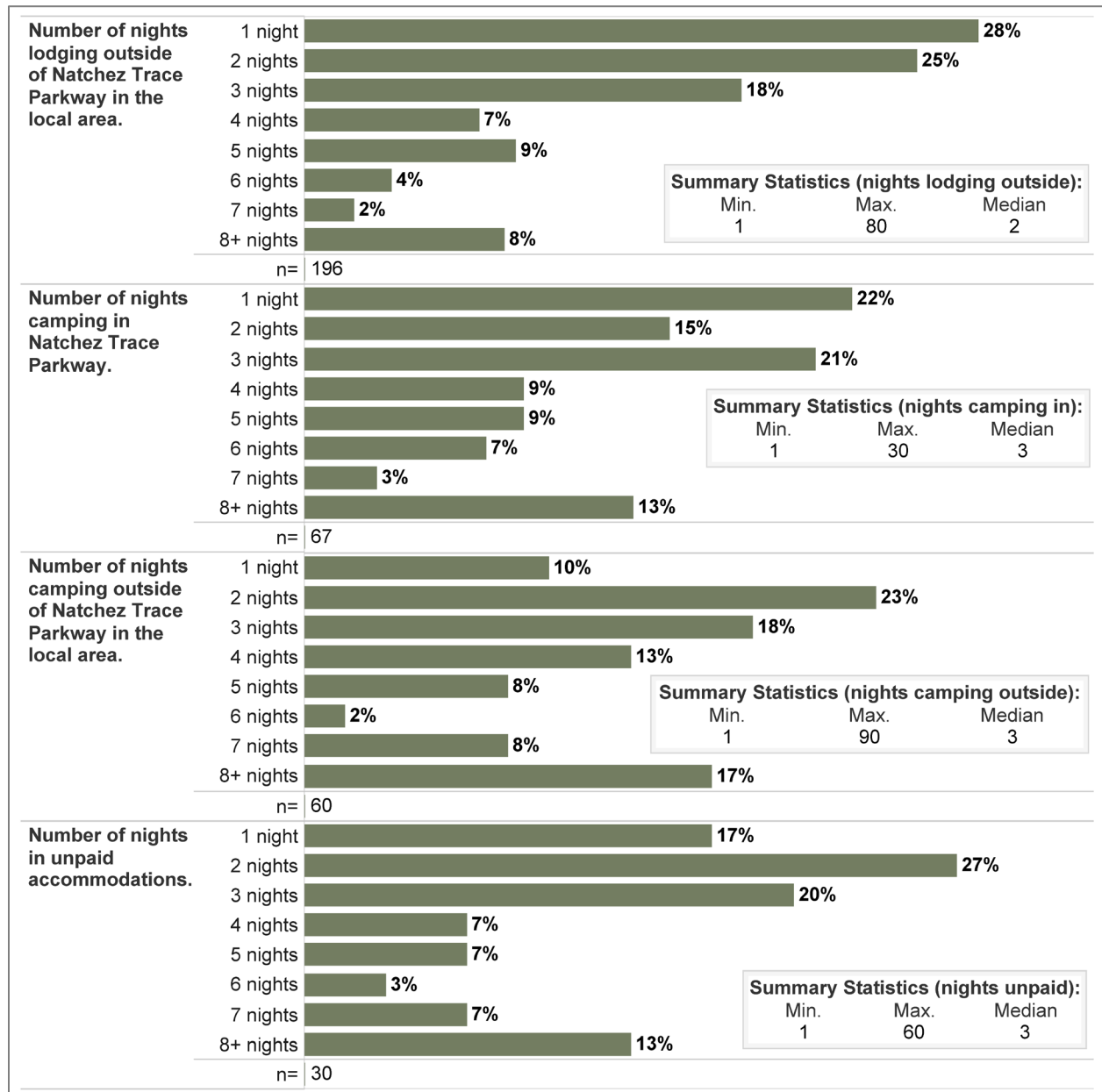


Figure 7. Number of nights spent in the local area around Natchez Trace Parkway, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 8](#).

NPS

- Among the 58% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Natchez Trace Parkway in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 2 nights. More than half (53%) lodged 2 nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 71% spent 3 nights or fewer.
- Among the 21% of overnight respondents who camped in Natchez Trace Parkway (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 3 nights. More than one-third (38%) of campers were spending 2 nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; 58% spent 3 nights or fewer.
- Among the 18% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Natchez Trace Parkway (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 3 nights. About one-third (33%) of campers were spending 2 nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; 51% spent 3 nights or fewer.
- Among the 9% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 3 nights. A plurality (44%) stayed 2 nights or fewer in unpaid accommodations; 64% spent 3 nights or fewer.

Questions 9–11: Party Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate how many adults (18 or older) and children (under 18) were in their personal group during their visit to Natchez Trace Parkway (Figure 8). 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.

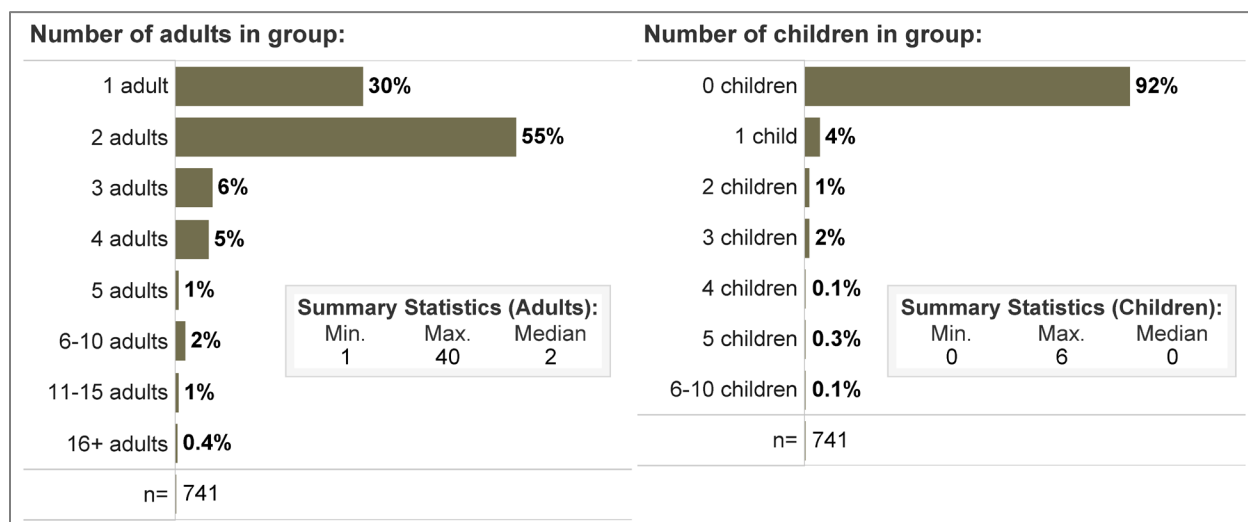


Figure 8. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 9](#).

NPS

- The median number of adults per group was 2. Most groups (55%) included 2 adults.
- Most groups (92%) did not include any children.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 9).

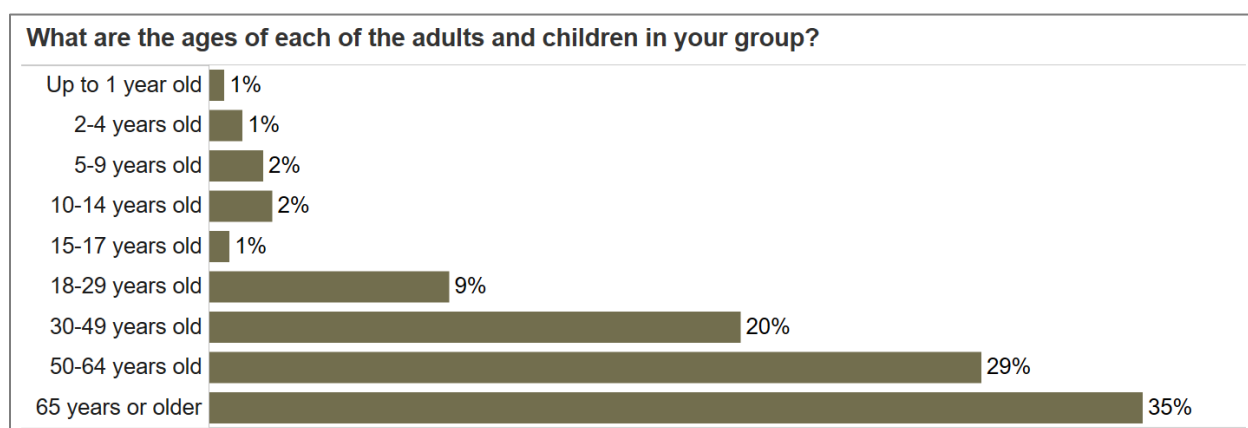


Figure 9. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 65 years or older (35%), followed by 50–64 years old (29%), and 30–49 years old (20%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of just 7% of group members.

Questions 13–15: Park Use Characteristics

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Natchez Trace Parkway 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 10 and Table 7).



Figure 10. Duration of the respondent's trip to Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

Table 7. Amount of time spent within Natchez Trace Parkway.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Natchez Trace Parkway today?	53	7	59	30
[If planning to spend less than a day, but one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Natchez Trace Parkway today?	381	1	16	3
[If planning to visit at least one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Natchez Trace Parkway on this trip?	305	1	90	3
[If planning to visit at least one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	305	1	90	2

- While visiting Natchez Trace Parkway, a majority of visitors (59%) did not plan to spend more than one day in the park.
- Among the 59% of visitors who did not spend more than a day in Natchez Trace Parkway, most (88%) planned to spend one hour or more in the park. The median length of time spent in the park among this group was 3 hours.
- The remaining 41% of visitors planned to visit for more than one day; among those visitors, the median length of stay was 3 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 what state they were in when they first accessed the Natchez Trace Parkway on the day they were surveyed (Figure 11).

