



2022 Socioeconomic Research of National Capital Parks-Central

Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)



Outlet Bridge spanning the Tidal Basin.

NPS

2022 Socioeconomic Research of National Capital Parks-Central: Report on 2022 Data Collection (Revised)

Science Report NPS/SR—2026/488

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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Contents

	Page
Figures.....	v
Tables.....	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Methods.....	3
Study Area.....	3
Sampling Period and Procedure	4
Intercept Survey.....	4
Mail-Back/Online Survey.....	5
Non-Response Bias Analysis	6
Results.....	8
Intercept Survey Results.....	8
Questions 1–2: Visitor Residency	8
Question 3: Trip Purpose.....	10
Question 4: Length of Stay.....	10
Questions 5–6: Overnight Visitors	11
Questions 7–9: Party Characteristics.....	13
Questions 11–13: Park Use Characteristics.....	14
Question 14: Transportation.....	16
Question 16: Previous Visits to National Capital Parks-Central.....	18
Question 17: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units.....	18
Follow-Up Survey Results	19
Questions 1–2: Information About National Capital Parks-Central.....	19
Question 3: Transportation.....	21
Question 4: Travel Party Composition.....	21
Question 10: Entrance Fees	22
Questions 12–14: Trip Characteristics	23
Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit.....	25

Contents (continued)

	Page
Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning	26
Questions 20–21: Use of Devices.....	27
Question 22: Physical Difficulties.....	29
Questions 25–28: Visitor Experience.....	30
Questions 31–39: Background/Demographics	33
Literature Cited	37
Appendix A: Accessible Tables.....	38

Figures

	Page
Figure 1. National Capital Parks-Central local area map.....	4
Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to National Capital Parks-Central.	9
Figure 3. Role of National Capital Parks-Central in overall trip purpose.....	10
Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around National Capital Parks-Central.....	11
Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around National Capital Parks-Central.....	11
Figure 6. Number of nights spent in the local area around National Capital Parks-Central, by accommodation type.	12
Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent’s personal group while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	13
Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent’s personal group while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	14
Figure 9. Duration of the respondent’s trip to National Capital Parks-Central.....	14
Figure 10. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to National Capital Parks-Central.....	16
Figure 11. Form of transportation used to enter National Capital Parks-Central on the day of the survey.....	17
Figure 12. Number of people in respondent’s vehicle when entering National Capital Parks-Central.....	17
Figure 13. Previous visits to National Capital Parks-Central.	18
Figure 14. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.	19
Figure 15. Sources used to obtain information about National Capital Parks-Central prior to the trip.	20
Figure 16. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to National Capital Parks-Central on the recent trip.....	21
Figure 17. Travel party composition during National Capital Parks-Central visit.	22
Figure 18. Entrance fees to enter National Capital Parks-Central on the most recent trip.	23
Figure 19. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.....	23
Figure 20. Participation in activities at National Capital Parks-Central.	24
Figure 21. Reasons or motivations to visit National Capital Parks-Central.....	25

Figures (continued)

	Page
Figure 22. Programs participated while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	26
Figure 23. Learning.	27
Figure 24. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	27
Figure 25. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	28
Figure 26. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	29
Figure 27. Physical difficulties while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.	29
Figure 28. Meeting National Capital Parks-Central expectations.	30
Figure 29. Rating National Capital Parks-Central experience.	31
Figure 30. Rating the quality of National Capital Parks-Central facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.	32
Figure 31. Rating overall quality of National Capital Parks-Central facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.	33
Figure 32. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.	34
Figure 33. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.	35
Figure 34. Household demographics: annual household income and household size.	35
Figure 35. Respondent’s language preference.	36

Tables

	Page
Table 1. Information about sampling locations in National Capital Parks-Central.	3
Table 2. Response outcomes—National Capital Parks-Central intercept Survey.....	5
Table 3. Response rate—National Capital Parks-Central follow-up mail-back/online survey.	6
Table 4. Non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around National Capital Parks-Central?”	6
Table 5. Non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?”.....	7
Table 6. Non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, have you [and your personal group] stayed, or will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in National Capital Parks-Central and/or within the local area?”	7
Table 7. Amount of time spent within National Capital Parks-Central.	15
Table 8. Data from Figure 6.	38
Table 9. Data from Figure 7.	38
Table 10. Data from Figure 12.	38
Table 11. Data from Figure 13.	38
Table 12. Data from Figure 14.	38
Table 13. Data from Figure 21.	39
Table 14. Data from Figure 24.	39
Table 15. Data from Figure 25.	39
Table 16. Data from Figure 26.	40
Table 17. Data from Figure 29.	40
Table 18. Data from Figure 30.	41
Table 19. Data from Figure 34.	41

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. National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central and what they do during their visit. It uses a two-phased survey methodology to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior: (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a follow up (mail-back and/or online survey) for full trip details. The results are organized by these two phases and are intended to assist park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, operations and potential issues, as well as to facilitate communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

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

Introduction

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

This mandate resulted in a pilot socioeconomic monitoring study in 2015/2016 at a sample of park units across the U.S., previously described as “Phase One.” The current study uses outcomes from the 2015/2016 pilot program and progresses into “Phase Two” of the pilot process at 24 NPS units across the United States. National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central, what they do during their visit, and their spending profile. The results of the study are intended to assist National Capital Parks-Central 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.

National Capital Parks-Central is now referred to as National Mall and Memorial Parks, but throughout the report we refer to it as National Capital Parks-Central because that was the administrative name at the time of the 2022 survey.

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.



Hains Point in East Potomac Park.
NPS

Methods

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

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

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

Study Area

The National Capital Parks-Central local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around National Capital Parks-Central consists of Washington, D.C.; Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun counties and Falls Church, Alexandria, and Fairfax cities in Virginia; Montgomery, Prince George's, and Anne Arundel counties in Maryland. Within National Capital Parks-Central, the study area was comprised of 10 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.

Table 1. Information about sampling locations in National Capital Parks-Central.

Intercept Site	Number of Completed Intercept Surveys	Percent of Completed Intercept Surveys
Lincoln Memorial refreshment and gift shop - North	127	9.4%
Lincoln Memorial refreshment and gift shop - South	318	23.5%
Paddle boat marina	168	12.4%
West Potomac Park ball fields	89	6.6%
East Potomac Park picnic area/parking/playground	39	2.9%
East Potomac Park golf course parking lot	181	13.4%
East Potomac Park fishing site - parking along Ohio Dr.	77	5.7%
East Potomac Park tennis center parking lot	86	6.3%
National Mall in front of Smithsonian museums	227	16.8%
Carousel area	43	3.2%

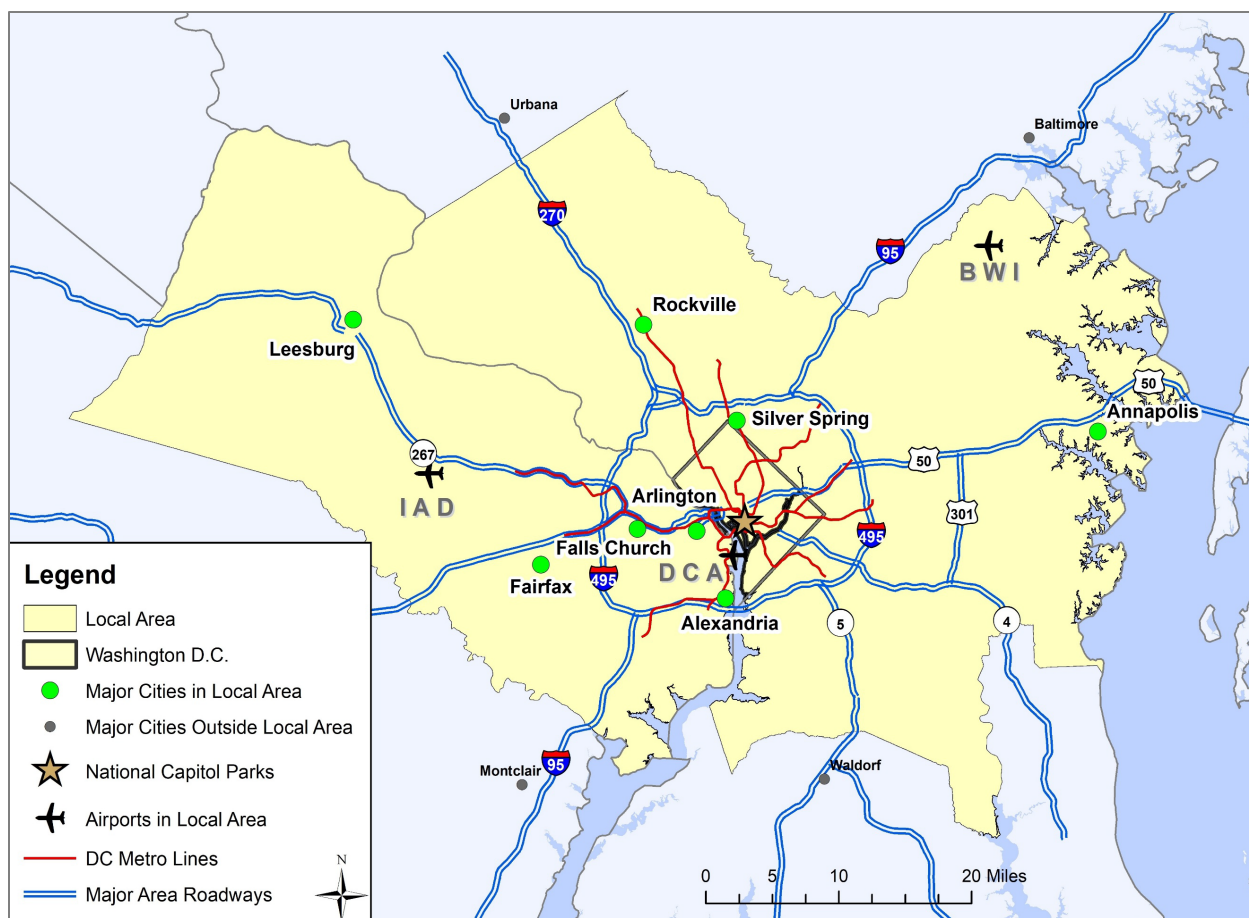


Figure 1. National Capital Parks-Central local area map.

NPS

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 July 9th to July 18th, 2022. A sample of visitors was intercepted while visiting National Capital Parks-Central across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. All respondents were visitors on foot at these locations.

Surveyors approached potential respondents at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and ask them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in National Capital Parks-Central (NPS 2022). If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not a National Capital Parks-Central 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—National Capital Parks-Central intercept Survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	1,581
Complete refusals	113
Partial refusals (non-response questions completed)	113
Intercept surveys completed	1,355
Follow-up surveys distributed	1,061
Intercept response rate	85.7%
Follow-up acceptance rate	78.3%

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 National Capital Parks-Central. Each surveyor worked nine 7-hour days (six hours data collection and one-hour lunch break) and rotated between several sites. Each surveyor had one day off during the 10-day sampling window.

Mail-Back/Online Survey

The follow-up mail-back/online survey was distributed to participating respondents who completed the intercept survey and then agreed to take a follow-up survey after completing their trip to National Capital Parks-Central. 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—National Capital Parks-Central follow-up mail-back/online survey.

Outcome	Total
Follow-up surveys distributed	1,061
Valid follow-up surveys completed	174
Response rate	16.4%

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 85.7%, 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 National Capital Parks-Central?” Note: p-value = 0.15.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	81	46.6%	482	40.8%
No	93	53.4%	699	59.2%

Table 5. Non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?” Note: p-value = 0.01.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	162	93.1%	1011	85.6%
No	12	6.9%	170	14.4%

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 National Capital Parks-Central and/or within the local area?” Note: p-value = 0.31.

Response	Full Survey Respondents		Intercept-Only Respondents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	46.0%	602	51.0%
No	94	54.0%	579	49.0%

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 one question: 1) Residency in the United States. Therefore, foreign residents are not as well represented in the full responses as desired.

Results

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 1,355 visitor intercept surveys conducted in National Capital Parks-Central from July 9th to July 18th, 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 National Capital Parks-Central. 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.

