

**Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure
for Jacob Riis Park
Gateway National Recreation Area**

FINAL REPORT

**By the Public Space Research Group,
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INTRODUCTION

The intent of Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures (REAP) is to provide ethnographic information on local populations in order to "evaluate alternatives and assess planning impacts on ethnographic resources and associated user groups" (NPS-28 draft, p. 196). Ethnography is concerned with the peoples associated with parks, with their cultural systems or ways of life, and with the related sites, structures, material features, and natural resources. Cultural systems include expressive elements that celebrate or record significant events and many carry considerable symbolic and emotional importance for local cultural groups (NPS-28, p. 165.)

The REAP is a collaborative process that requires the participation of community members to promote an ongoing dialogue between the community and park managers. The main focus is to collect data on and establish ties to local neighborhood and cultural groups who would not otherwise have a voice in the park design and assessment process. REAP is distinctive as an information-gathering tool in that it focuses on park users and local stakeholders who are not necessarily members of formally organized groups.

The REAP report is conceptually different from other kinds of research documents in that it is a reflection of the local community's perspective. To that end, the interpretation of historical and sociocultural data is based on the community's point of view, rather than solely on institutionally and/or professionally produced analyses. In some cases, the conclusions may vary from those drawn by other professional and political groups or associations whose voices are already included.

REAP's are different for each site; they present a "snapshot" of the communities studied at one point in time. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the communities are frozen in time. A REAP, therefore, is always limited by its scope, methodology, time frame, and the degree of change being experienced by the identified communities.

Jacob A. Riis Park, Gateway National Recreation Area, is currently undertaking a series of renovations and considering the redesign of various areas of the beach and picnic areas. This REAP, therefore, is designed to provide a general overview of park-associated cultural groups, including an analysis of their concerns and the identification of cultural and natural resources used by and/or culturally meaningful to the various groups. The information gathered by the REAP will assist managers in evaluating alternatives and requests for access, as well as in assessing potential impacts on the cultural systems of local populations of changes in park design, use and programs.

METHODOLOGY

Human Subjects Procedure

The research team is well aware of the importance of representing people as they want to be represented, while at the same time maintaining research objectivity and integrity. The sensitivity of issues such as cultural background and park preferences required that all data collected be confidential and written consent forms used when conducting an interview that was taped or whenever a consultant wanted to have his/her perspective presented with his/her name and affiliation (see Appendix I for the consent form). Further, the field notes kept by the

researchers used pseudonyms when permission to use names was not given and a code list of names was maintained separately.

Research Questions

Four research questions were addressed:

1. What are the demographic, cultural, and socioeconomic characteristics of contemporary park users at Jacob Riis Park?
2. What values are ascribed to the various geographic areas of Jacob Riis Park and adjacent areas by diverse groups of park users? How are these areas actually used?
3. How do the diverse groups of park users perceive and value traditional park activities, programs, concessions, and facilities?
4. What factors enhance or impede enjoyment of Riis Park and adjacent areas (shade, cost, accessibility, concessions, swimming, NPS presence)?

A number of Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure (REAP) methods were used during the various phases of the research process. Each generated a different type of data to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the site. A description of each method is presented, followed by a chart that presents the product and outcome of each.

Behavioral Maps

Behavioral maps record people and their activities located in time and space. Such maps arrange data in a way that permits planning and design analyses of the site, and are very useful in developing familiarity with the everyday activities and problems of a site. They are most effectively used in limited park areas with a variety of social and economic uses where the researcher can return repeatedly to the various social spaces during the day.

Transect Walks

A transect walk is a record of what a community consultant describes and comments upon during a guided walk of the site. The idea is to include one or two community members from each cultural group as research team members, in order to learn about the site from the community member's point of view. The researchers ask community members who are interested in the research process to participate in these transect walks. With a map and tape recorder in hand the researcher asks her/him to describe the site--are there any special places? special events? historical areas? culturally significant areas? favorite spots for resting, reading or drinking? trysting places? Maps, field notes, and audio tapes when possible are collected for each consultant.