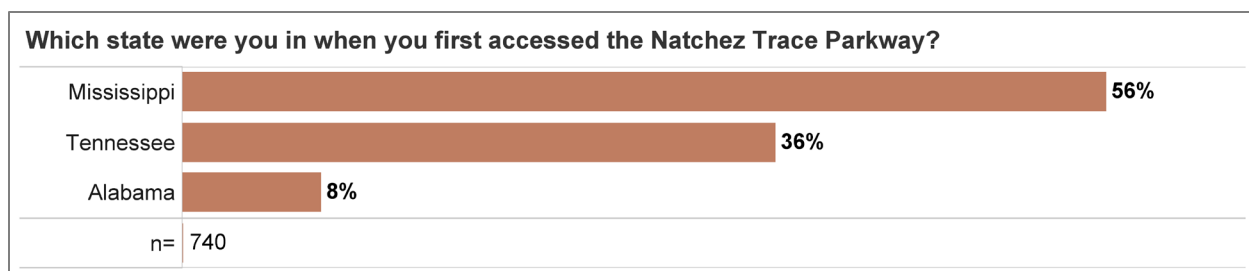


Figure 11. State where first accessed Natchez Trace Parkway today.

NPS

- A majority of respondents (56%) first entered the parkway in Mississippi.
- Over one-third of respondents (36%) first entered the parkway in Tennessee.

Question 16: Transportation

Visitors were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter Natchez Trace Parkway on the day they were surveyed (Figure 12).

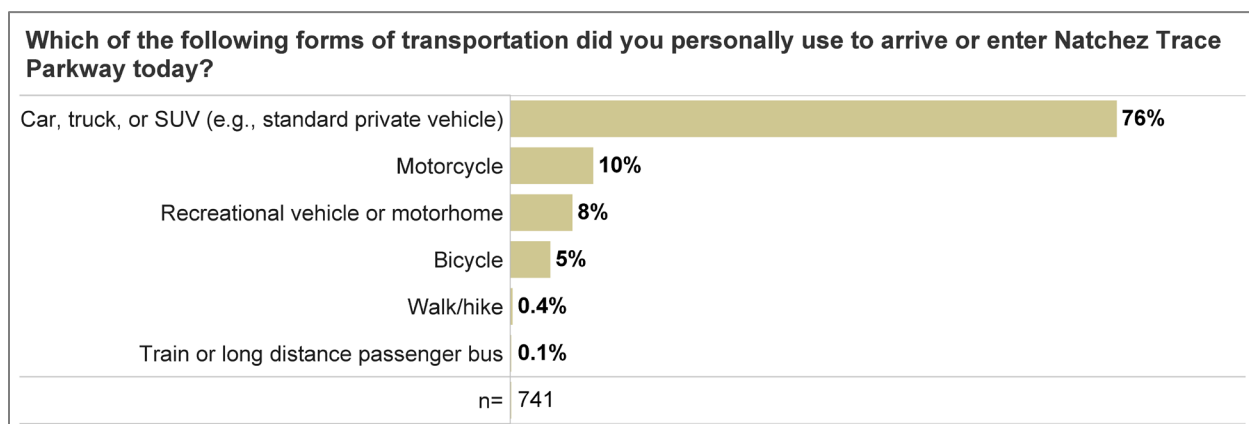


Figure 12. Form of transportation used to enter Natchez Trace Parkway on the day of the survey.
NPS

- About three quarters of respondents (76%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Natchez Trace Parkway on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by use of a motorcycle (10%), and a recreational vehicle or motorhome (8%).

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).

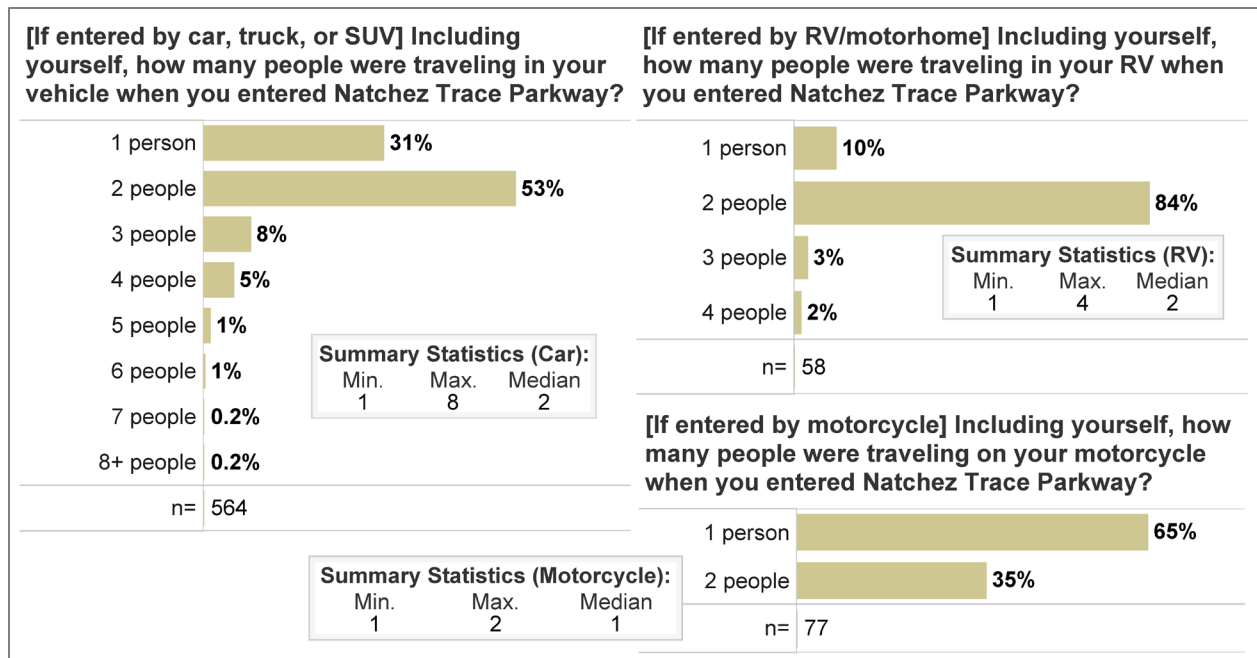


Figure 13. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 10](#).

NPS

- More than half of respondents traveling by car reported two people. The next common group size was one person (31%), followed by three people (8%).
- Most respondents entering Natchez Trace Parkway by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of two people (84%), followed by one person (10%).
- About two-thirds of motorcyclists (65%) were traveling on their own.

Question 18: Previous Visits to Natchez Trace Parkway

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

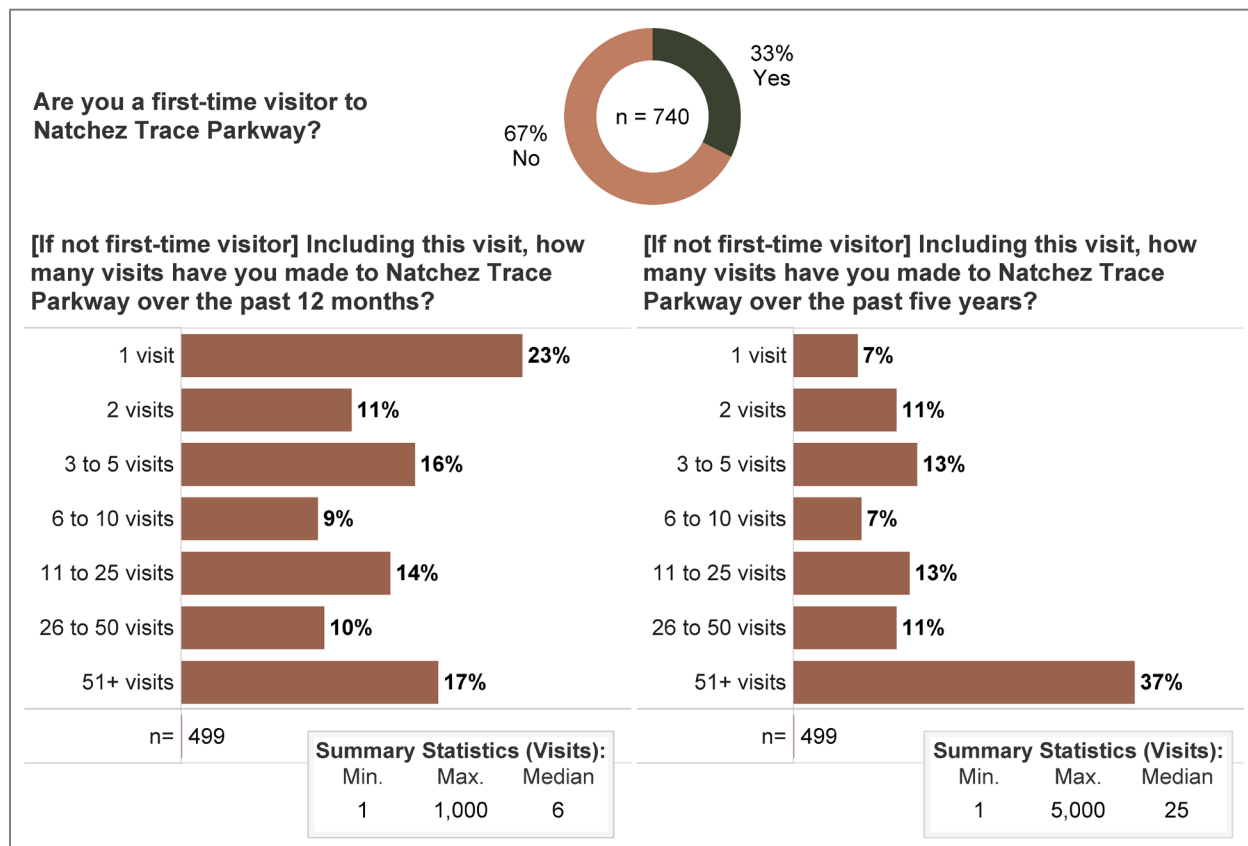


Figure 14. Previous visits to Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- One-third of respondents (33%) were on their first ever trip to Natchez Trace Parkway.
- Among the 67% of respondents who were repeat visitors, about a quarter (23%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- A majority of repeat visitors (61%) had visited at least 10 times in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was 25, including the current trip; 37% of repeat visitors had made more than 50 visits in the past five years.

Question 19: 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).