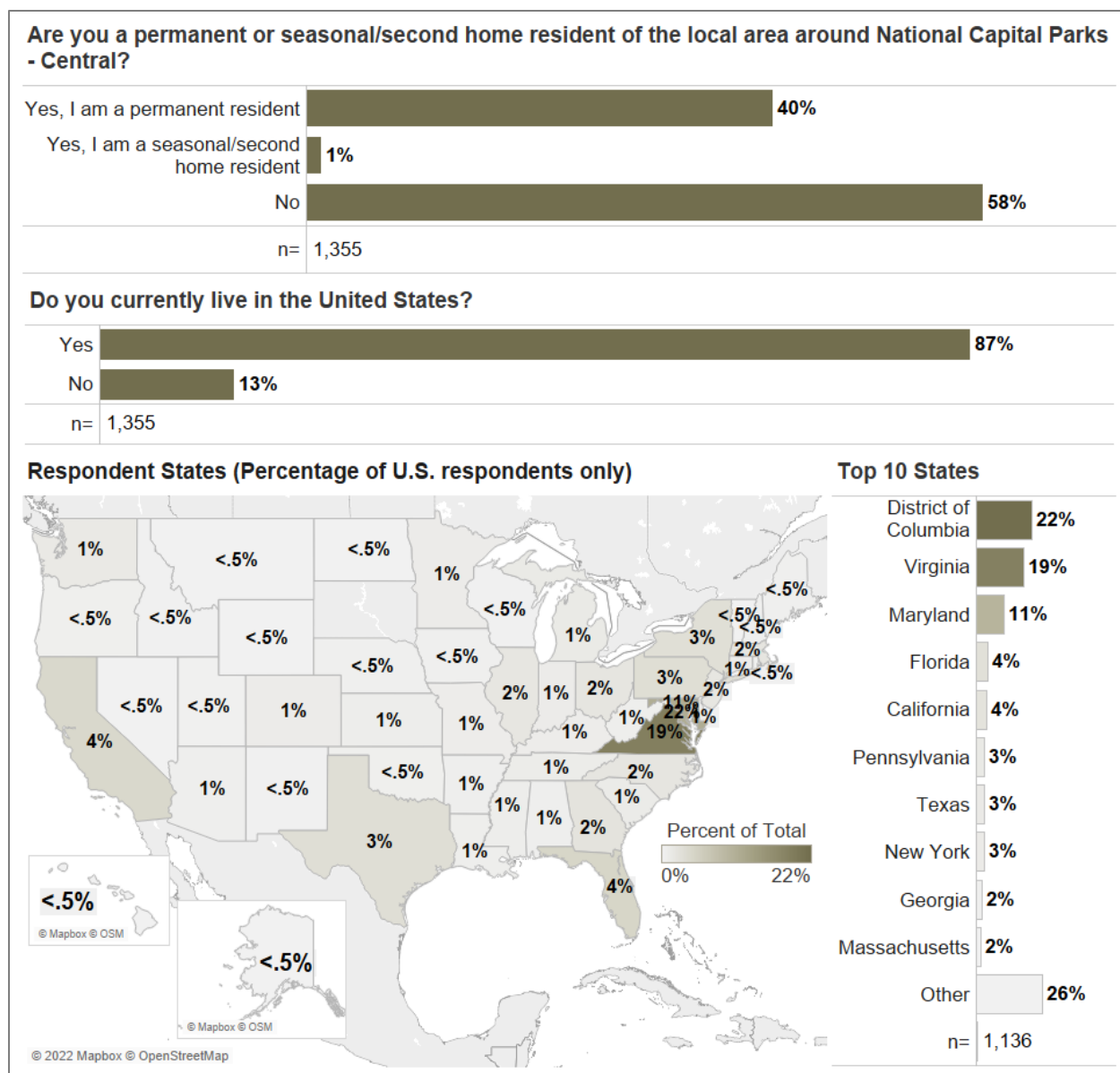


Figure 2. Visitor local residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors to National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- A plurality of respondents (a combined 41%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around National Capital Parks-Central.
- There was a large geographic concentration of visitors from the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland (where National Capital Parks-Central is located).
- Among the 87% of respondents currently residing in the U.S., 22% reside in the District of Columbia, followed by 19% in Virginia, and 11% in Maryland.

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).

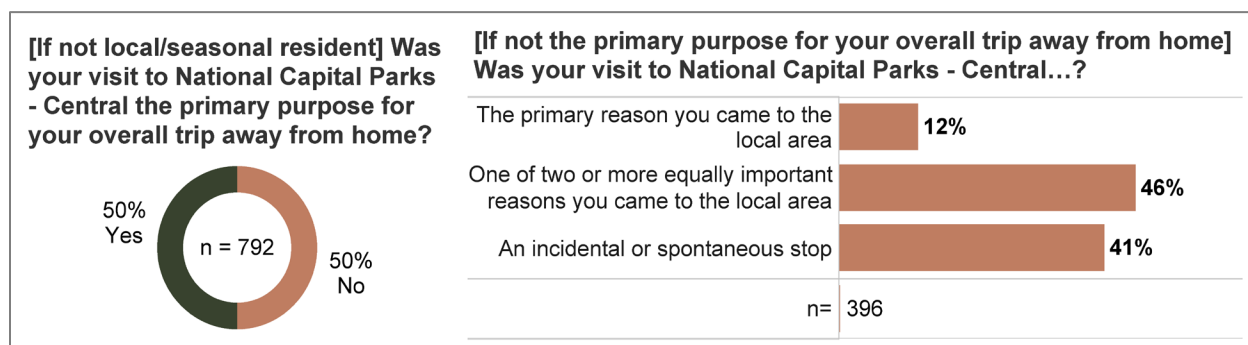


Figure 3. Role of National Capital Parks-Central in overall trip purpose.

NPS

- For half of non-local respondents (50%), visiting National Capital Parks-Central was not the primary purpose for their overall trip away from home.
- Among those respondents for whom National Capital Parks-Central was not their primary trip purpose, 46% stated that their visit to National Capital Parks-Central was one of two or more equally important reasons for coming to the local area, while another 41% indicated that it was an incidental or spontaneous stop. For the remaining 12%, visiting National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central, 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.

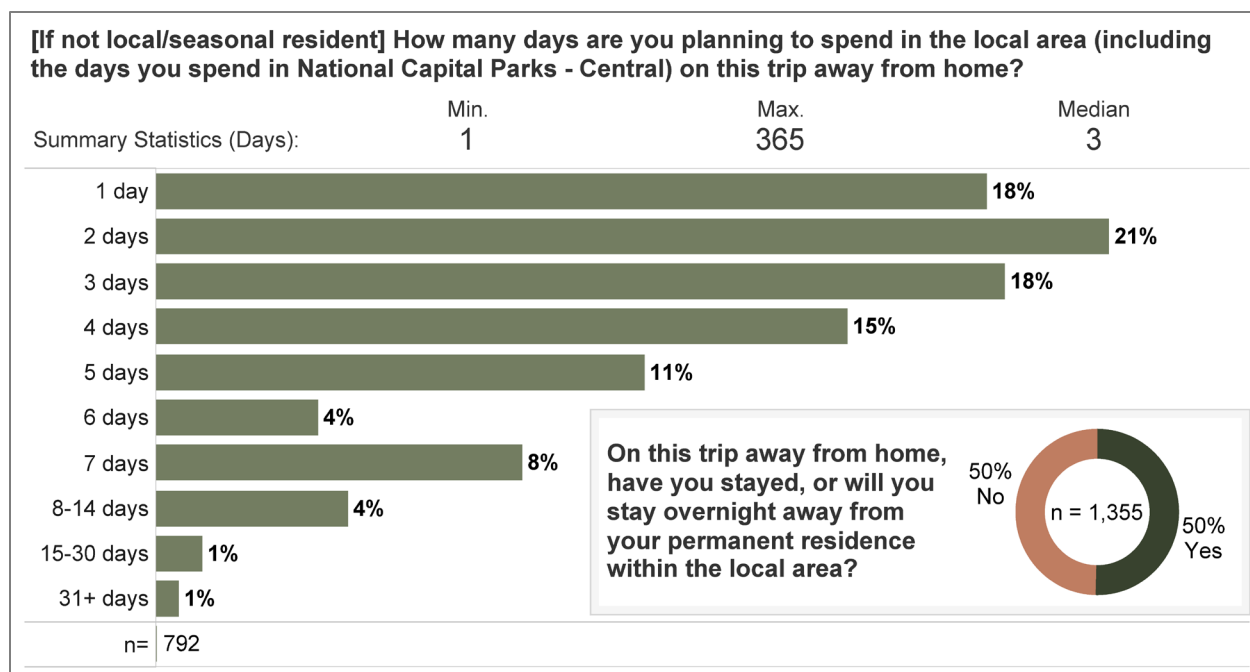


Figure 4. Time spent in the local area around National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- About one in five non-local respondents (18%) spent one day in the local area, while 21% spent 2 days, and 18% spent 3 days. The median length of stay was 3 days.
- Additionally, half of all respondents (50%; including permanent/seasonal residents) had stayed or planned to stay overnight away from their permanent residence 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).

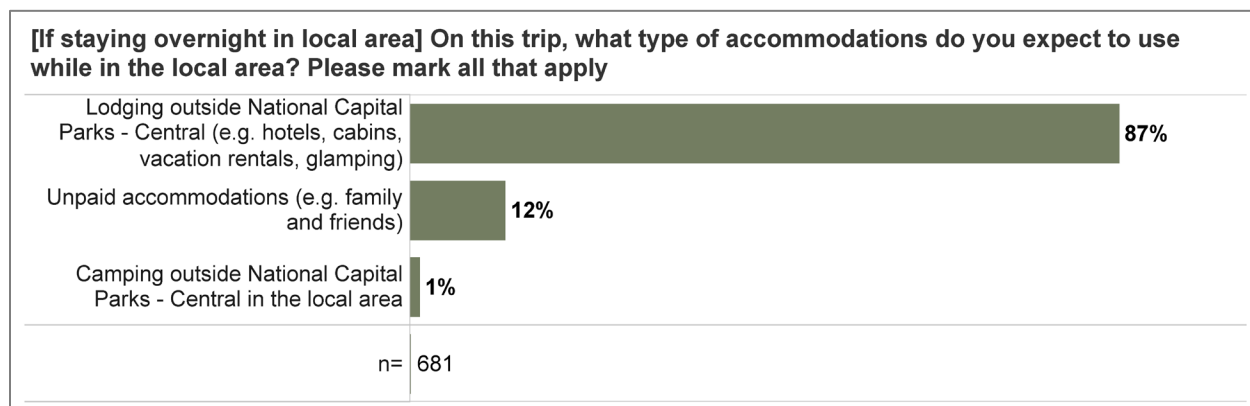


Figure 5. Accommodation types used in the local area around National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- Most overnight respondents (87%) stayed in lodging in the local area.
- This was followed in prevalence by unpaid accommodations (12%), and camping in the local area (1%).

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

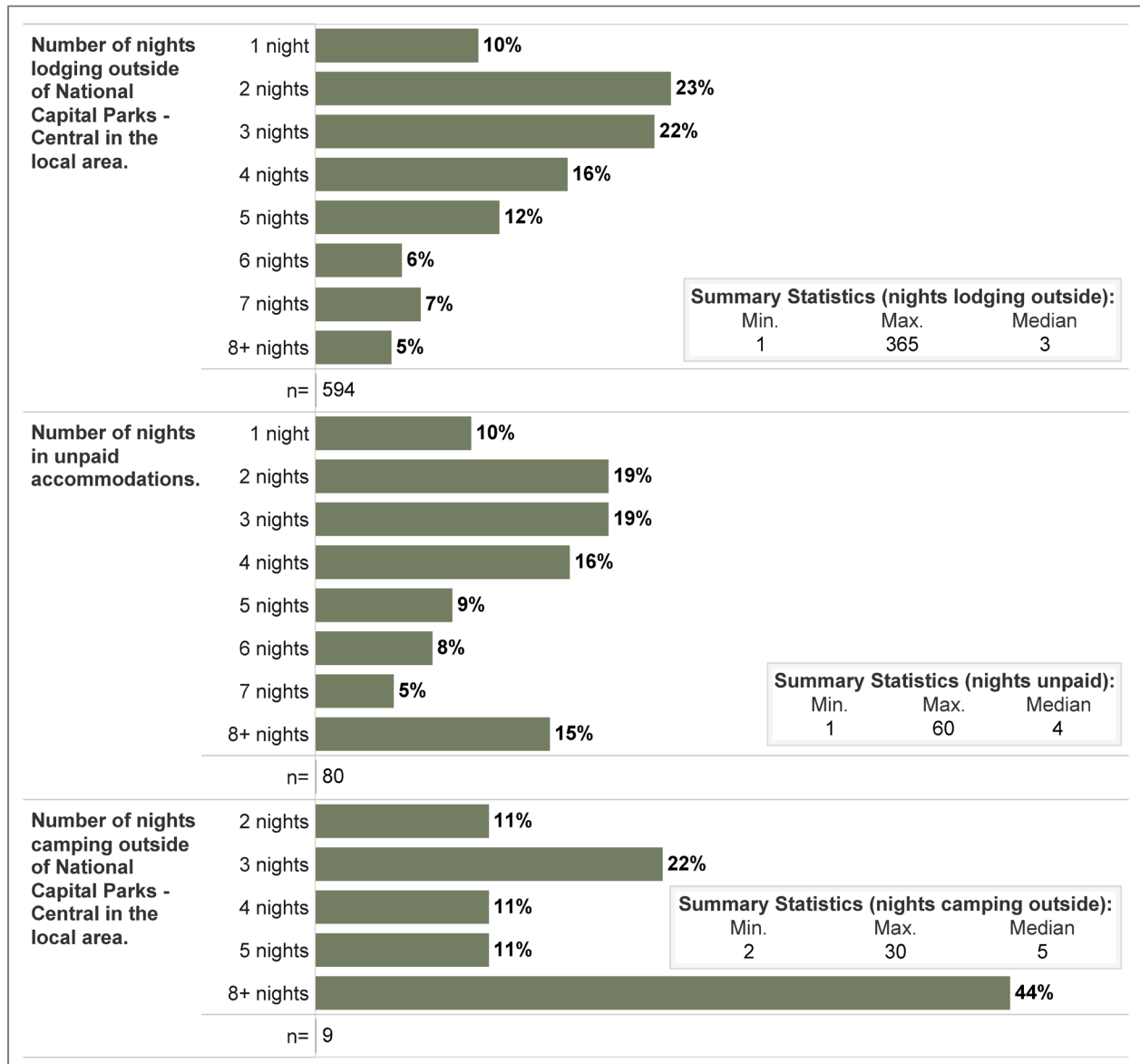


Figure 6. Number of nights spent in the local area around National Capital Parks-Central, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 8](#).