Interviews

Individual Interviews. Individual interviews based on the Interview Schedule (Appendix 2.) were completed in Spanish, Russian or English, depending on the preference of the interviewee. The interviewers had a map of the park available for noting any specific site and to stimulate discussion about Jacob Riis Park. Our goal was to involve and educate as well as to interview community members about the park design process.

We collected 131 interviews, divided almost equally among the original six sites (see Appendix 3 for interview data summary). The sites identified during our initial meeting and subsequent telephone consultations included: Bay 1, Bays 5-6, and Bay 14 and three designated picnic areas: "the Mall," "the Clock," and "Wood Park," named for the closest landmark. The sites

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were selected to represent the different cultural, ethnic, and activity-based groups that use the park. The final questions were approved in a meeting with park staff on June 28, 2000. The interim report was approved on July 25, 2000.

Expert Interviews. Expert interviews were collected from park staff and volunteers identified as having special expertise to comment on current park problems. These interviews were completed during the first week of the project to help identify park concerns and problem areas.

Other methods. Historical and archival work accompanied all phases of the study. Documents available at the park were reviewed and included in a summary history section of this report.

Mode of Analysis

The data were organized by coding all responses from the interviews, and then content-analyzed by cultural group and study question. The combination of mapping, transect walks, individual and expert interviews provided independent bodies of data that were compared and contrasted. The different interview sites within the park provided another basis of comparison. As in all ethnographic research, interviews, observations, field notes, as well as knowledge of cultural group patterns and local politics, were used to interpret the data. Table 1 summarizes the methods, data collected, time frame for data collection, and what was learned from each of the REAP methods.

TABLE 1. METHOD, DATA, DURATION, PRODUCT, AND WHAT CAN BE LEARNED

METHODS	DATA	DURATION	PRODUCT	WHAT CAN BE LEARNED
Behavioral Mapping	Time/space maps of sites, field notes	5 days	Description of daily activities on sites	Identifies cultural activities on site
Transect walks	Transcribed interviews and consultant's map of site, field notes	3 days	Description of site from community member's point of view	Community-centered understanding of the site; local meaning; identification of sacred places
Individual Interviews	Interview sheets, field notes	20 days	Description of responses of the cultural groups	Community responses and interest in the park
Expert Interviews	In-depth interview transcriptions	5 days	Description of responses of local institutions and community leaders	Community leaders' interest in park planning process

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Jacob Riis Park as we know it is a product of the career of Robert Moses, the great builder of parks and roads and wielder of political power in mid-20th century New York. The kinds of parks that were built in Metropolitan New York and the places chosen to build them from the 1920s through the 1960s were the personal choices of Robert Moses. Moses loved the salt water and loved swimming in it. He particularly loved the south shore of Long Island, which he favored with a series of parks facing ocean and bay. Moses had a uniquely large-scale vision of public recreational space, encompassing a vast ex-urban territory around New York City laced together with a network of landscaped parkways and sumptuous waterfront parks.

Riis Park's development proceeded rapidly after the example of the phenomenal and wildly popular Jones Beach State Park, which opened in 1929. Prior to Jones Beach, a bathhouse meant a modest wooden, sometimes concrete, pavilion; a water tower was a tank mounted atop stilts. Public beaches were customarily lined with snack bars and tacky attractions and amusements. At Jones Beach, Moses worked out the new idea of combining a beach with a spacious, elegantly appointed park. The central water tower at Jones was designed like a Renaissance campanile. The two great bathhouses contained restaurants, outdoor terraces, showers and changing rooms, and giant swimming pools. Each was finished with expensive materials and elaborate architectural details in Moorish and Art Deco styles, all in a setting of ocean-front promenades, landscaped walkways, game areas, and lawns and picnic groves (Caro, 1974).

The idea of creating a non-commercial public beach on the Rockaway barrier island followed a period of beach resort development that began with the opening of a railroad across Jamaica Bay to Rockaway in 1880. The newly consolidated city of New York began seeking land for a public beach in 1904 and purchased much of the present site in 1912. The site was diverted for use as a naval air station during World War I. Riis Park's largest structure, the bathhouse, was opened in 1932, shortly after the Navy withdrew across Rockaway Inlet to Floyd Bennett Field. Although it lacks the swimming pools of the Jones Beach prototypes, the Riis bathhouse was modeled on them. The new park also had handball and tennis courts, playgrounds, and landscaped grounds (Wrenn, 1975; Lane Frenchman, 1992).