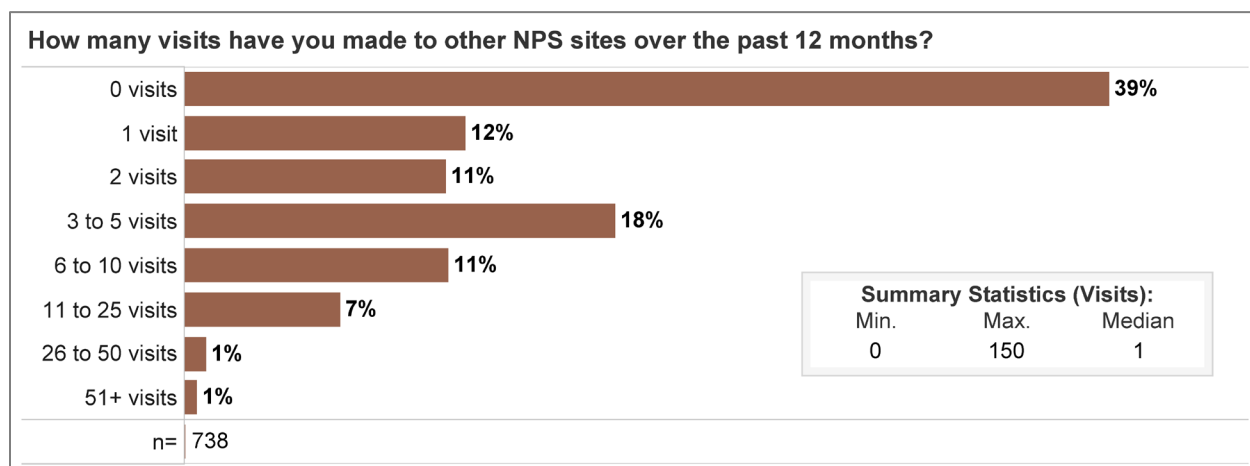


Figure 15. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- A majority (61%) 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 1, though a combined 38% 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 Natchez Trace Parkway in spring 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 Natchez Trace Parkway

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

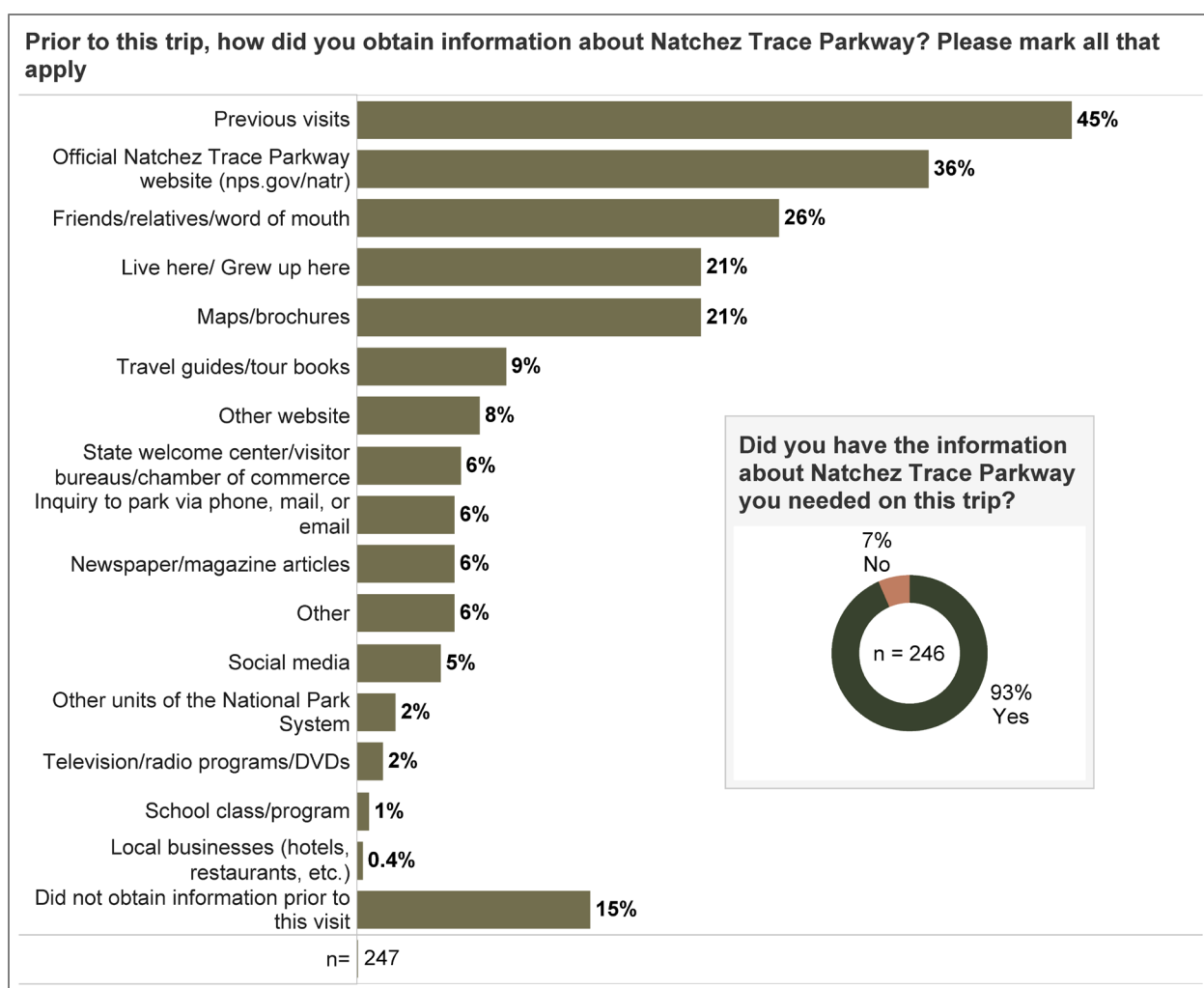


Figure 16. Sources used to obtain information about Natchez Trace Parkway prior to the trip.

NPS

- The most used resource was previous visits, with 45% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was the official Natchez Trace Parkway website (36%), followed by friends/relatives/word of mouth (26%), live here/grew up here (21%), and maps/brochures (21%).
- In a follow-up question, 93% of respondents said that they had the information about Natchez Trace Parkway that they needed on their trip, while 7% 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 Natchez Trace Parkway on their trip (Figure 17).

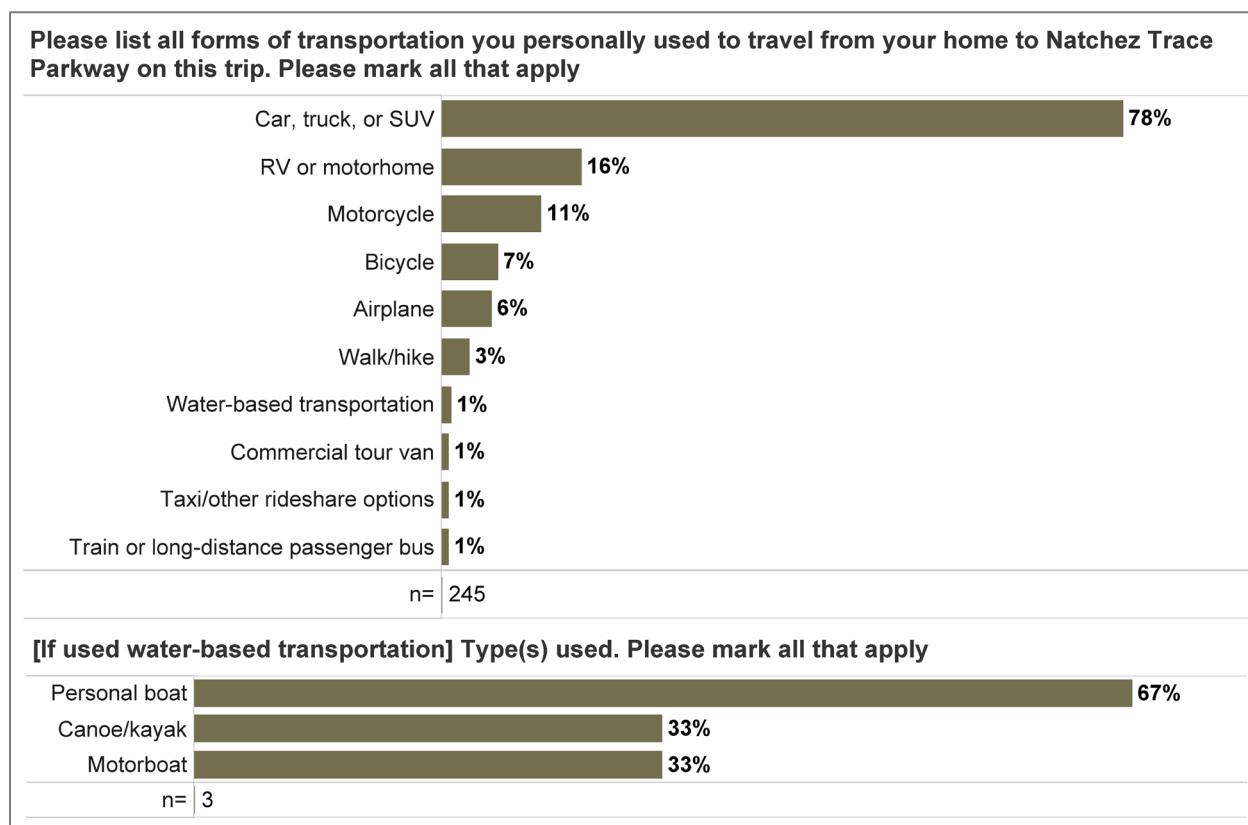


Figure 17. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Natchez Trace Parkway on the recent trip.
NPS

- More than three quarters of respondents (78%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Natchez Trace Parkway.
- The second most common mode of travel was an RV or motorhome (16%), followed by motorcycle (11%).

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to Natchez Trace Parkway on the day of the survey (Figure 18).