NPS

- Among the 87% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of National Capital Parks-Central in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 3 nights. About one-third (33%) lodged 2 nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 55% spent 3 nights or fewer.
- Among the 12% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 4 nights.
- Among the 1% of overnight respondents who camped outside of National Capital Parks-Central (per Figure 5), median length of stay was 5 nights, though the plurality (44%) stayed more than 8 nights.

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 National Capital Parks-Central (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.

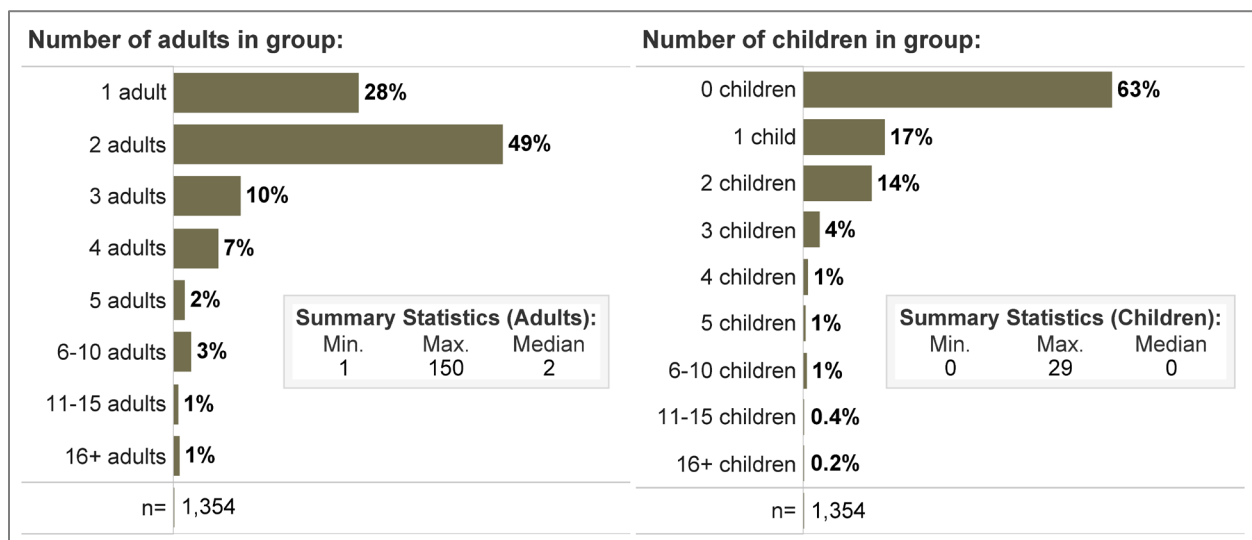


Figure 7. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 9](#).

NPS

- The median number of adults per group was 2. Nearly half of visitor groups (49%) included 2 adults.
- Most groups (63%) did not include any children.

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

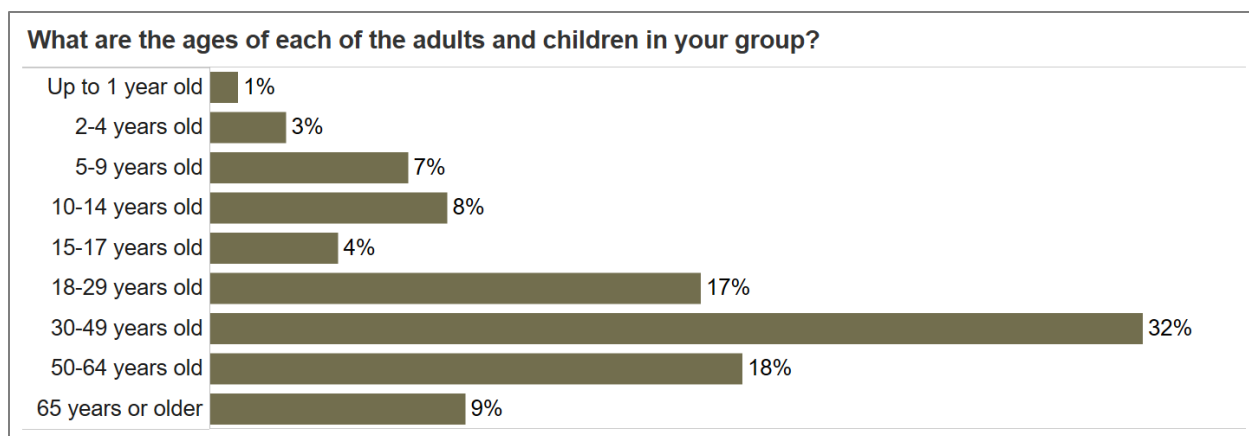


Figure 8. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 30–49 years old (32%), followed by 50–64 years old (18%), and 18–29 years old (17%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of 23% of group members.

Questions 11–13: Park Use Characteristics

First, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit National Capital Parks-Central 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).

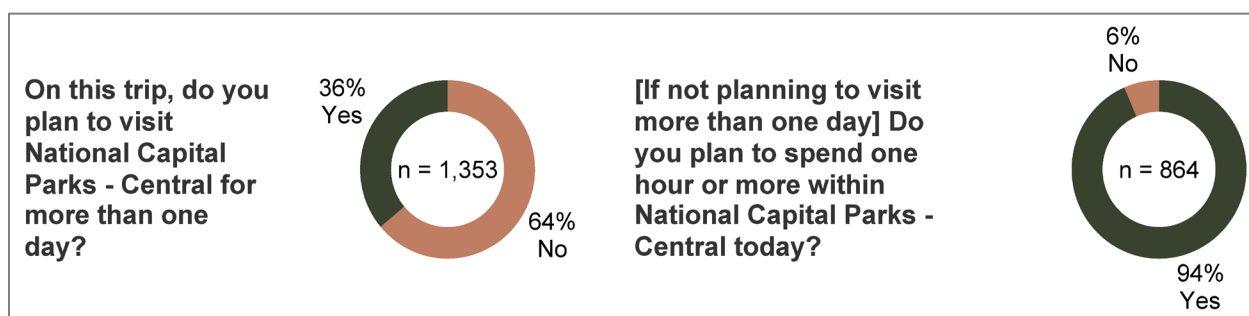


Figure 9. Duration of the respondent's trip to National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

Table 7. Amount of time spent within National Capital Parks-Central.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within National Capital Parks-Central today?	56	4	59	33
[If planning to spend less than a day, but one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within National Capital Parks-Central today?	805	1	14	3
[If planning to visit at least one day] How many days do you plan to spend within National Capital Parks-Central on this trip?	489	1	365	2
[If planning to visit at least one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	488	1	365	2

- While visiting National Capital Parks-Central, most visitors (64%) did not plan to spend more than one day in the park.
- Among the 64% of visitors who did not spend more than a day in National Capital Parks-Central, most (94%) 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 36% of visitors planned to visit for more than one day; among those visitors, the median length of stay was 2 days.
- Those respondents who spent at least one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was 2 days.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within National Capital Parks-Central and asked to indicate if they had been to, or planned to visit them, that day (Figure 10).

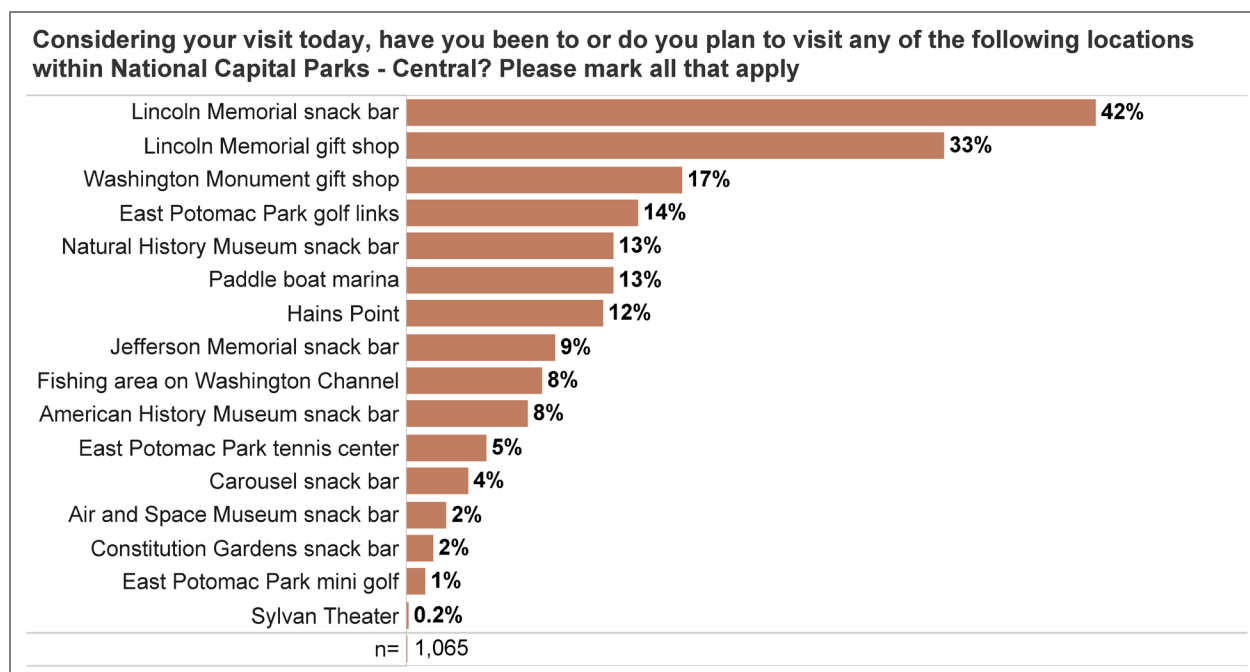


Figure 10. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to National Capital Parks-Central.
NPS

- The most commonly visited location in National Capital Parks-Central was the Lincoln Memorial snack bar (42% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by the Lincoln Memorial gift shop (33%) and the Washington Monument gift shop (17%).
- The Sylvan Theater was the least-visited location from the list provided, with only 0.2% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit.

Question 14: Transportation

Visitors were asked about the form of transportation they used to enter National Capital Parks-Central on the day they were surveyed (Figure 11).

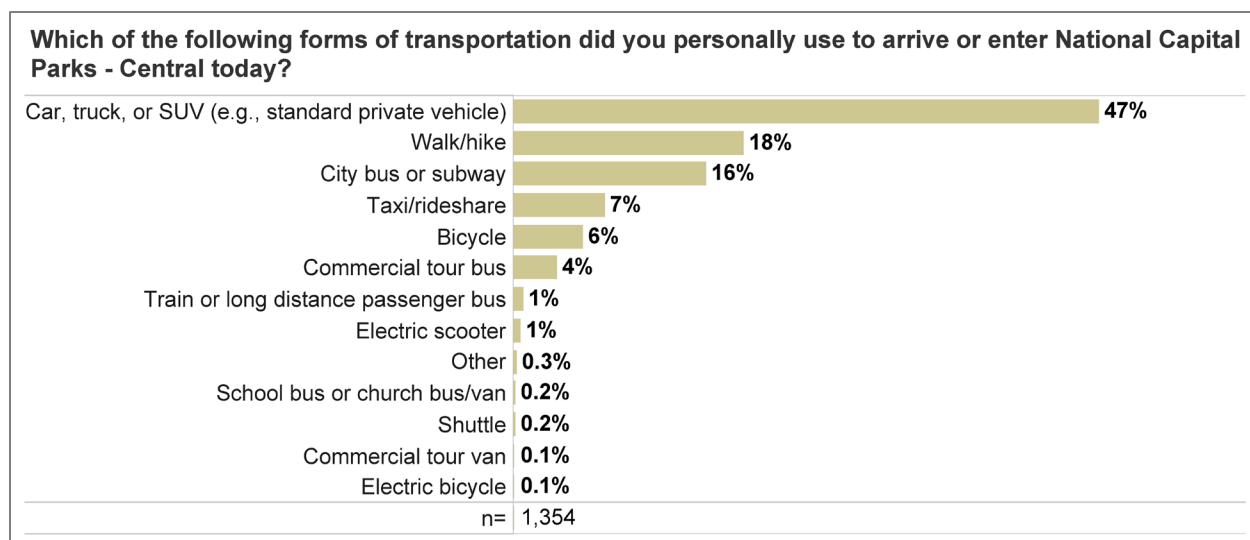


Figure 11. Form of transportation used to enter National Capital Parks-Central on the day of the survey.
NPS

- A plurality of respondents (47%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter National Capital Parks-Central on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by walking or hiking (18%), and city bus or subway (16%).

If respondents entered the park using a car, truck or SUV, they were asked to indicate how many people were traveling in that vehicle (Figure 12).