The mayoral election of Fiorello H. LaGuardia in 1933 brought Robert Moses into the city government as Parks Commissioner, a position he held into the 1960s. Until then, the boroughs had separate park departments, which, according to Caro (1974), were corrupt, under the control of Tammany politics and riddled with patronage. The new citywide commissioner began by firing hundreds of park employees and hiring his own staff. Taking advantage of federal funds newly available for design and construction under the New Deal, Moses set about rebuilding city parks and playgrounds, and completed 1700 of 1800 planned projects in his first year (Lane Frenchman, 1992).

Moses took an early interest in Riis Park. Although newspaper reports of the day described the park as complete, Moses wanted to make it his own. The eventual plan for reconstruction, issued in 1936, transformed the site. Like many Moses projects, the new plan was tethered to a major road project, in this case, the new Marine Parkway Bridge connecting the park with Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn and another Moses project, the Belt Parkway. Visitors coming by car over the new bridge could park in a gigantic new parking lot. In fact, the whole plan was a tribute to automotive movement: the swift, triumphant approach over the new bridge above Rockaway Inlet, then a short glide along the backside of the beach on a looping, six-lane

parkway which leads to the parking lot entrance, itself set on an angle across the curving parkway.

Moses built concession buildings and a new, elliptical boardwalk. The concessions buildings articulate the start of a grassy pedestrian mall visually aligning the Empire State Building, visible in the distance across the Brooklyn lowlands, with the midpoint of the boardwalk ellipse. The landscaping and pedestrian circulation system was completely redone. The Japanese Black Pine, the most distinctive element of the Riis Park planting plan, was a personal favorite of Moses. Only four years old at the time, the bathhouse too was overhauled. Disparaging its design, Moses had some of the Moorish architectural ornaments removed, and the towers raised for dramatic effect. A beachfront pavilion that projected too far toward the water for his liking was torn down and replaced with a streamlined, modern facade, and new extensions were built at either end. The resulting stylistic mixture was masked by painting the building white, which he ordered for all the structures at Riis Park to unify the aesthetic effect (Wrenn, 1975).

Today, the historic bathhouse is being renovated again, and there are plans to restore the mall and other elements of the Moses design. The ethnographies presented below describe the current state of repair of the areas studied.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A total of 12 expert interviews were collected. The Superintendent of the Unit, Assistant Superintendent of the Unit, and a representative of the park police were interviewed. Two park EMTs, one volunteer EMT, the chief lifeguard and two lifeguard supervisors were also consulted. The General Foreman and Grounds and Facilities Foreman of Maintenance and one other members of this department were interviewed as well.

The conversations with park staff informed the research team of their overall concerns about the park. General themes included: 1) the drop in visitation numbers in the recent years and explanations of this change; 2) limited resources and personnel to meet visitor needs and maintain the park; 3) overall image and reputation of the park given resources; 4) park staff communication; 5) changing visitor populations at the park, problematic visitor practices, and the challenges of communicating park rules to new visitors; 6) the sense of peace based on the minimal number of conflicts among users and between staff and visitors; 7) limited shade, space and equipment for picnickers at the back beach, and the relocation of picnicking areas; 8) the varying success of the new garbage policy at the beach; and 9) ongoing conflicts with park police.

Overall, the interviews revealed that the park staff is dedicated and committed to the park. The staff who were interviewed have extensive knowledge of the park and have experienced its growth and evolution. This unique knowledge is a valuable resource for park management.

One transect walk was collected with the site manager. The walk began at Fort Tilden and traversed the boardwalk, back beach, playgrounds, bathhouse, and Edison parking lot. The major themes focused on identifying major facilities and the flow and characteristics of users to these areas. A good deal of time was spent examining the back beach picnicking areas and discussing picnic practices, picnic area relocation, the status of trees and lawns, the status and uses of playground equipment, and the participant's experience and interaction with visitors.