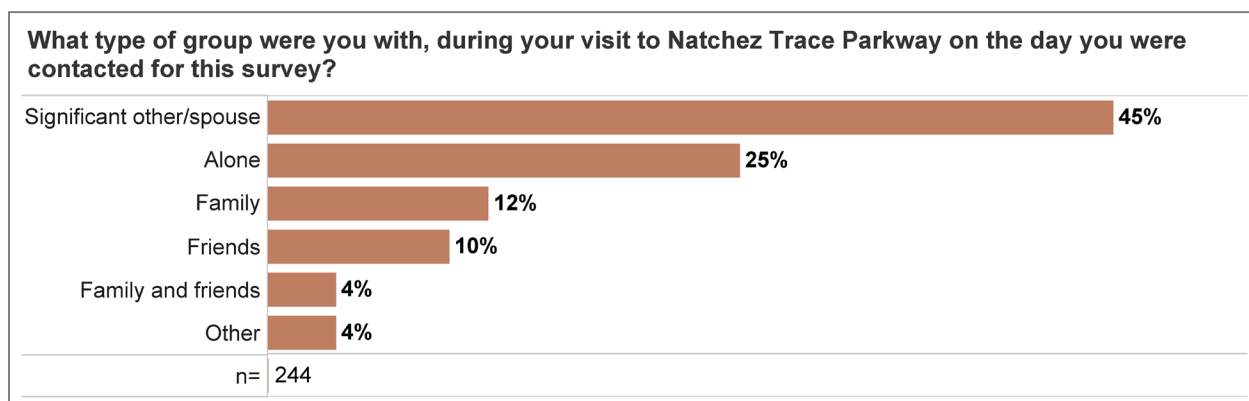


Figure 18. Travel party composition during Natchez Trace Parkway visit.

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (45%) visited Natchez Trace Parkway with their significant other or spouse on the day of the survey.
- A quarter of respondents (25%) visited Natchez Trace Parkway alone.
- Relatively small percentages of respondents (12%) explored Natchez Trace Parkway with their family, and another 10% 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 Natchez Trace Parkway² (Figure 19).

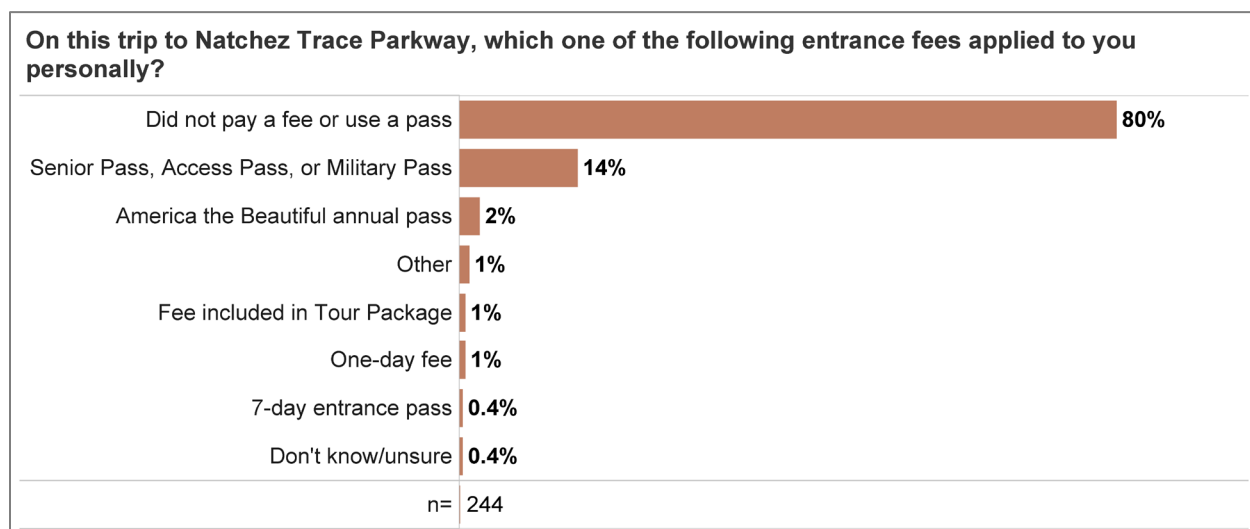


Figure 19. Entrance fees to enter Natchez Trace Parkway on the most recent trip.

NPS

- Most respondents (80%) reported that they did not pay a fee or use a pass to enter Natchez Trace Parkway.
- In contrast, 14% of respondents indicated that they entered using a Senior Pass, Access Pass, or Military Pass.

² Natchez Trace Parkway 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 20).

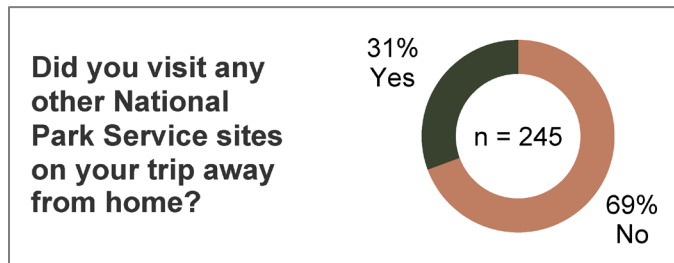


Figure 20. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- Nearly one-third (31%) of all respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 69% identified Natchez Trace Parkway 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 Natchez Trace Parkway, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 21).

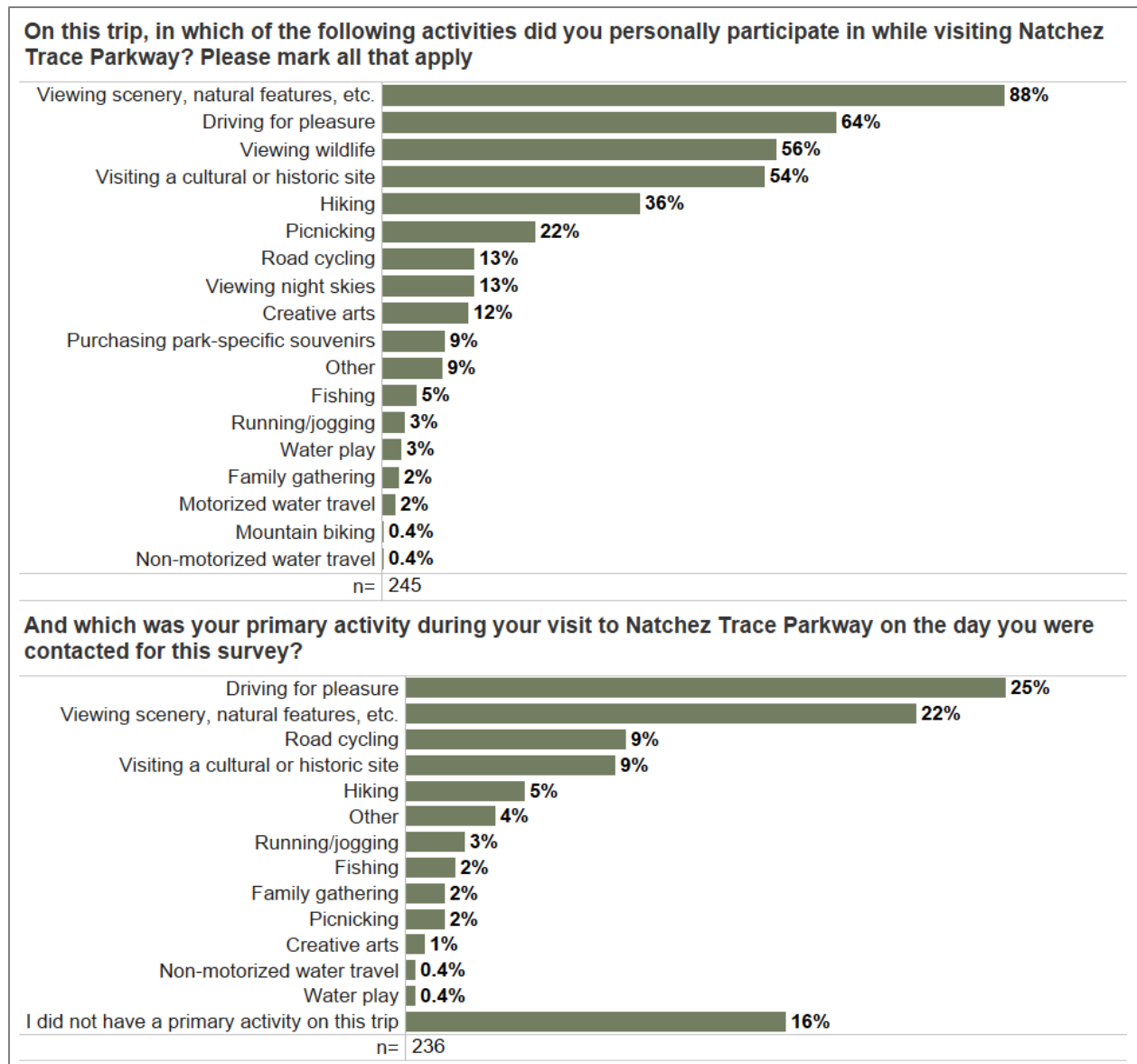


Figure 21. Participation in activities at Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- Most visitors reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (88%), about two-thirds (64%) reported driving for pleasure, and more than half (56%) reported viewing wildlife and visiting a cultural or historic site (54%).
- Mountain biking, motorized water travel, and family gatherings were all uncommon activities (reported by 2% or fewer of respondents).
- A quarter of respondents (25%) reported driving for pleasure as their primary activity, followed by viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (22%).
- Some respondents (16%) reported that they did not have a primary activity on this trip.

Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit

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

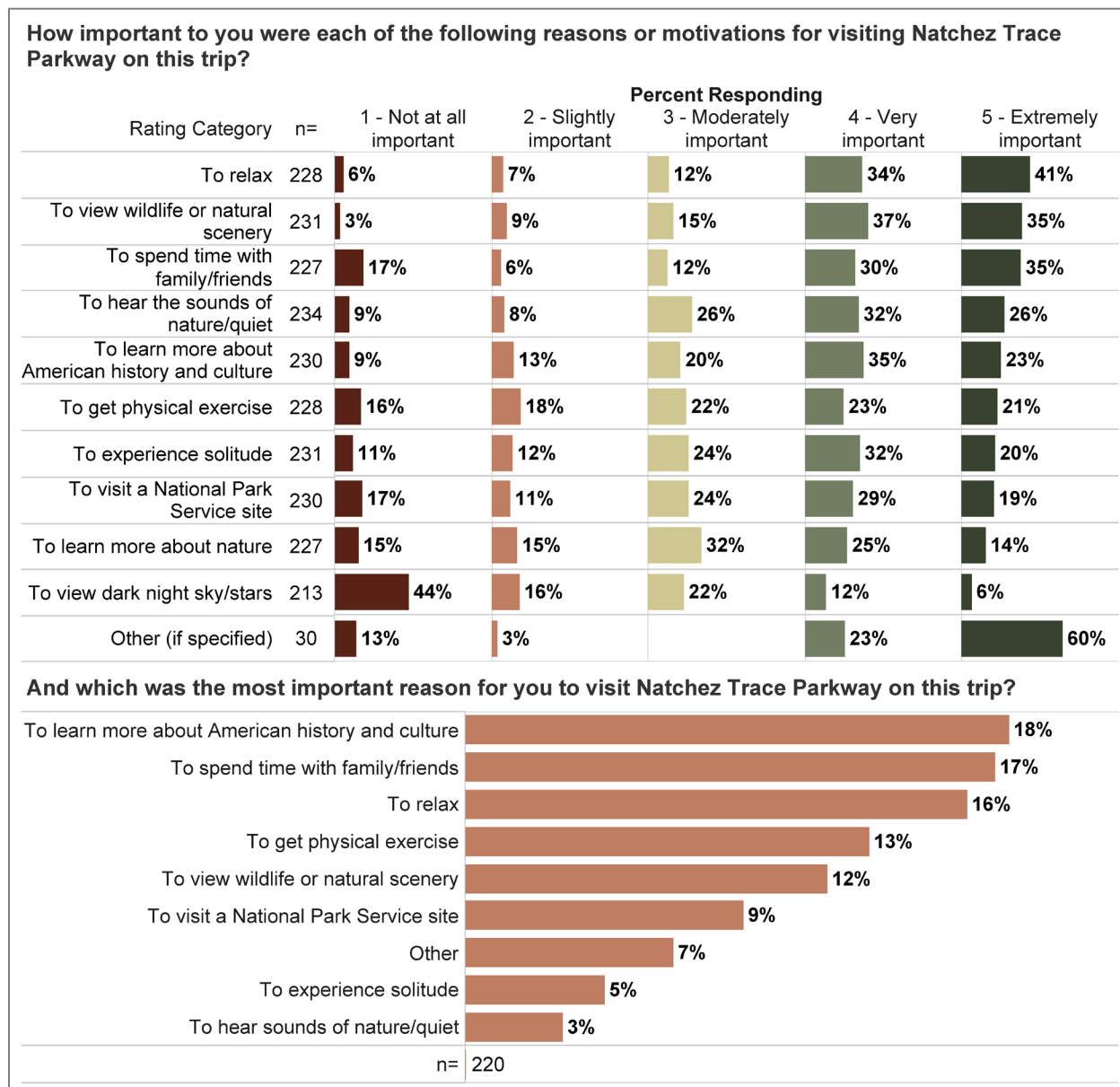


Figure 22. Reasons or motivations to visit Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- Most visitors chose to relax (41%), to view wildlife or natural scenery (35%), and to spend time with family and friends (35%) as extremely important reasons for their trip to Natchez Trace Parkway.

- Other important reasons were to hear the sounds of nature/quiet and to learn more about American history and culture (26% and 23% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons were to view dark night sky/stars and to learn more about nature (only 6% and 14% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 44% and 15% 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 (18%), followed by to spend time with family/friends (17%), and to relax (16%).

Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services that they personally participated in in Natchez Trace Parkway during their trip (Figure 23).

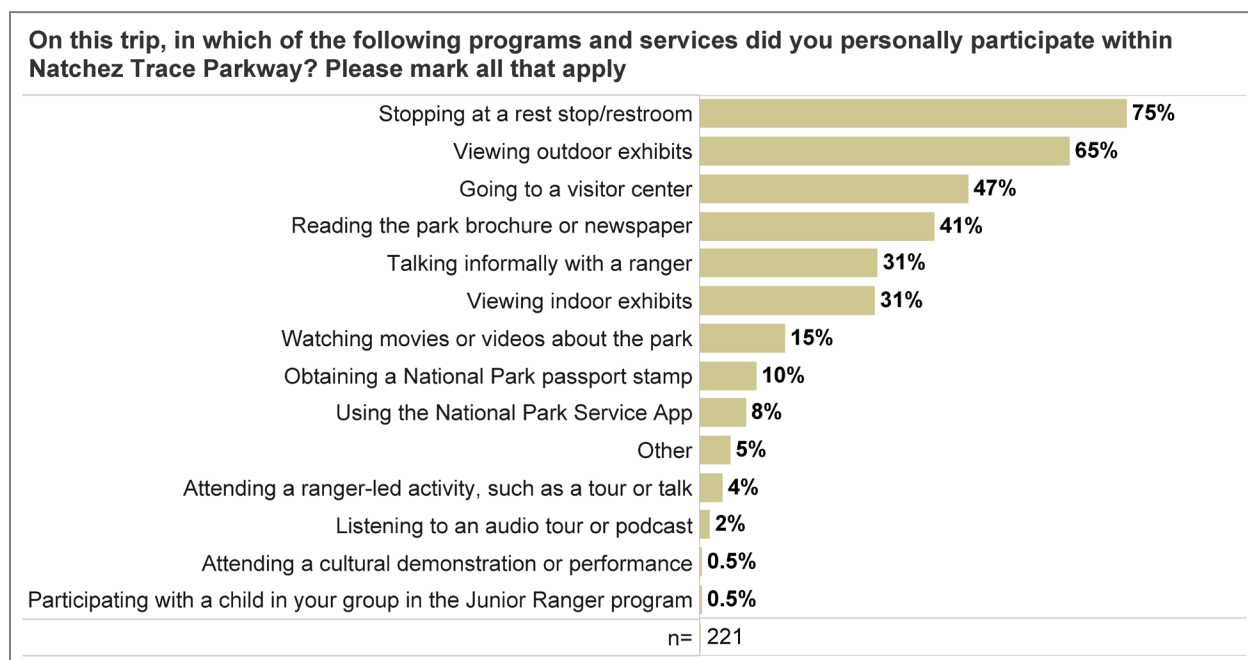


Figure 23. Programs participated while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- The two most-used programs were stopping at a rest stop/restroom (75%) and viewing outdoor exhibits (65%).
- No other programs were engaged in by over half of respondents.

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).

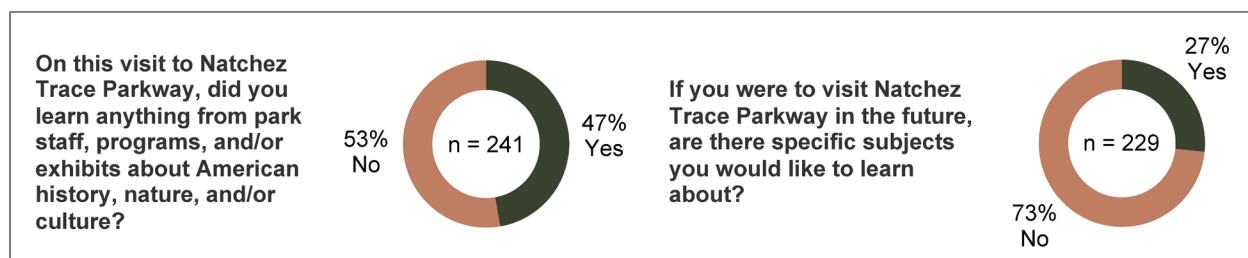


Figure 24. Learning.

NPS

- Nearly half of respondents (47%) reported that they learned something from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- About a quarter of respondents (27%) reported that if they were to visit Natchez Trace Parkway 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 Natchez Trace Parkway (Figure 25).

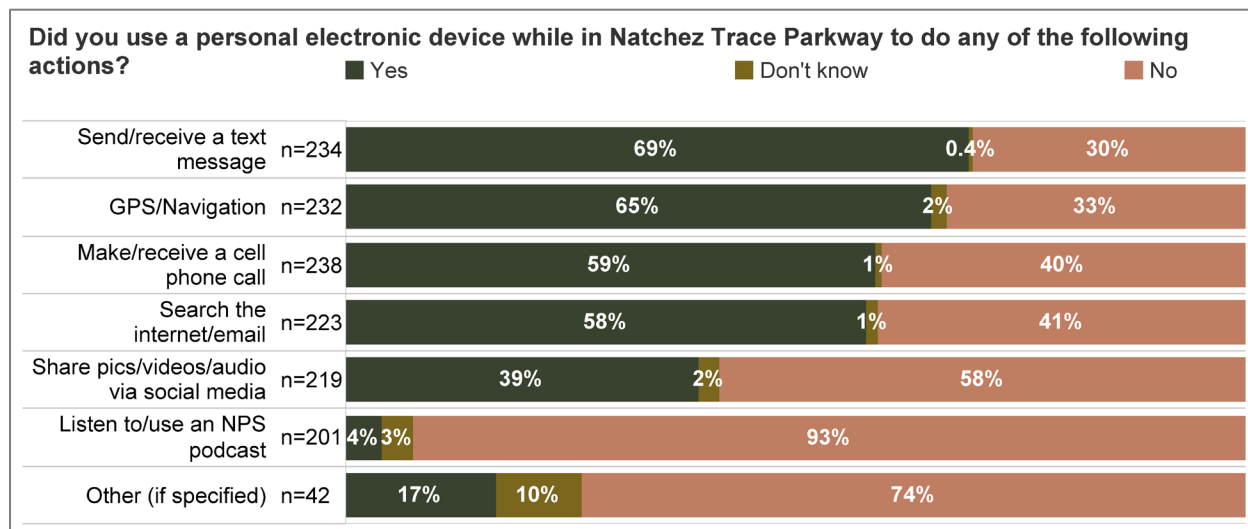


Figure 25. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- Over two-thirds of respondents (69%) reported sending or receiving a text message, and nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) reported using GPS/Navigation.
- 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 26), and the quality of their service (Figure 27).