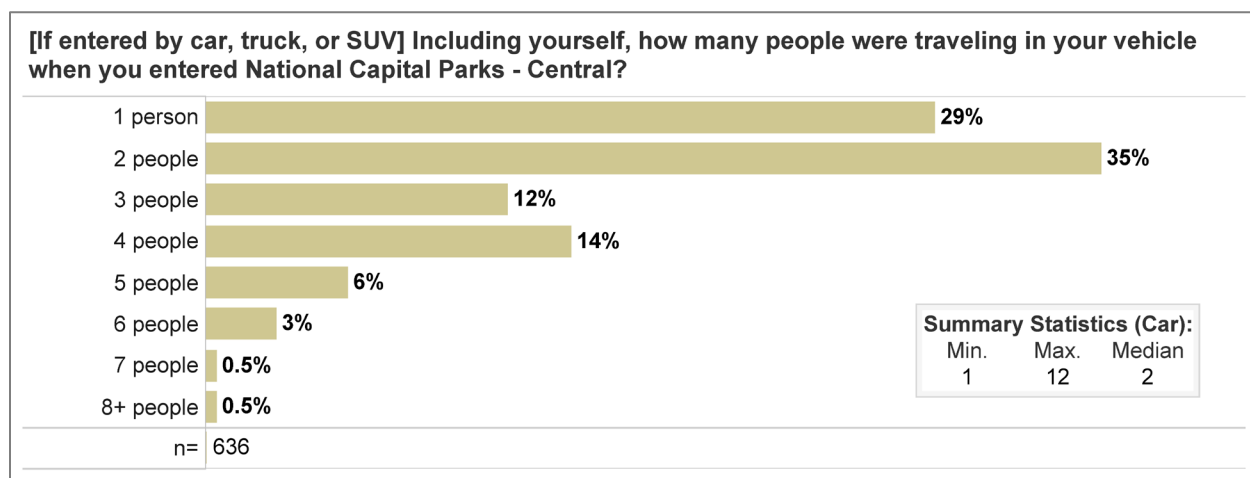


Figure 12. Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 10](#).

NPS

- Just over one-third of respondents (35%) traveling by car reported two people. The next common group size was 1 person (29%), followed by 4 people (14%).

Question 16: Previous Visits to National Capital Parks-Central

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

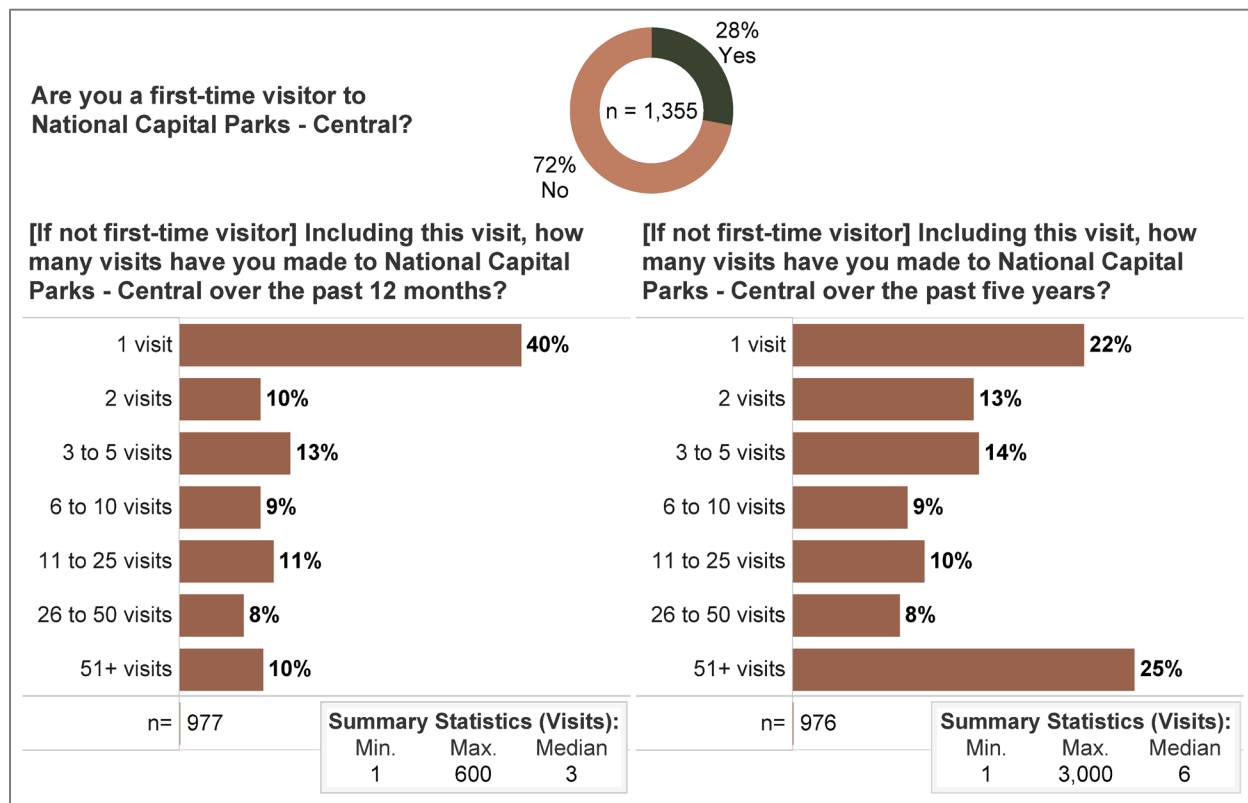


Figure 13. Previous visits to National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 11](#).

NPS

- Just over a quarter of respondents (28%) were on their first ever trip to National Capital Parks-Central.
- Among the 72% of respondents who were repeat visitors, a plurality (40%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).
- However, the majority of repeat visitors (78%) had visited at least one prior time in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was 6, including the current trip; 43% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past five 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).

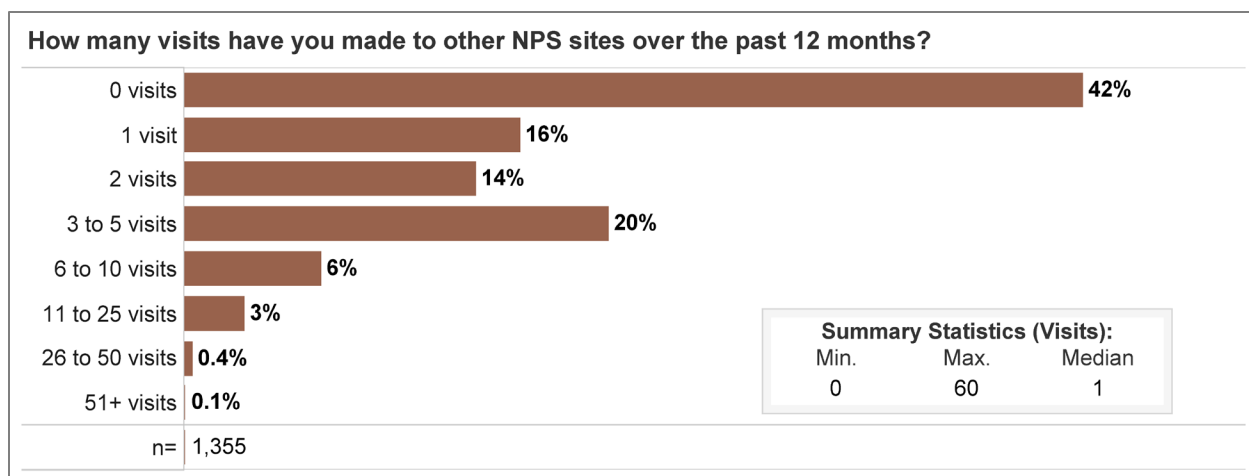


Figure 14. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 12](#).

NPS

- A majority of visitors (58%) 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 29.5% had made 3 or more visits in the past year.

Follow-Up Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 174 follow-up visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about National Capital Parks-Central prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 15).

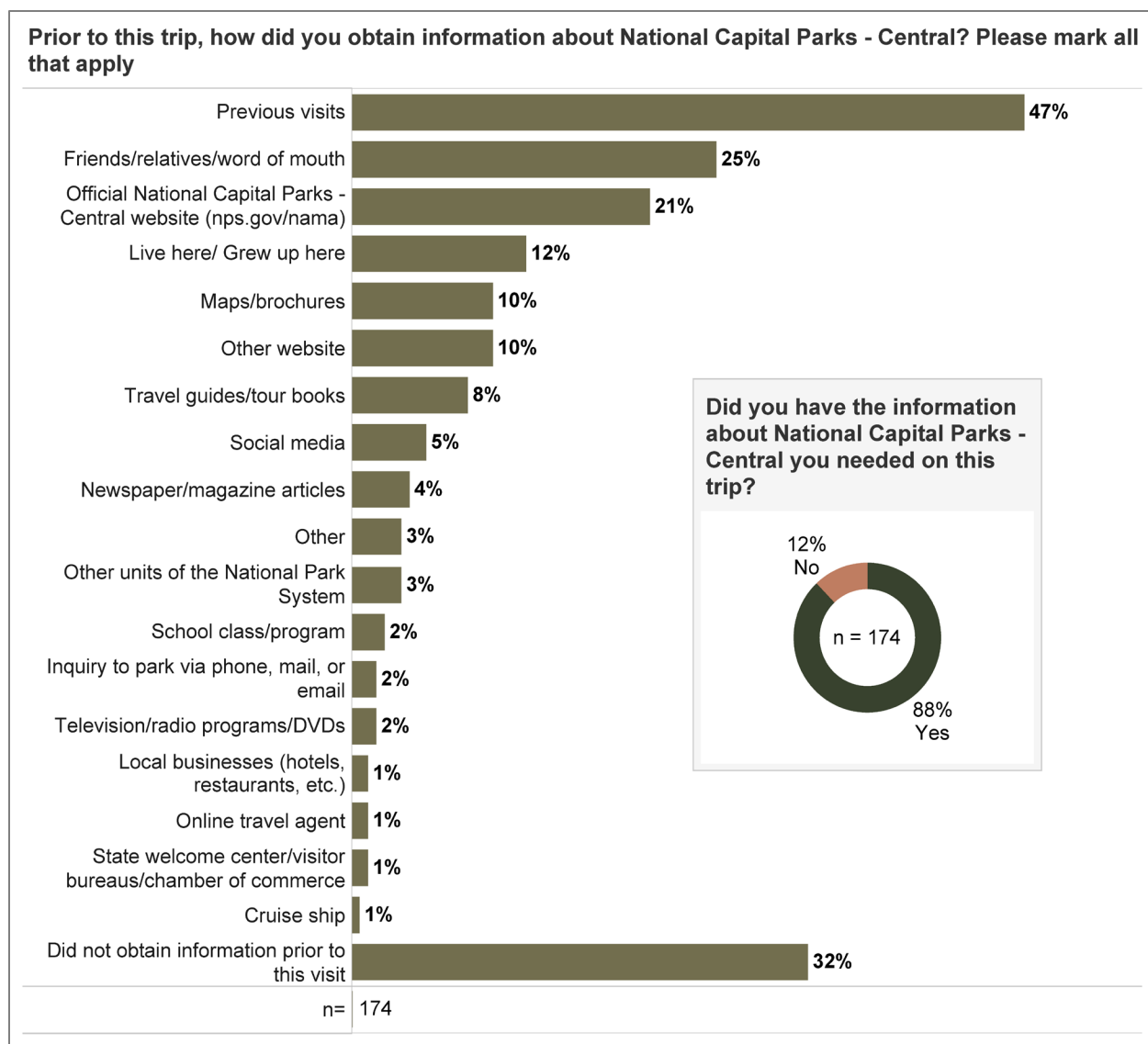


Figure 15. Sources used to obtain information about National Capital Parks-Central prior to the trip.
NPS

- The most used resource was a previous visit, with 47% of respondents reportedly using it. The second most common source was friends/relatives/word of mouth (25%), followed by the official National Capital Parks-Central website (21%), live here/grew up here (12%), maps and brochures (10%), and other websites (10%).
- In a follow-up question, 88% of respondents said that they had the information about National Capital Parks-Central that they needed on their trip, while 12% 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 National Capital Parks-Central on their trip (Figure 16).

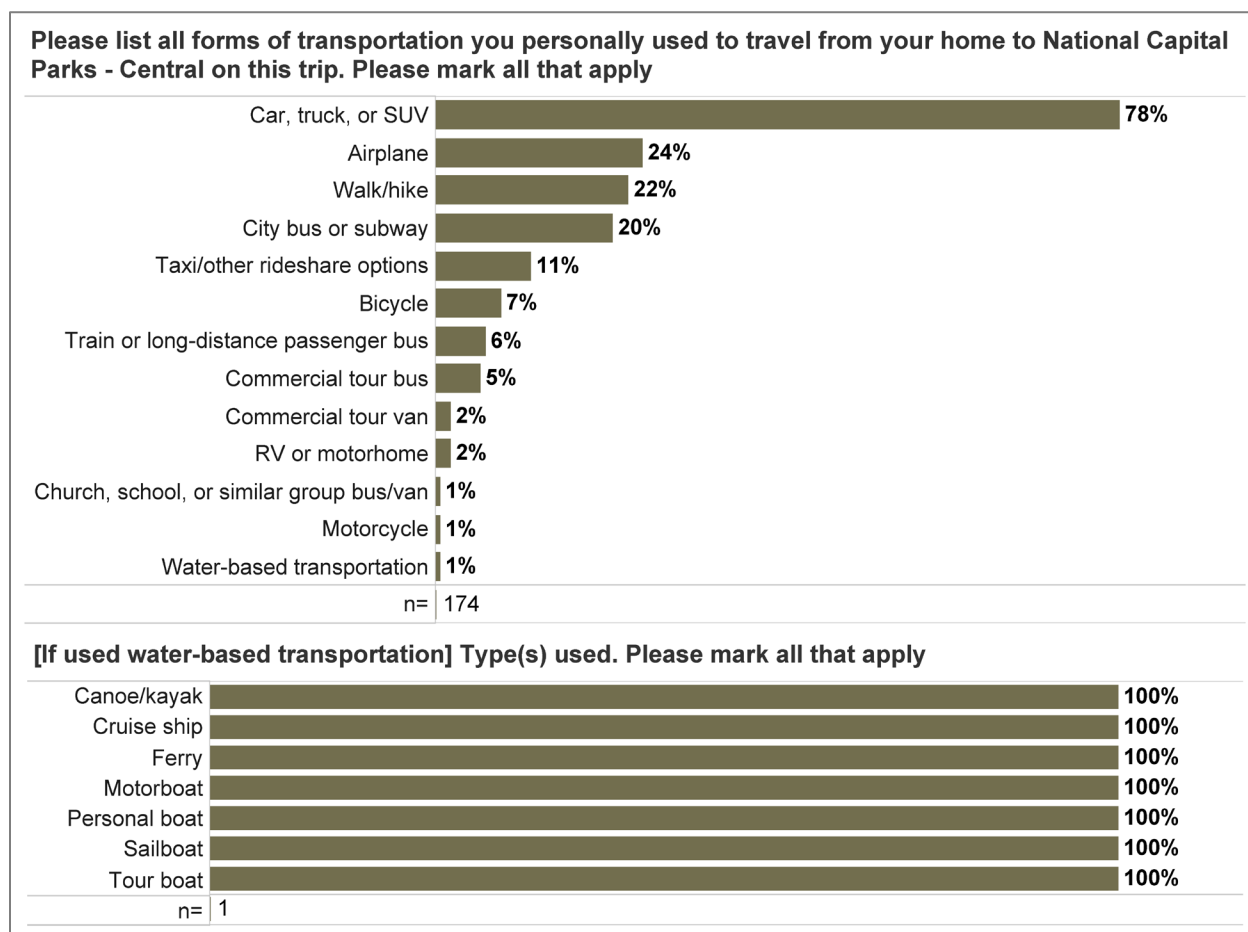


Figure 16. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to National Capital Parks-Central on the recent trip.