The Bays, Beach and Jetties

Jacob Riis Park beach is unusually wide because the dunes were removed at some point in the area's history as a public beach--probably during Robert Moses's reconstruction of Riis Park in 1935-37. Fort Tilden beach, by contrast, is much narrower because the sand dunes there remain undisturbed. The beach is narrowest at Bay 4, opposite the bathhouse, although it is not very narrow even there.

The jetties that separate the bays at Riis consist of a wall of reinforced concrete that is mostly buried in the sand, and then a double row of wooden pilings that extend 40 feet or so into the water beyond the low tide line. At the jetties, large boulders have been piled up around the point where the concrete ends and the wood begins. Unlike the stone jetties at Fort Tilden, the Riis Park jetties do not attract people to walk or sit on them. In fact, the life guards direct swimmers away from the jetties when they get too close. There are signs opposite each jetty that identifies it as such and warns people of the danger. Signs at jetties where the pilings stand lower in the water mysteriously warn people away from "submerged objects."

The sand at Riis Park, like other barrier beaches on Long Island, is very fine. It seems browner than at beaches farther east--perhaps some kind of construction sand has been mixed in during beach reconstruction. In many places, including Bays 5-6 and 14, the sand is mixed with lots of very short, reedy sticks. There are also lots of shell shards. The beach seems quite clean of trash for an urban beach. The use of heavy mechanical equipment for daily cleaning leaves the surface very flat, with long, straight tracks and grooves left in the sand.

The beach at Riis is similar to other Northeastern beaches in the way it is used: people sunbathe, swim, eat, read or listen to the radio, and generally relax. There is, however, considerable variation in who uses each of the bays. The Gateway National Recreation Report written by William Kornblum in 1975 identifies Bays 1 and 2 as a "gay" beach, and Bays 5 and 6 as a Black American area with music and parties. Although Bay 1 has retained its identity as a gay beach, Bays 5 and 6 appear no longer to be solely a Black American area. In fact Bays 5 and 6 have become a popular sunning and swimming spot for a diverse group of Black Caribbean Americans, Black Americans, and Hispanics, with scattered groups from Europe, and Asia. The composition of Bays 5 and 6 reflects the demographic changes over the past twenty-five years in Brooklyn and Queens, with increasing numbers of new immigrants settling there from all over the world. This change has disrupted some aspects of "Black" place attachment mentioned in the Kornblum report. On the other hand, these new populations are rapidly adopting Riis park, symbolically "marking" it, and making it their own.

Bay 1

Ethnography

Bay 1 is a stretch of sand located on the far eastern edge of the beach at Jacob Riis Park. It's about a five minute walk from the parking lot next to the bath house. Bordered by the fence on one end and the abandoned senior citizens center at the back of the beach, bay one feels more secluded and private than some of the other more open stretches of the beach. The

grassy dune-like area in the back corner of the bay adds to this sense of separation or isolation. Bay 1 also seems a bit more neglected. The sand is filled with bits and pieces of shells and little sticks. Apart from the shells and sticks, the main area of sand is relatively clean overall, but lots of trash has gathered along the edges of the bay, particularly along the fences. Trash is strewn all along the back fence area and into the grassy part of the beach. Along the back there is a railing along what looks like an abandoned pathway from the senior center. This pathway seems to trap a lot of trash. Most of the trash looks like it has blown up to the fence from the various picnics people have set up around the bay. There are a lot of plastic bags and the remnants of regular picnic fare such as soda and beer bottles, plastic cups and plates. Several people left their suntan lotion bottles behind, and three broken beach chairs had been thrown behind the fence. Someone also left an old hard hat behind. The bars on the railing along the walkway are rusted out and the rust has stained the concrete foundation.