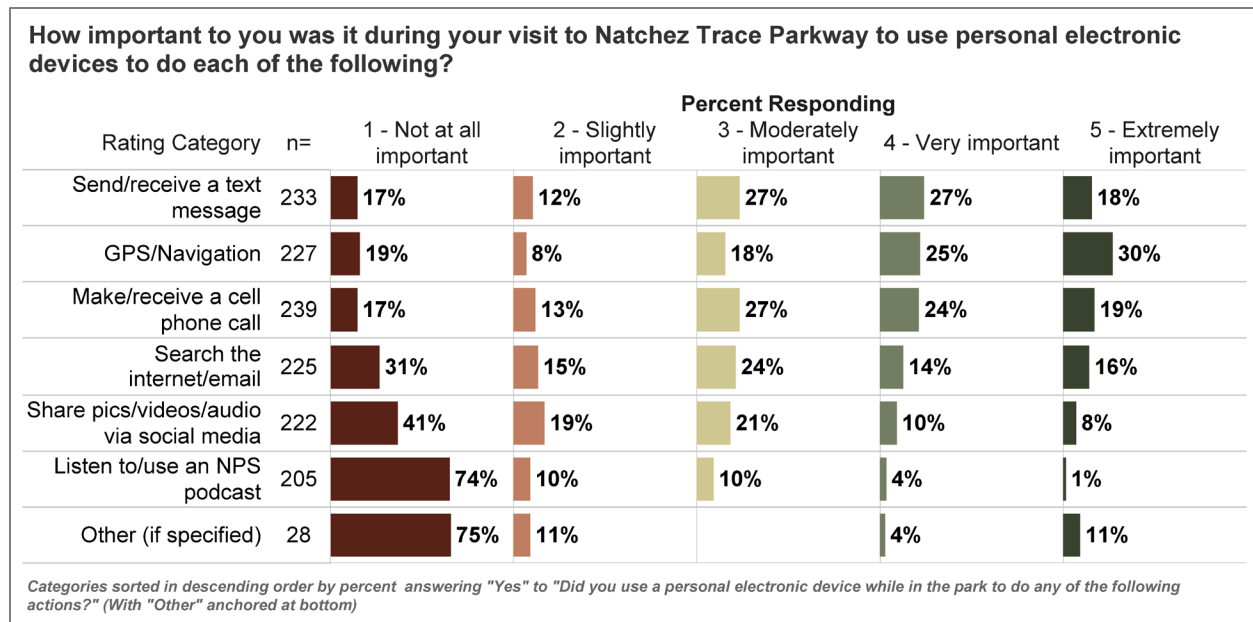


Figure 26. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- The most important device uses were GPS/Navigation and making or receiving a cell phone call (30% and 19% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important only by 1% of respondents, and not at all important by 74% of respondents.

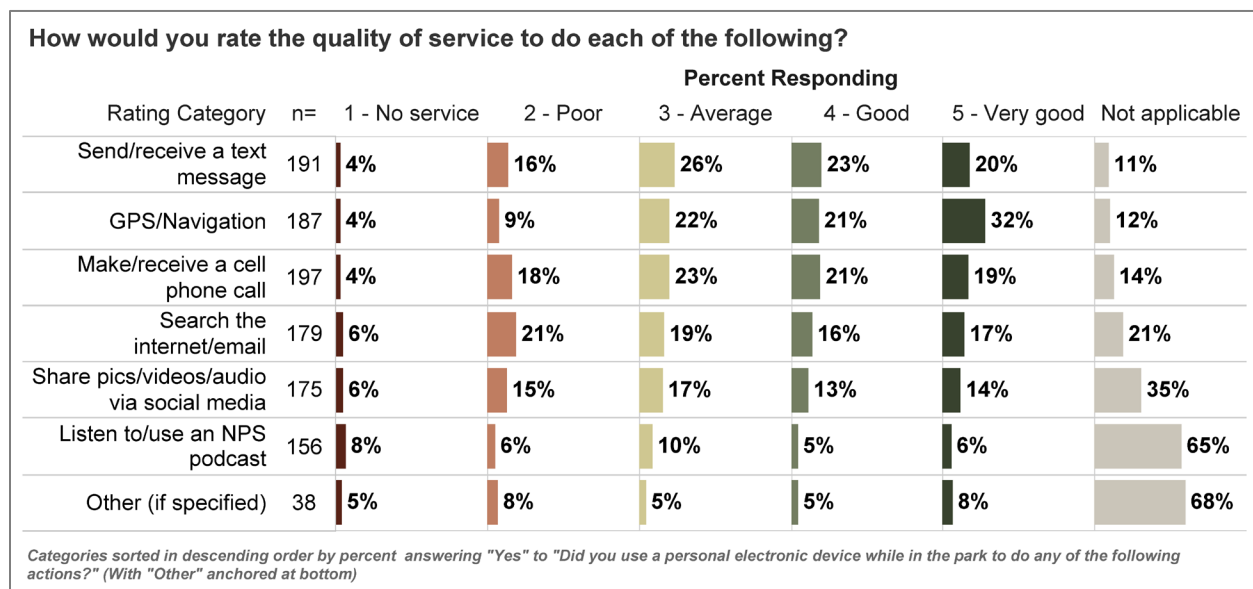


Figure 27. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- GPS/Navigation was rated as very good or good by 32% and 21% of respondents, respectively. However, 4% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- About one in five respondents (ranging from 20% to 19%, depending on the service) rated sending and receiving text messages, and making or receiving a cell phone call 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 Natchez Trace Parkway. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 28).

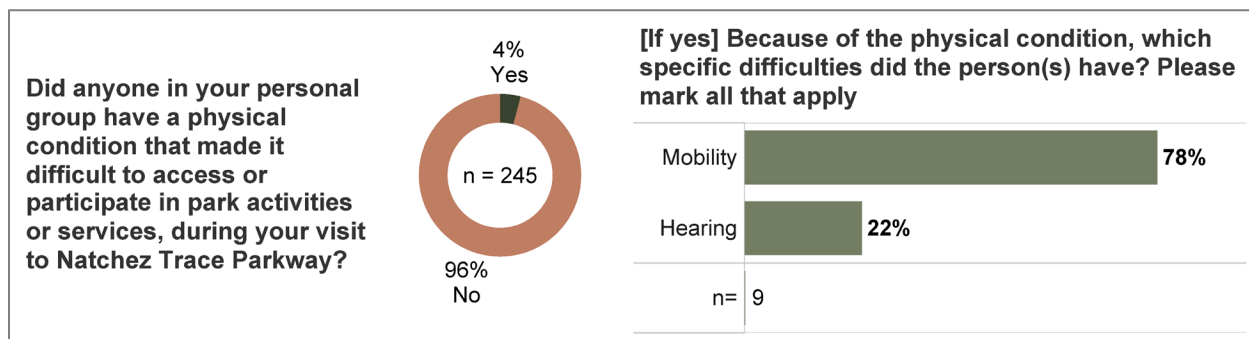


Figure 28. Physical difficulties while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

NPS

- Nearly all respondents (96%) 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 Natchez Trace Parkway.
- Among the 4% of visitors who identified at least one difficulty, 78% reported mobility issues in their group, with about a quarter (22%) reporting hearing difficulties.

Questions 25–28: Visitor Experience

Respondents were asked if their visit to Natchez Trace Parkway met their expectations (Figure 29).

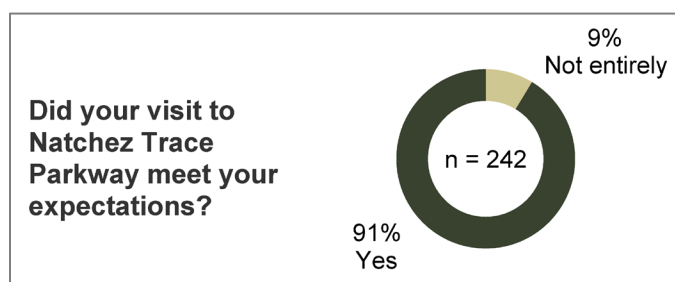


Figure 29. Meeting Natchez Trace Parkway expectations.

NPS

- Most respondents (91%) reported that their visit to Natchez Trace Parkway met their expectations, while 9% 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 Natchez Trace Parkway 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 Natchez Trace Parkway and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 30).