NPS

- About 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 National Capital Parks-Central.
- The second most common mode of travel was an airplane (24%), followed by walking or hiking (22%), and city bus or subway (20%).

Question 4: Travel Party Composition

Respondents were asked what type of group they were with during their visit to National Capital Parks-Central on the day of the survey (Figure 17).

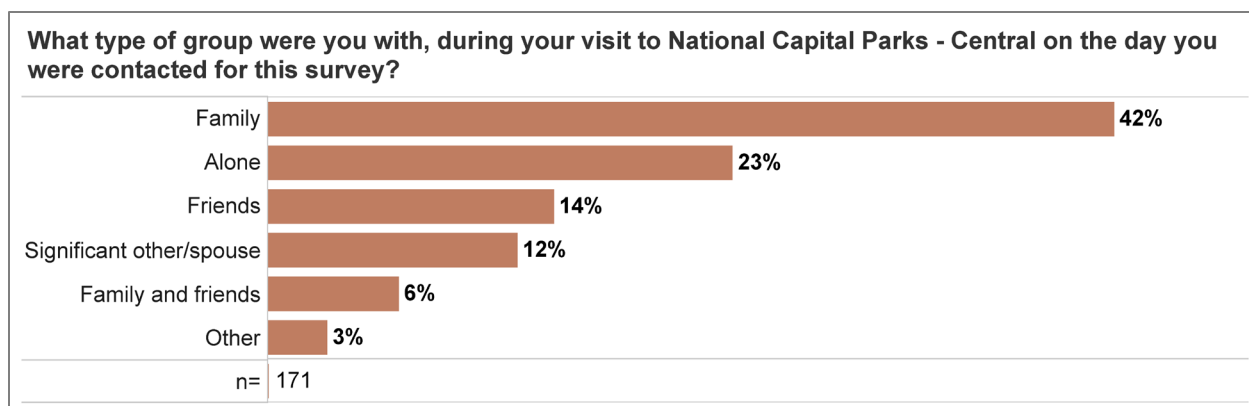


Figure 17. Travel party composition during National Capital Parks-Central visit.

NPS

- A plurality of respondents (42%) visited National Capital Parks-Central with their family on the day of the survey.
- Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) explored National Capital Parks-Central alone, and another 14% 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 National Capital Parks-Central² (Figure 18).

² National Capital Parks-Central does not charge an entrance fee. However, this question was asked as part of the standard survey fielded at units across the NPS system.

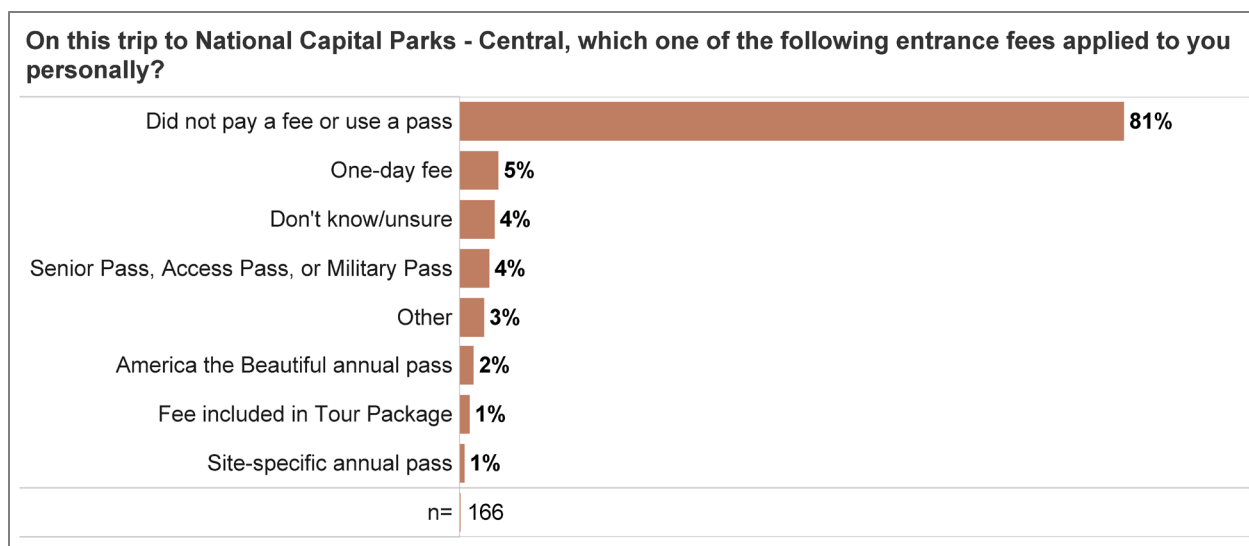


Figure 18. Entrance fees to enter National Capital Parks-Central on the most recent trip.

NPS

- Most respondents (81%) reported not paying a fee or using a pass.
- In contrast, small percentages of respondents (5% or less for each option) reported paying one form of fee or using a pass.

Questions 12–14: Trip Characteristics

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

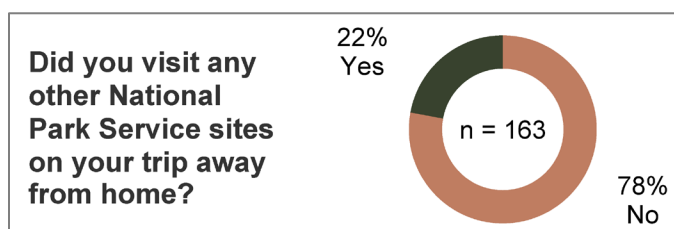


Figure 19. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

NPS

- Nearly a quarter (22%) of all respondents had visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 78% identified National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 20).

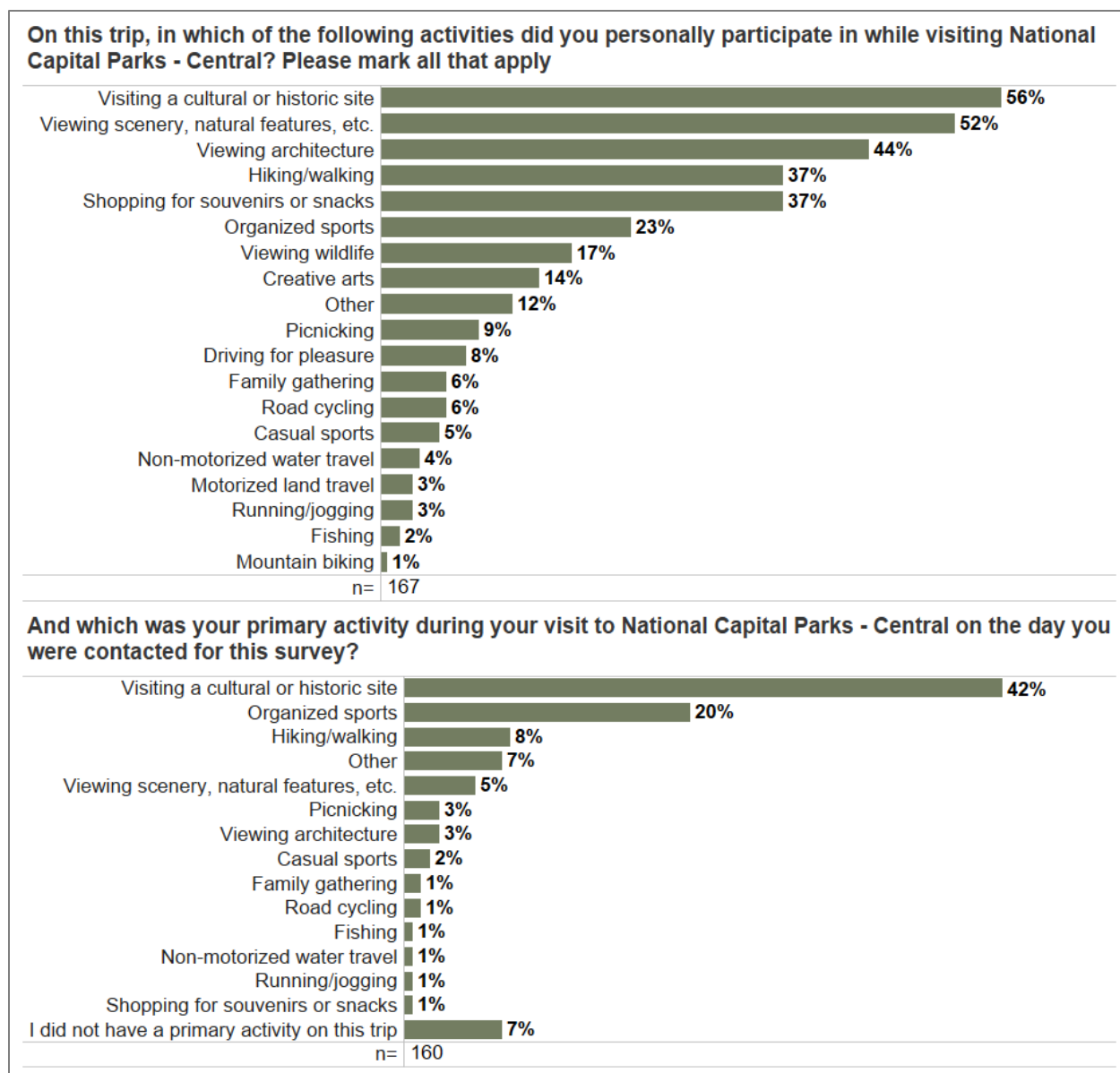


Figure 20. Participation in activities at National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- A majority of visitors reported visiting a cultural or historic site (56%), and viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (52%).
- Mountain biking, fishing, running/jogging, motorized land travel, and casual sports were all uncommon activities (reported by 5% or fewer of respondents for each activity).
- A plurality of respondents (42%) reported visiting a cultural or historic site as their primary activity, followed by organized sports (20%).

Questions 15–16: Reasons to Visit

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

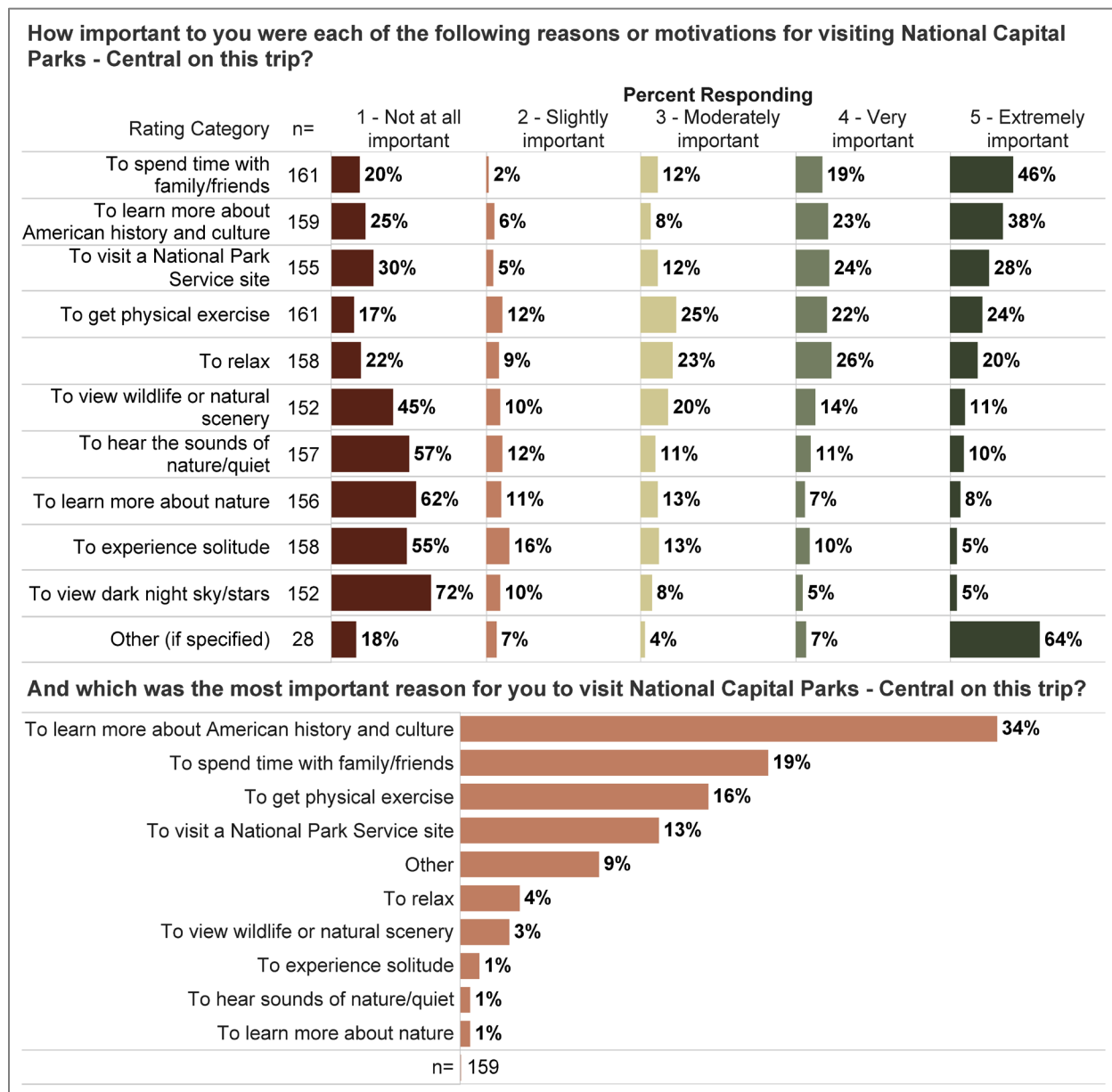


Figure 21. Reasons or motivations to visit National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 13](#).

NPS

- Nearly half of visitors chose to spend time with family/friends (46%) as an extremely important reason for their trip to National Capital Parks-Central.

- Other important reasons were to learn more about American history and culture and to visit a National Park Service site (38% and 28% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons were to view dark night skies and to experience solitude (only 5% of respondents reported them as extremely important, and 72% and 55% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).
- The most common response about the most important reason for visiting National Capital Parks-Central was to learn more about American history and culture (34%), followed by to spend time with family and friends (19%), to get physical exercise (16%), and to visit a National Park Service site (13%).

Questions 17–19: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services that they personally participated in in National Capital Parks-Central during their trip (Figure 22).

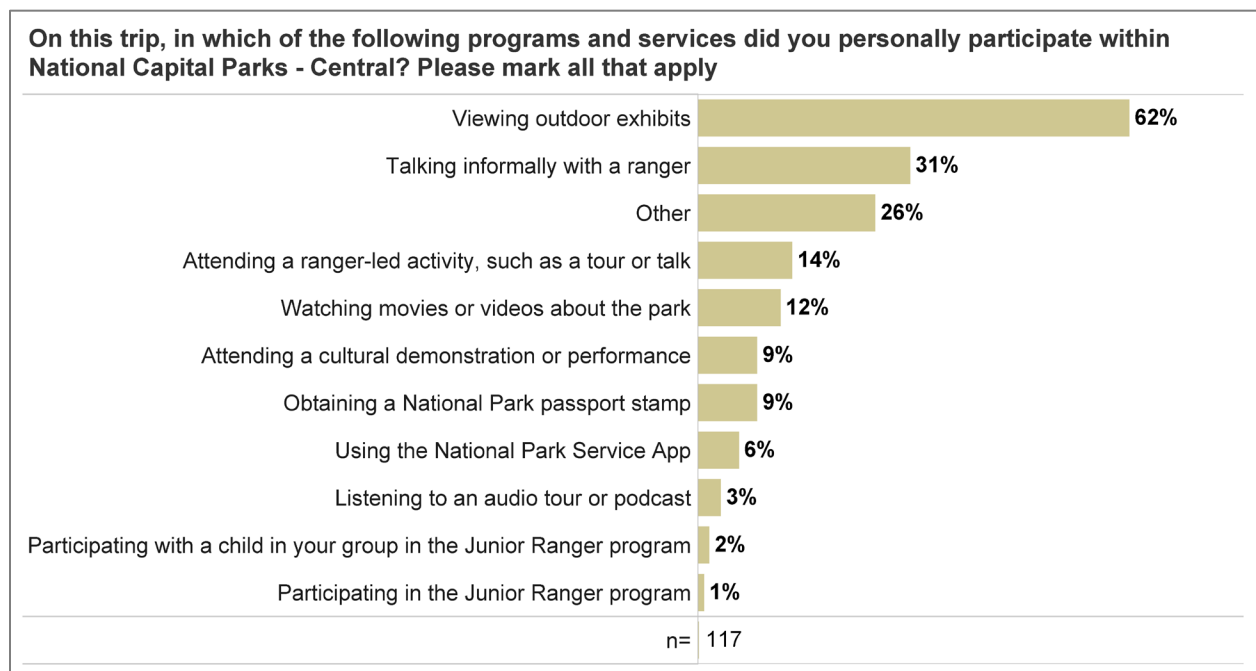


Figure 22. Programs participated while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- The two most-used programs were viewing outdoor exhibits and talking informally with a ranger, with 62% and 31% of respondents reporting participating in each of them respectively.

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).

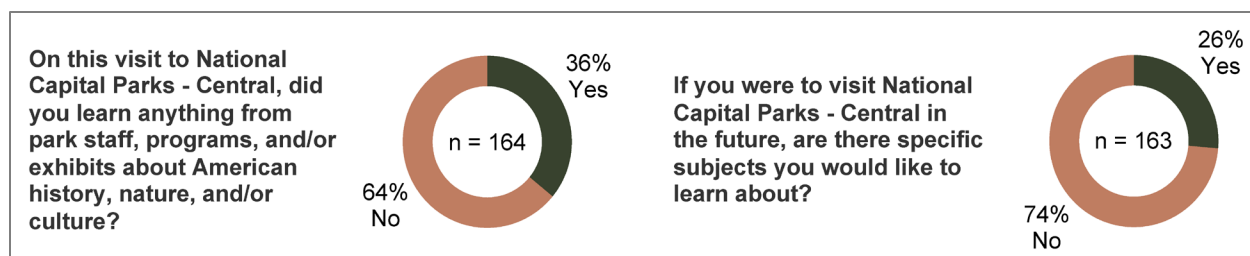


Figure 23. Learning.

NPS

- Over one-third of respondents (36%) reported that they learned something from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture.
- About a quarter of respondents (26%) reported that if they were to visit National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central (Figure 24).

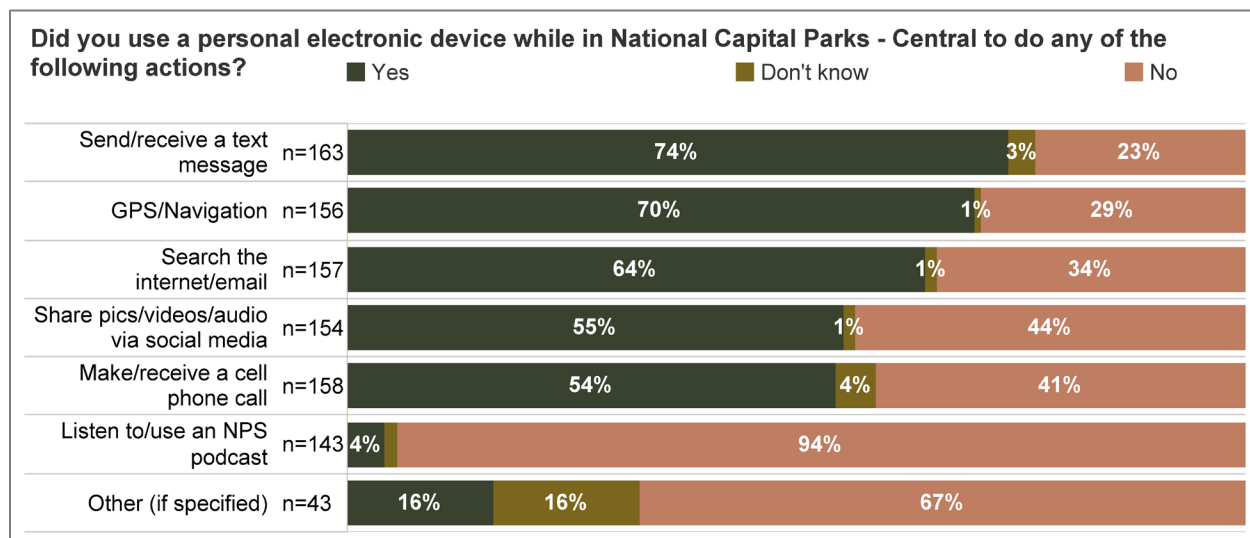


Figure 24. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 14](#).

NPS

- A majority of respondents (74%) reported sending or receiving a text message, using GPS/Navigation (70%), searching the internet/email (64%), sharing pictures/videos/audio via social media (55%), and making or receiving a cell phone call (54%).

- 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).

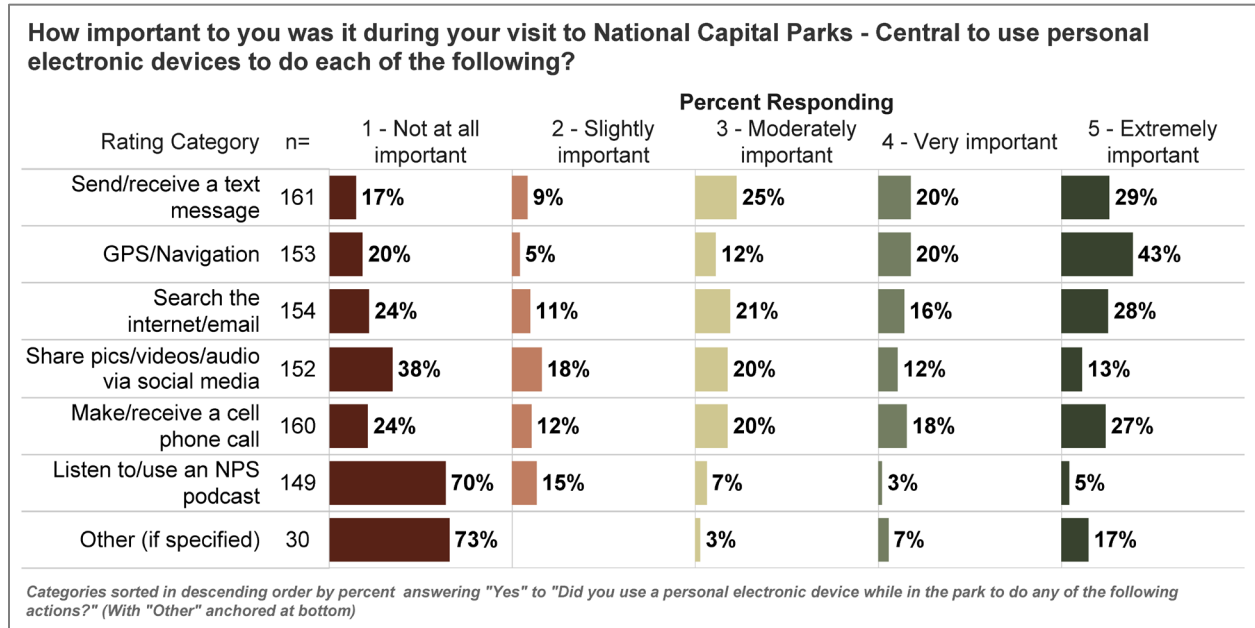


Figure 25. The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 15](#).

NPS

- The most important device uses were GPS/Navigation and sending/receiving a text message (43% and 29% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Listening to and using an NPS podcast was rated as extremely important only by 5% of respondents, and not at all important by 70% of respondents.

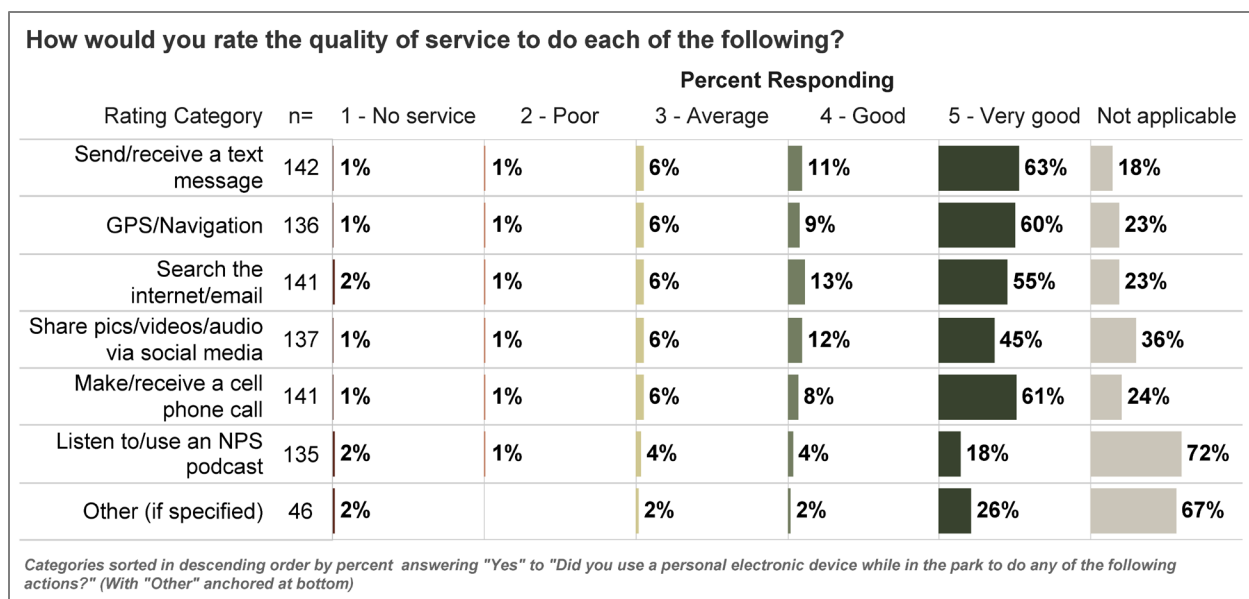


Figure 26. Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 16](#).