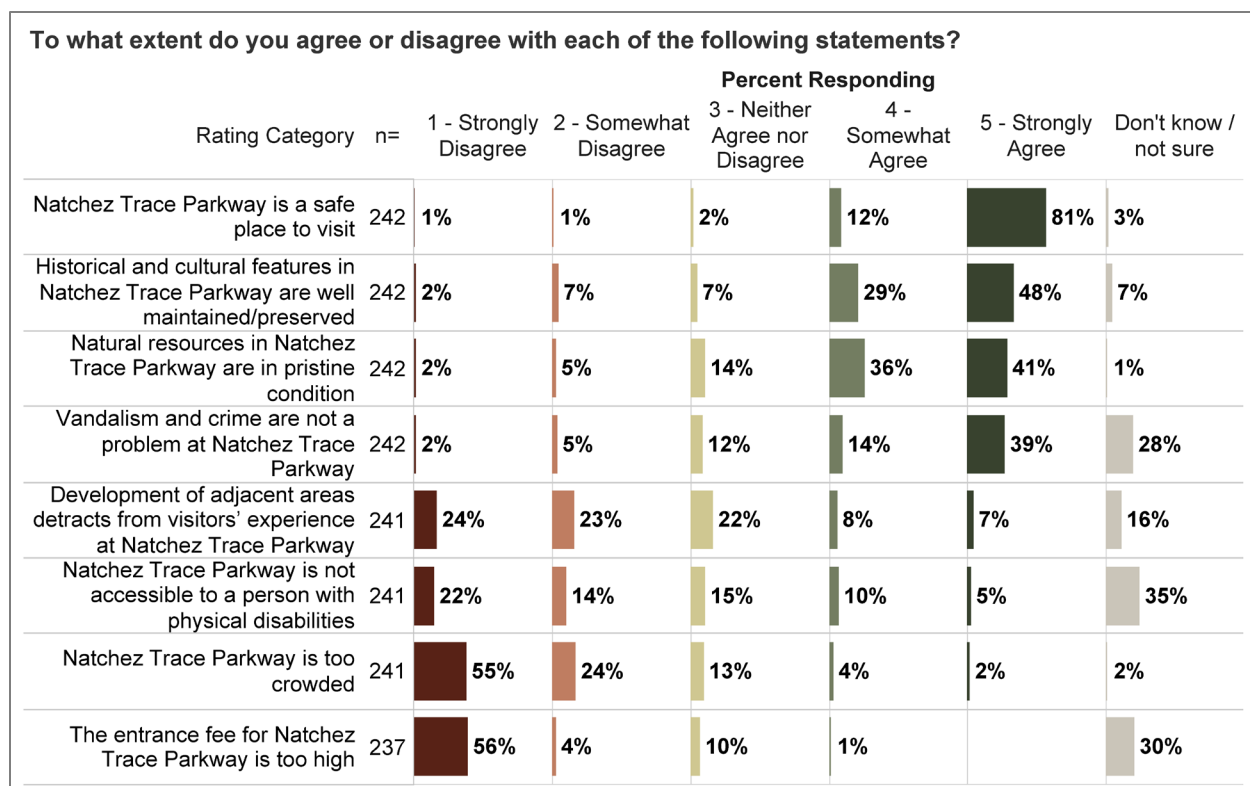


Figure 30. Rating Natchez Trace Parkway experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “Natchez Trace Parkway is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 93% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “historical and cultural features in Natchez Trace Parkway are well maintained/preserved” and “natural resources in Natchez Trace Parkway are in pristine condition” (77% and 77% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “the entrance fee for Natchez Trace Parkway is too high” and “Natchez Trace Parkway is too crowded” received the least support, with only 1% and 6% of respondents respectively, either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and just 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 Natchez Trace Parkway (Figure 31).

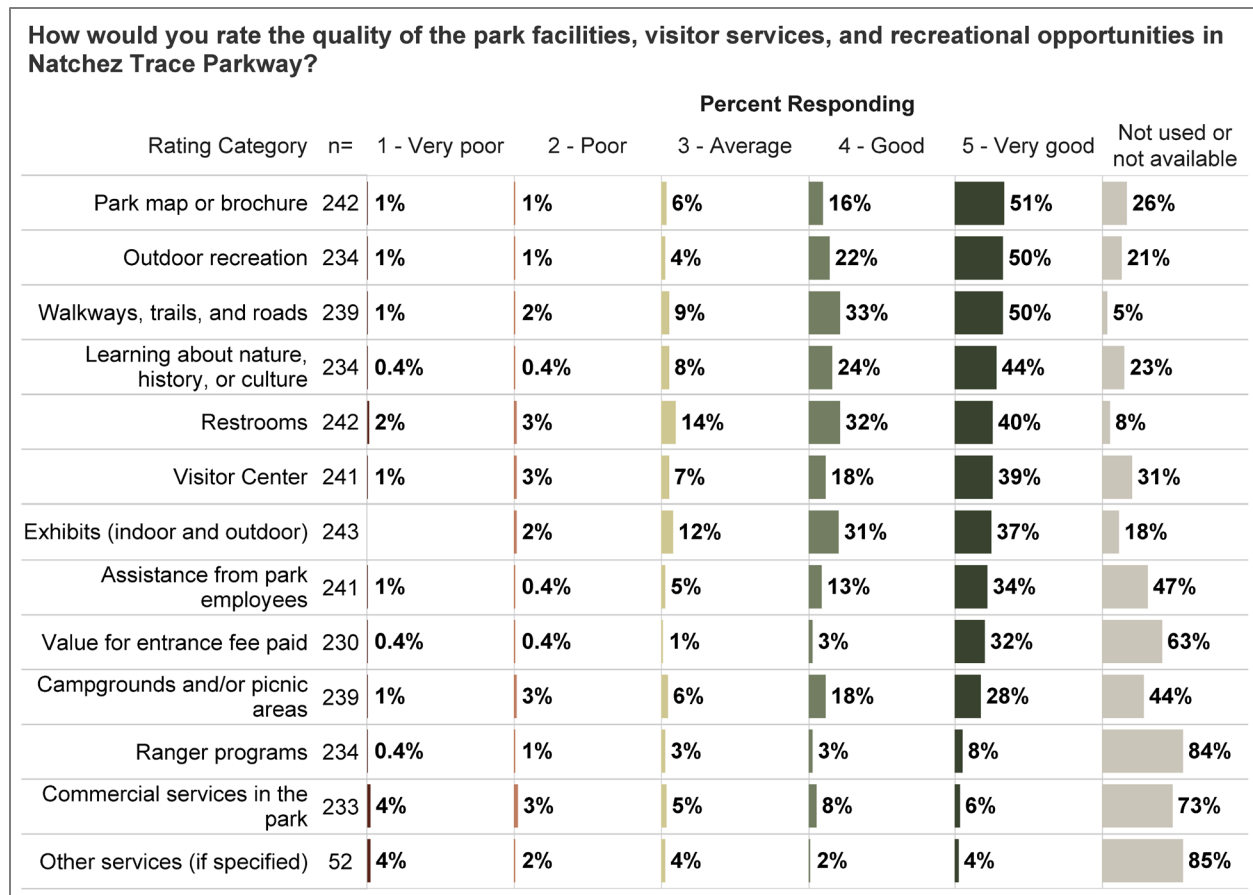


Figure 31. Rating the quality of Natchez Trace Parkway facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- At least half of visitors (ranging from 50% to 51%) rated the park map or brochure, outdoor recreation, and walkways, trails, and roads as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than 10% of visitors rated ranger programs, and commercial services in the park 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).

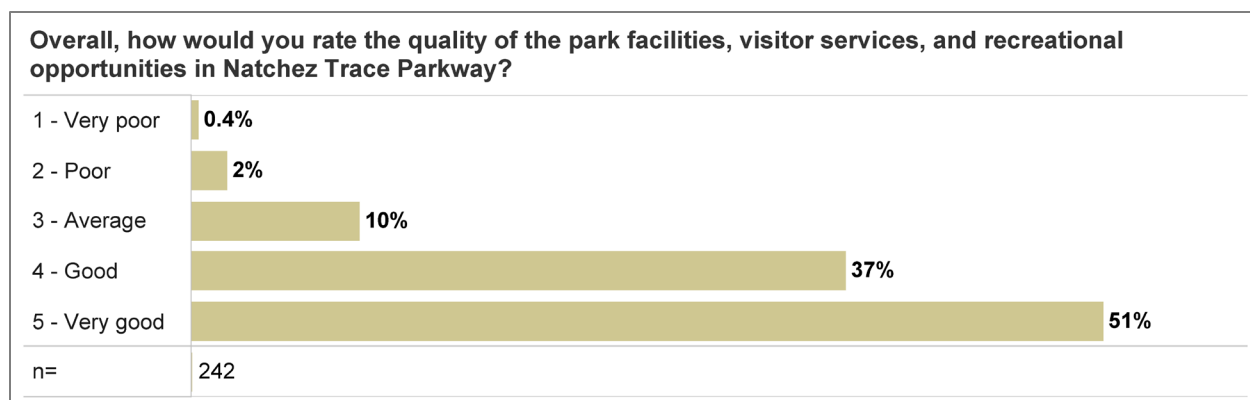


Figure 32. Rating overall quality of Natchez Trace Parkway facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

NPS

- In general, about half of respondents (51%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Natchez Trace Parkway as very good, and another 37% rated them as good.
- Just about 1 in 8 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.

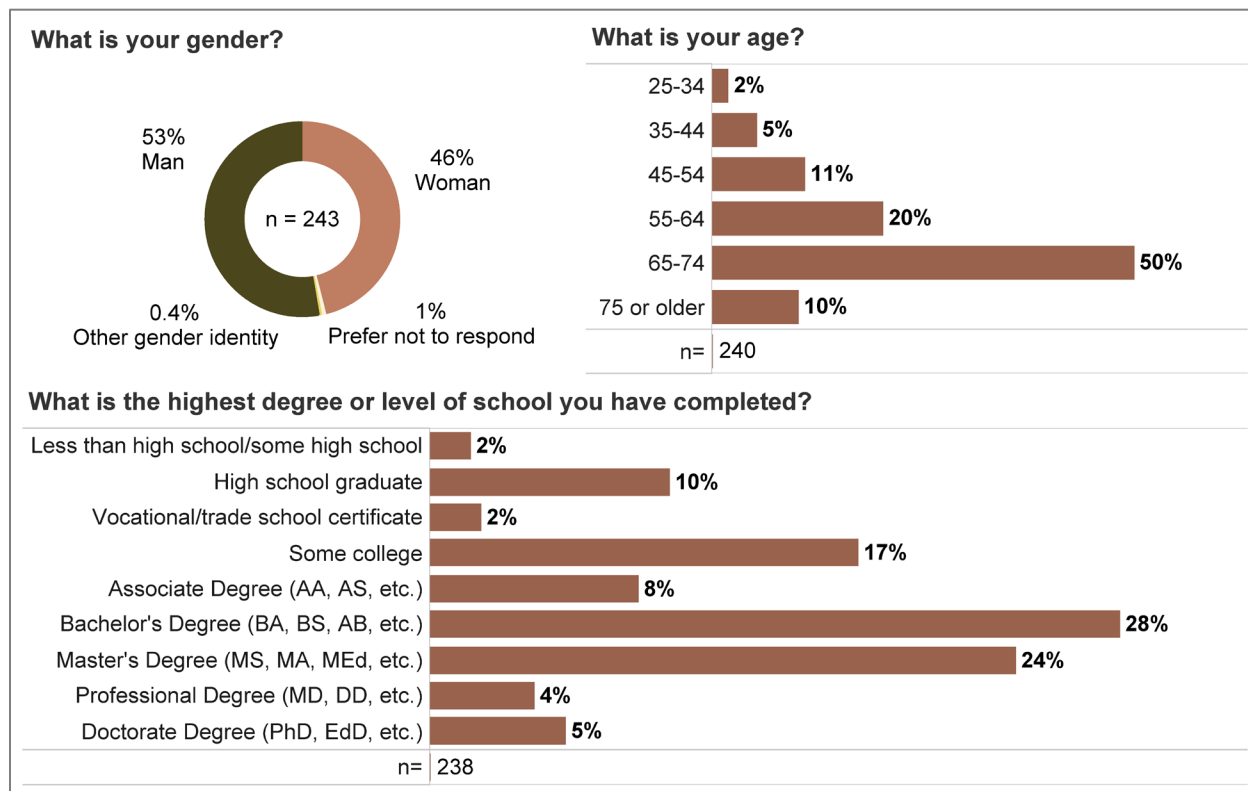


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.