NPS

- Sending/receiving a text message was rated as very good or good by 63% and 11% of respondents, respectively. A very small percentage (1%) of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- Only a small percentage of respondents (ranging from 1% to 2%, depending on the service) reported that they had no service for any of the electronic devices listed.

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 National Capital Parks-Central. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 27).

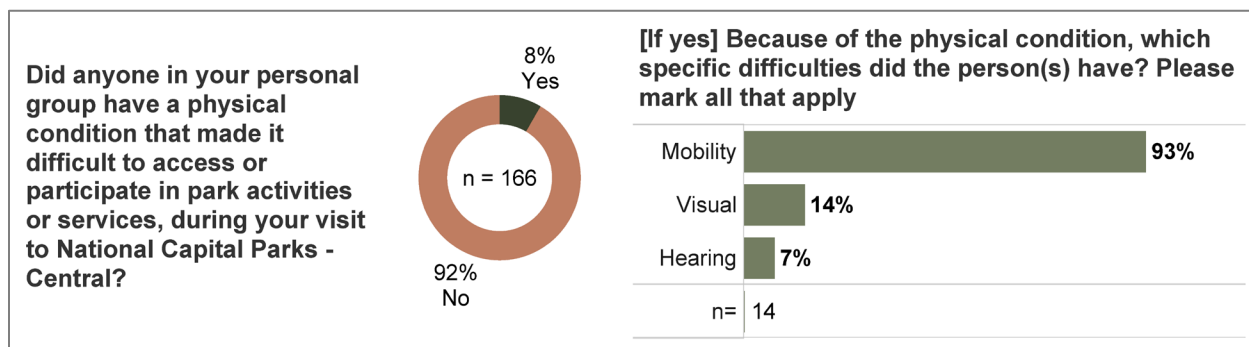


Figure 27. Physical difficulties while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (92%) 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 National Capital Parks-Central.
- Among the 8% of visitors who identified at least one difficulty, 93% 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 National Capital Parks-Central met their expectations (Figure 28).

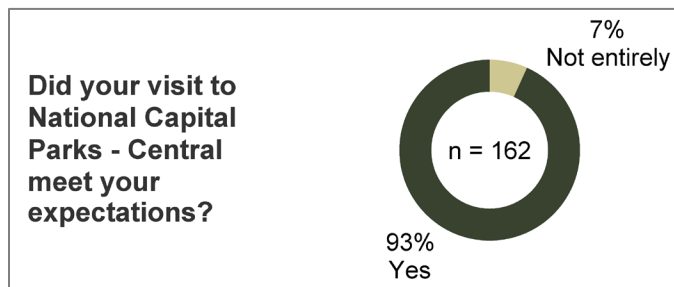


Figure 28. Meeting National Capital Parks-Central expectations.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (93%) reported that their visit to National Capital Parks-Central met their expectations, while 7% 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 National Capital Parks-Central 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 National Capital Parks-Central and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 29).

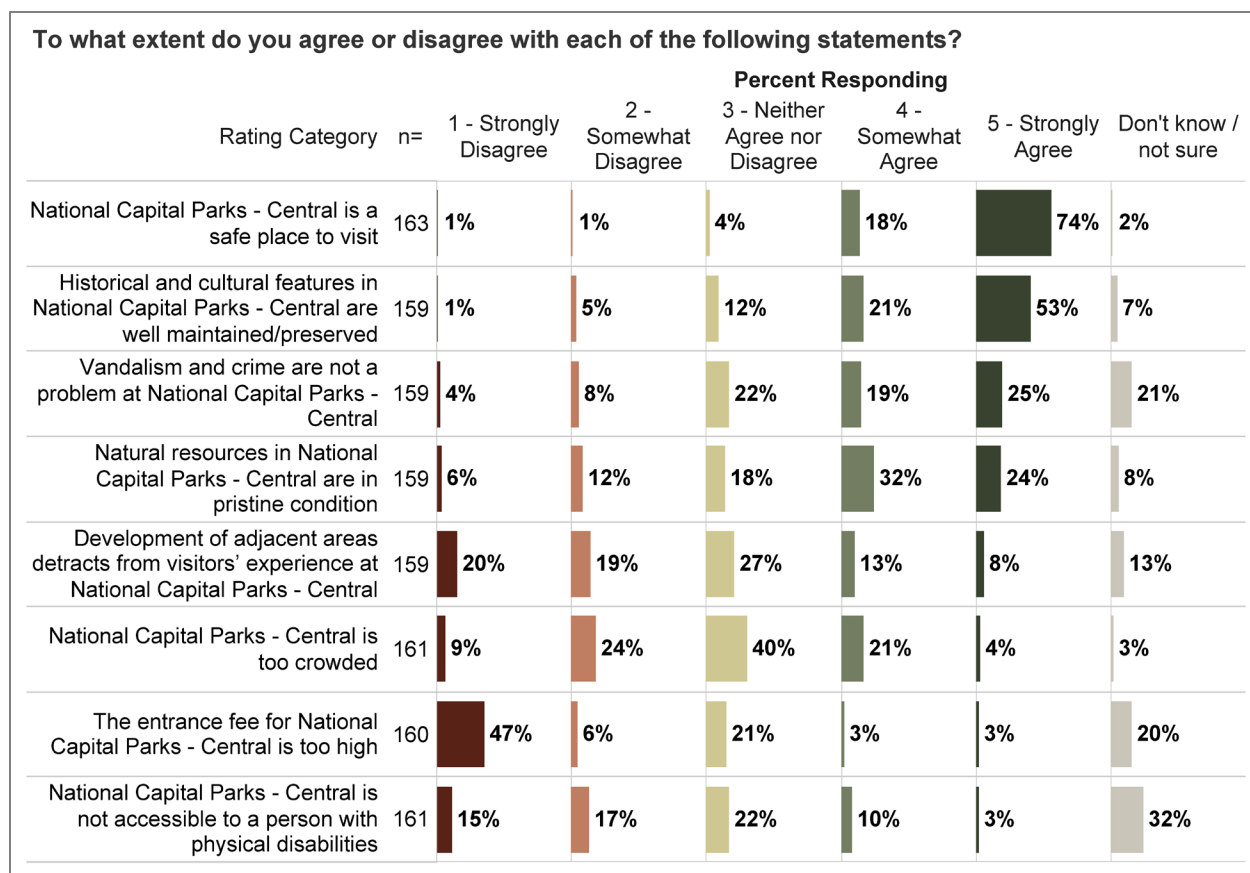


Figure 29. Rating National Capital Parks-Central experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 17](#).

NPS

- From all the statements listed, “National Capital Parks-Central is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 92% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “historical and cultural features in National Capital Parks-Central are well maintained and preserved” (74% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “the entrance fee for National Capital Parks-Central is too high” received the least support, with only 6% of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreeing with this statement, and nearly half (47%) of respondents strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in National Capital Parks-Central (Figure 30).

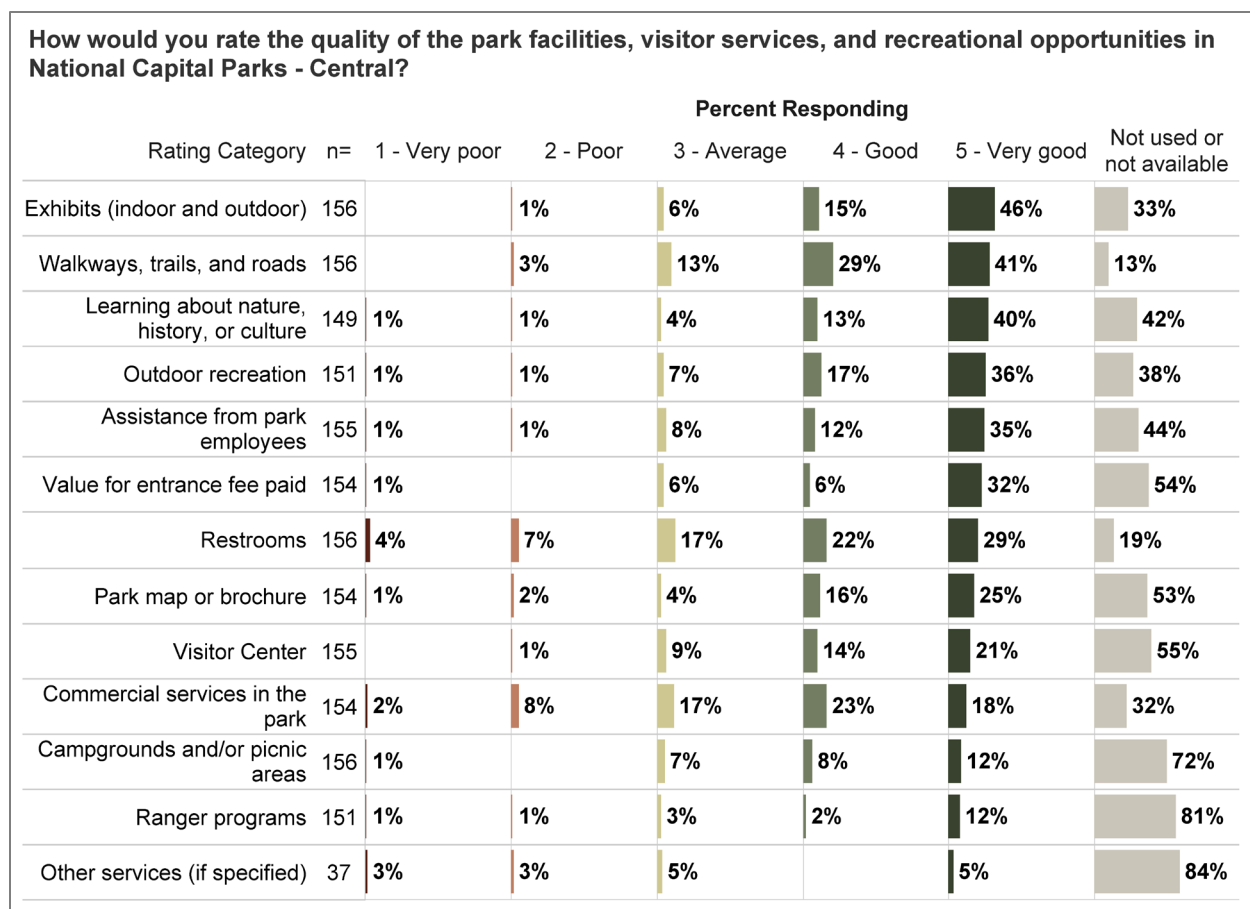


Figure 30. Rating the quality of National Capital Parks-Central facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 18](#).

NPS

- Nearly half of visitors (ranging from 40% to 46%) rated indoor and outdoor exhibits, walkways, trails, and roads, and learning about nature, history, or culture as very good.
- A majority of visitors (ranging from 54% to 84%) indicated that many of the facilities and services listed were not used or not available.

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

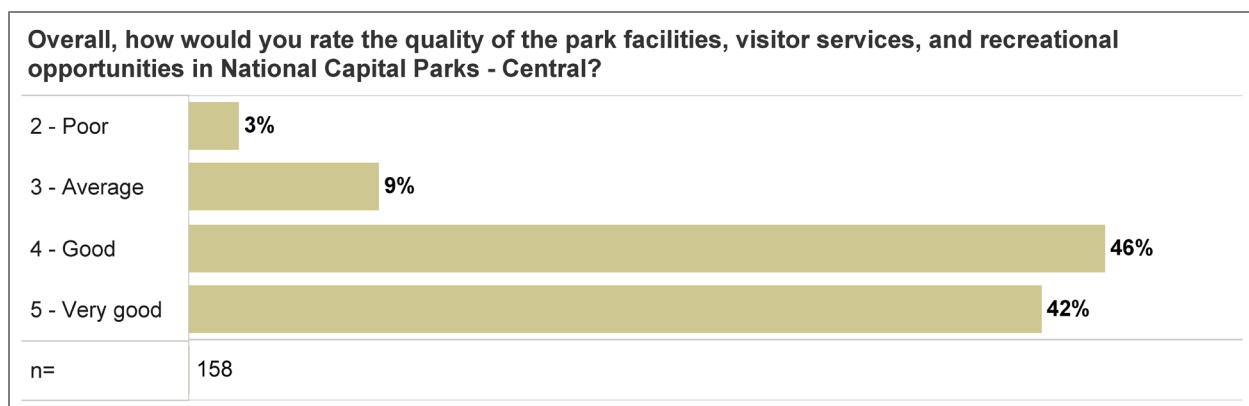


Figure 31. Rating overall quality of National Capital Parks-Central facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

NPS

- In general, about half of respondents (42%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in National Capital Parks-Central as very good, and another 46% 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 32 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent gender, age, and education.

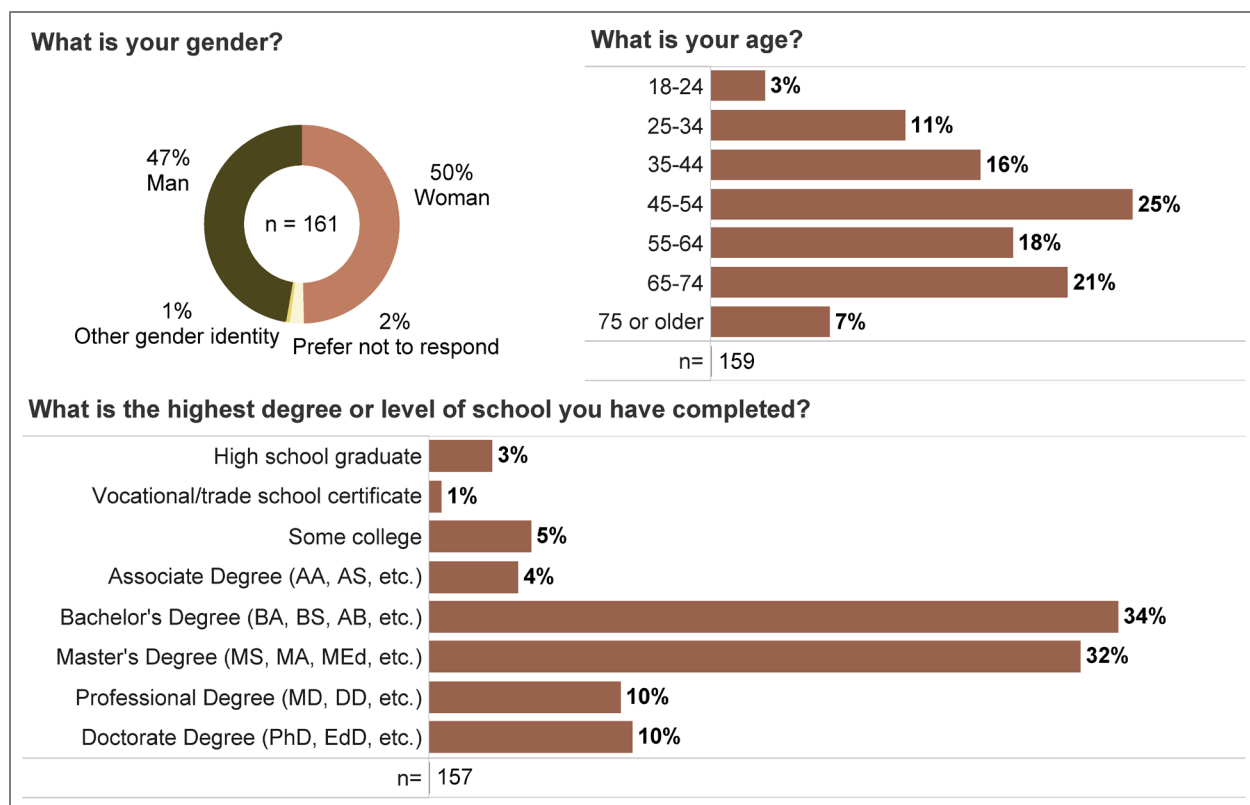


Figure 32. Respondent demographics: gender, age, and level of education.

NPS

- Follow-up survey respondents were slightly more likely to be women than men, though the sample was relatively balanced (50% vs. 47%). Another 1% had another gender identity, while 2% preferred not to disclose their gender identity.
- The most common age categories were 45–54 (25%), 65–74 (21%), and 55–64 (18%). The least represented age group was 18–24 (only 3% of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents were highly educated, with a combined 90% having some college degree, and a majority (52%) holding a master's degree or higher.

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

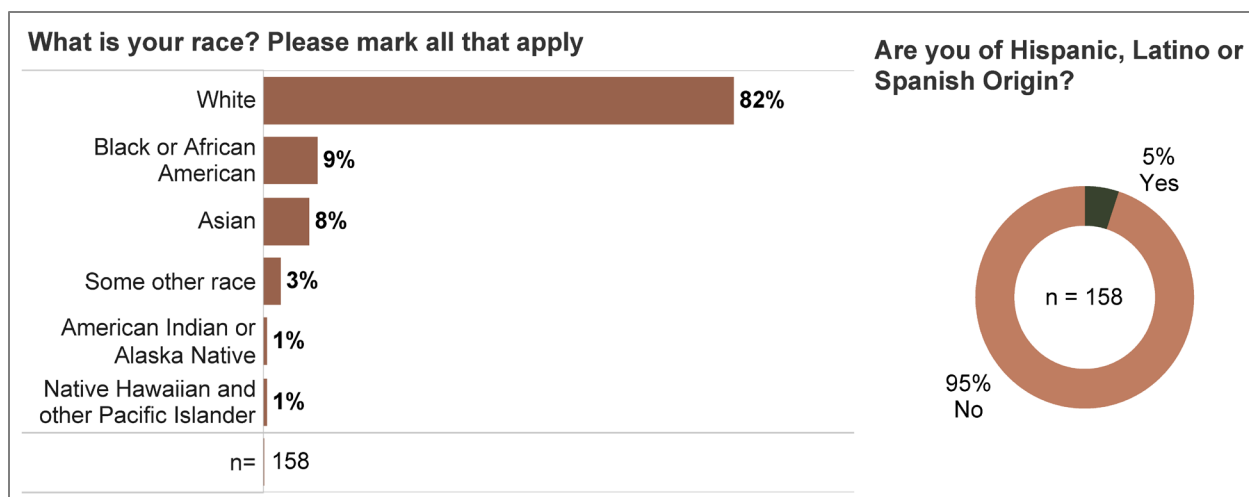


Figure 33. Respondent demographics: race and ethnicity.

NPS

- The majority of respondents (82%) were White, while 9% were Black or African American.
- Most respondents (95%) 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).

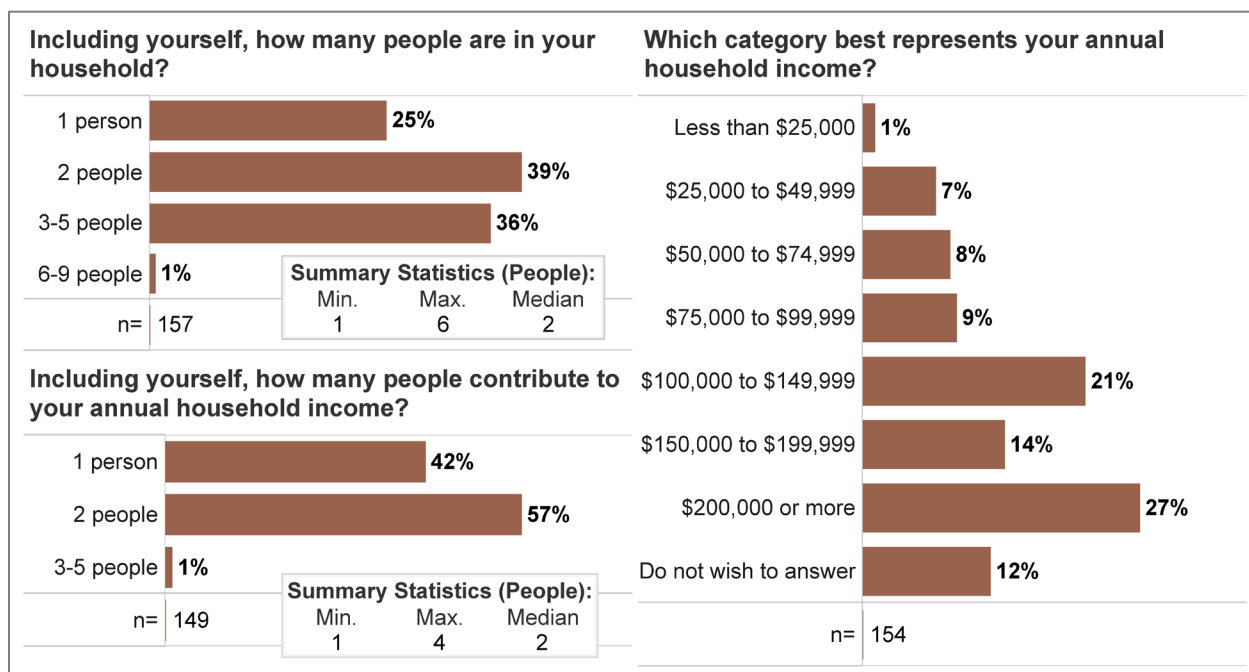


Figure 34. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in [Appendix A, Table 19](#).

NPS

- Over one-third of respondents (39%) had 2 people in their household, followed by 3–5 people (another 36%).
- In addition to being highly educated, National Capital Parks-Central visitors are also relatively affluent. About one in five respondents (21%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999, and another 27% earned \$200,000 or more.
- Most respondents (57%) came from a dual-income household.

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

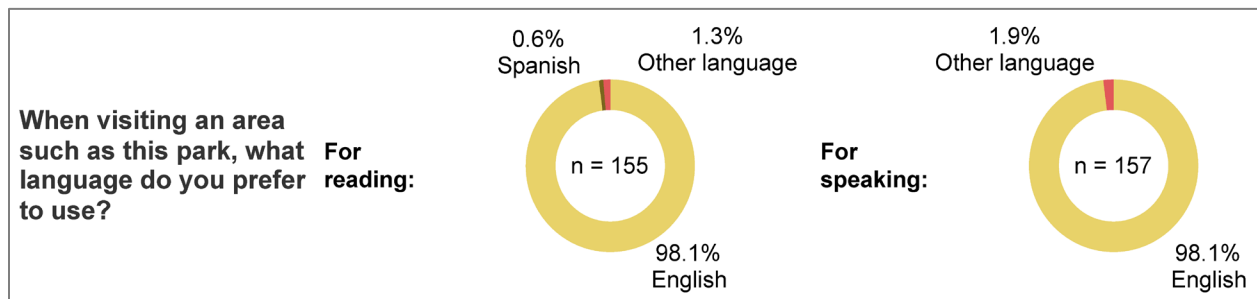


Figure 35. Respondent's language preference.

NPS

- While 5% of respondents were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, the overwhelming majority of respondents (98.1%) preferred to use English both for reading and speaking when visiting an area such as National Capital Parks-Central.
- Only 0.6% of respondents preferred Spanish for either reading and/or speaking.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2022. 2022 Socioeconomic Monitoring of National Capital Parks-Central: Visitor Intercept and Post-Trip Surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2318676>

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 National Capital Parks-Central, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Camping outside National Capital Parks-Central	9	2	30	5
Lodging outside National Capital Parks-Central	594	1	365	3
Unpaid accommodations	80	1	60	4

Table 9. Data from [Figure 7](#). Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

Group Composition	n	Min.	Max.	Median
Adults	1354	1	150	2
Children	1354	0	29	0

Table 10. Data from [Figure 12](#). Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering National Capital Parks-Central.

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 National Capital Parks-Central?	636	1	12	2

Table 11. Data from [Figure 13](#). Previous visits to National Capital Parks-Central.

Question	n	Min.	Max.	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to National Capital Parks-Central over the past 12 months?	977	1	600	3
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to National Capital Parks-Central over the past five years?	976	1	3000	6

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?	1355	0	60	1

Table 13. Data from [Figure 21](#). Reasons or motivations to visit National Capital Parks-Central.

Rating Category	n
To visit a National Park Service site	155
To experience solitude	158
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	157
To learn more about nature	156
To learn more about American history and culture	159
To spend time with family/friends	161
To get physical exercise	161
To view wildlife or natural scenery	152
To relax	158
To view dark night sky/stars	152
Other (if specified)	28

Table 14. Data from [Figure 24](#). Use of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	158
Send/receive a text message	163
Search the internet/email	157
GPS/Navigation	156
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	154
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	143
Other (if specified)	43

Table 15. Data from [Figure 25](#). The importance of use of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	160
Send/receive a text message	161
Search the internet/email	154
GPS/Navigation	153
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	152
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	149
Other (if specified)	30

Table 16. Data from [Figure 26](#). Quality of service of personal electronic devices while visiting National Capital Parks-Central.

Device Use	n
Make/receive a cell phone call	141
Send/receive a text message	142
Search the internet/email	141
GPS/Navigation	136
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	137
Listen to/use an NPS podcast	135
Other (if specified)	46

Table 17. Data from [Figure 29](#). Rating National Capital Parks-Central experience.

Rating Category	n
National Capital Parks-Central is a safe place to visit	163
National Capital Parks-Central is too crowded	161
Natural resources in National Capital Parks-Central are in pristine condition	159
The entrance fee for National Capital Parks-Central is too high	160
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at National Capital Parks-Central	159
National Capital Parks-Central is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	161
Historical and cultural features in National Capital Parks-Central are well maintained/preserved	159
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at National Capital Parks-Central	159

Table 18. Data from [Figure 30](#). Rating the quality of National Capital Parks-Central facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	n
Visitor Center	155
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	156
Restrooms	156
Walkways, trails, and roads	156
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	156
Assistance from park employees	155
Park map or brochure	154
Ranger programs	151
Value for entrance fee paid	154
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	154
Other services (if specified)	37
Learning about nature, history, or culture	149
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	151

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?	157	1	6	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	149	1	4	2

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Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

1201 Oakridge Drive, Suite 150
Fort Collins, CO 80525