NPS

- Follow-up survey respondents were slightly more likely to be men than women, though the sample was relatively balanced (53% vs. 46%). Another 0.4% had another gender identity, while 1% preferred not to disclose their gender identity.
- The most common age categories were 65–74 (50%), 55–64 (20%), 45–54 (11%), and 75 or older (10%). The least represented age group was 25–34 (only 2% of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents were highly educated, with a combined 53% having at least some college, and one-third (33%) holding a master's degree, professional degree, or doctorate degree.

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

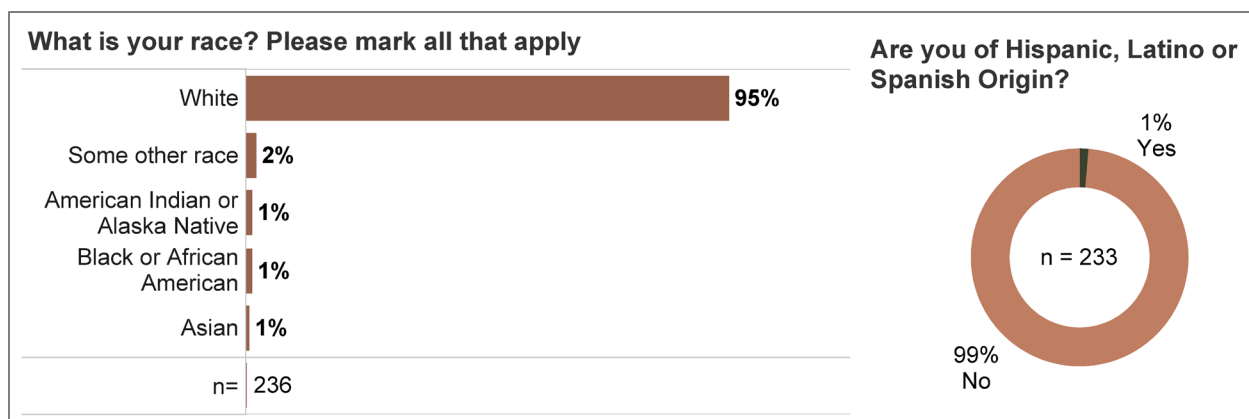


Figure 34. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- Most respondents (95%) were White, while 2% indicated “some other race” as a racial category.
- Most respondents (99%) were not of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.

At a household level, respondents were asked to report annual income and number of contributors, as well as how many people (adults and children) live in their household (Figure 35).

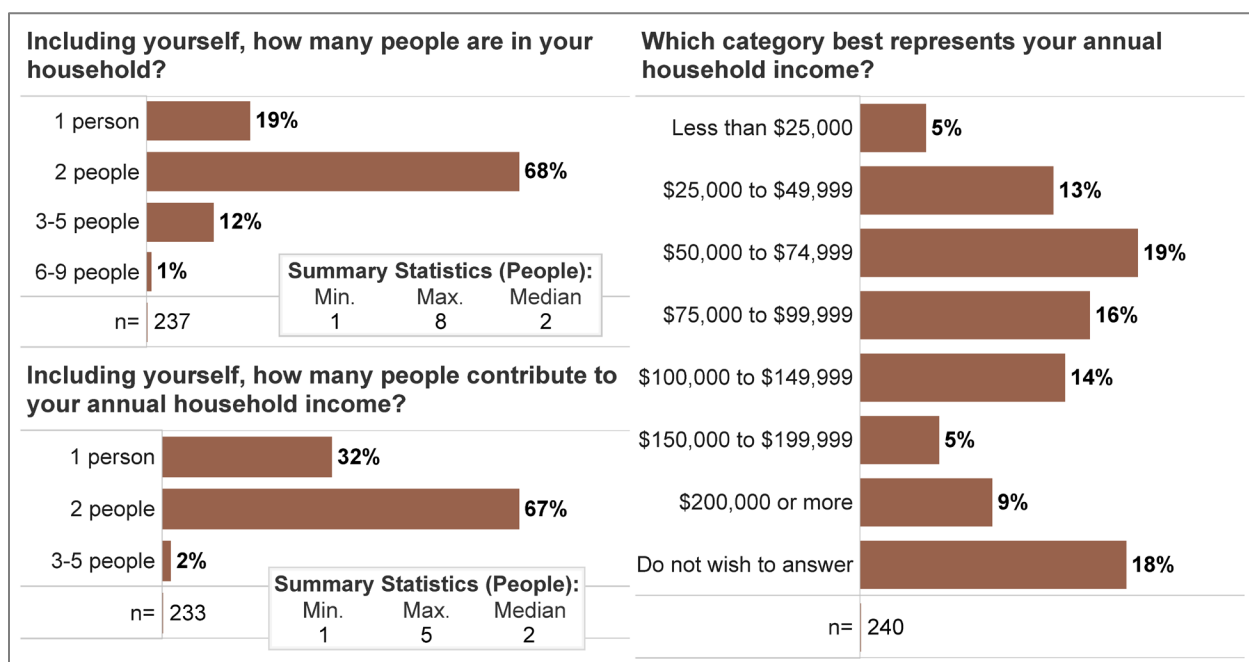


Figure 35. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- Just over two-thirds of respondents (68%) had two people in their household, followed by one person (another 19%).
- Natchez Trace Parkway visitors tended to have incomes in the middle of the range. About one in five respondents (19%) reported that their annual household income was between \$50,000 and \$74,999, while 16% reported income between \$75,000 and \$99,999, and another 14% earned between \$100,000 and \$149,999. Nearly one in five respondents (18%) chose not to provide income information.
- Two-thirds of respondents (67%) came from a dual-income household.

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

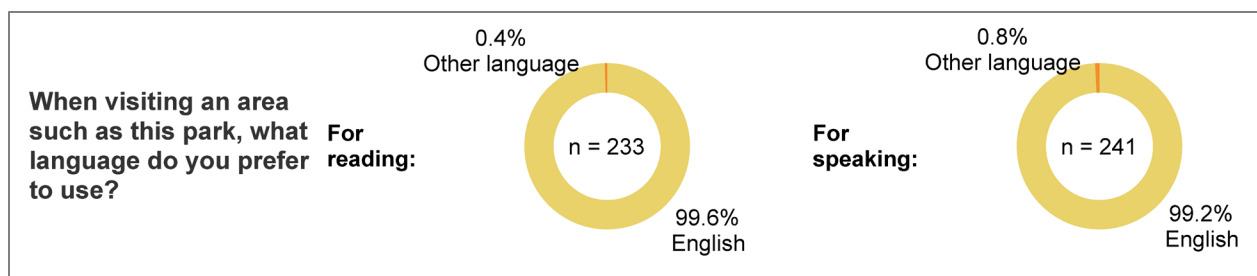


Figure 36. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- The overwhelming majority of respondents (99%) preferred to use English both for reading and speaking when visiting an area such as Natchez Trace Parkway.
- Less than 1% of respondents preferred another language for either reading and/or speaking.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2022. 2022 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Natchez Trace Parkway: Visitor Intercept and Post-Trip Surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2318675>

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 7](#). Number of nights spent in the local area around Natchez Trace Parkway, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Camping in Natchez Trace Parkway	67	1	30	3
Camping outside Natchez Trace Parkway	60	1	90	3
Lodging outside Natchez Trace Parkway	196	1	80	2
Unpaid accommodations	30	1	60	3

Table 9. Data from [Figure 8](#). Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

Group Composition	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Adults	741	1	40	2
Children	741	0	6	0

Table 10. Data from [Figure 13](#). Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering Natchez Trace Parkway.

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 Natchez Trace Parkway?	564	1	8	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Natchez Trace Parkway?	58	1	4	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Natchez Trace Parkway?	77	1	2	1

Table 11. Data from [Figure 14](#). Previous visits to Natchez Trace Parkway.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Natchez Trace Parkway over the past 12 months?	499	1	1000	6
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Natchez Trace Parkway over the past five years?	499	1	5000	25

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?	738	0	150	1

Table 13. Data from [Figure 22](#). Reasons or motivations to visit Natchez Trace Parkway.

Rating Category	n
To visit a National Park Service site	230
To experience solitude	231
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	234
To learn more about nature	227
To learn more about American history and culture	230
To spend time with family/friends	227
To get physical exercise	228
To view wildlife or natural scenery	231
To relax	228
To view dark night sky/stars	213
Other	30

Table 14. Data from [Figure 25](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	238
Send/receive a text message	234
Search the internet/email	223
GPS/Navigation	232
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	219
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	201
Other	42

Table 15. Data from [Figure 26](#). The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	239
Send/receive a text message	233
Search the internet/email	225
GPS/Navigation	227
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	222
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	205
Other	28

Table 16. Data from [Figure 27](#). Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting Natchez Trace Parkway.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	197
Send/receive a text message	191
Search the internet/email	179
GPS/Navigation	187
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	175
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	156
Other	38

Table 17. Data from [Figure 30](#). Rating Natchez Trace Parkway experience.

Rating Category	n
Natchez Trace Parkway is a safe place to visit	242
Natchez Trace Parkway is too crowded	241
Natural resources in Natchez Trace Parkway are in pristine condition	242
The entrance fee for Natchez Trace Parkway is too high	237
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Natchez Trace Parkway	242
Natchez Trace Parkway is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	241
Historical and cultural features in Natchez Trace Parkway are well maintained/preserved	242
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Natchez Trace Parkway	241

Table 18. Data from [Figure 31](#). Rating the quality of Natchez Trace Parkway facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	n
Visitor Center	241
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	243
Restrooms	242
Walkways, trails, and roads	239
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	239
Assistance from park employees	241
Park map or brochure	242
Ranger programs	234
Value for entrance fee paid	230
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	233
Other services	52
Learning about nature, history, or culture	234
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	234

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?	237	1	8	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	233	1	5	2

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

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