The trash along the back of the bay certainly doesn't stop people from coming to this area of the beach. On a sunny weekend day this bay may be filled with hundreds of people. Even on an overcast weekend well over two hundred people were crowded into Bay 1, although just one bay over - at Bays 3 and 4 - very few people were present. The crowd here seems quite diverse, although the make-up changes with the day of the week and the weather. On a sunny weekday there were more women on the beach and more groups with both men and women. Many people bring their own umbrellas to the beach and most are clustered in groups of two or more. Most of the groups are large groups, and they tend to be segregated by sex. The groups seem well supplied. They have coolers, quite a few have chairs and some bring radios or boom boxes along. The music is not as loud at this part of the beach, however, as at Bays 5 and 6. On a sunny day several of the women are topless, however, I didn't see any full nudity at the beach. Far fewer women were at the beach on the overcast weekend, and there were only men on the rainy weekend. In general this bay seems to be an adult bay. I only saw kids on the sandy area once, though a few older kids sometimes play down in the water. Most of the people seem to be sunbathing, socializing and eating. Many of the people also seem to know one another at this bay - there's a lot of interaction between people from different groups here, and many seem to at least know each other by sight. Ethnically, the bay is diverse, although there is a predominance of people who look black or Hispanic. The bay also seems to attract mostly young adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, although there are also a few older and occasionally a smattering of younger people. I haven't seen very much open display of affection in this section of the beach. I saw a young man and woman walking arm in arm along the water, and down by the water one man was lying on top of another. A few couples (men) could also be seen rubbing sun tan lotion all over each other. Many of the people at this bay look like they work out a lot.

Findings

I. Interview Information

All of 24 interviews at Bay 1 were conducted between 12:00 noon and 5:00 p.m. Seven interviews were conducted on a Monday, nine on a Friday, and eight were conducted on a Sunday.

II. Visitor Demographics

The 18 males and six females interviewed reflected the larger number of male visitors at this location. The park visitors interviewed ranged from 22 to 78 years old. Most were in their mid-twenties to early forties, creating a predominantly young adult space with few children.

Most visitors interviewed identified themselves as White American or Hispanic. Only three people identified themselves as Black American, one as Black Caribbean and two identified themselves as White Europeans. Three fourths of those interviewed were born in the United States, although only half of those were born in the New York/New Jersey area. Other U.S. visitors were from California, Florida, Kentucky, Pennsylvania (two visitors), Rhode Island, and three did not indicate their state. Visitors born outside the United States indicated their places of birth as Chile, Colombia, France, Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the West Indies. Most visitors identified themselves as either non religious or Catholic. Four of those who identified themselves as non-religious indicated that they were born Catholic. Two visitors identified themselves as Jewish, one as a Baptist from Kentucky, and one visitor indicated that she identified with all religions. Most interviewees live in three of the four boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. One resident of Long Island and one from New Jersey were also interviewed.

Interviewees were well educated. Two thirds had completed college or graduate school, and two of those who had only completed high school said that they had taken some college courses. They were employed in a variety of occupations: musicians, businessmen, a police officer, a chef, and several people employed in jobs concerned with health and social welfare. Many live alone, while several live with partners and a few in households with multiple roommates or family members. A wide range of socioeconomic levels were represented from the highest to the lowest of income levels, although most visitors reported incomes in the mid-range.

III. Visitor Response: Park Use

Eleven of those interviewed in Bay 1 indicated a preference for visiting the beach in the morning, and six visitors said they preferred the early afternoon, and the rest expressed no preference or pattern to their visitation times. Most said that they come to the beach as often as they can in the summer time. Frequency of visits depends where they live, and the distance they must travel. All of those who said that they come to the beach once a week or more were from Brooklyn and Queens. Seven of the nine interviewed from Manhattan indicated that they generally come to the beach only every other week. Most of the visitors interviewed are long-time users of the beach. Eleven of the 21 interviewees who answered this question have been coming to Jacob Riis Park for ten years or more. Most visitors come to the beach on the weekends. Those who come on both weekends and weekdays mentioned that one of their days off was a week day, while several of those who come on weekdays mentioned that they preferred weekdays because it was less crowded. Most of the visitors interviewed come to the beach with family or friends or come to meet family and friends at the beach. Only three people who said they came alone did not indicate that they had later met up with friends or hoped to meet up with friends.

The most popular activities at the beach are sunbathing and swimming. Very few people indicated that they participate in sports. A couple of people mentioned that they sometimes play frisbee or body surf, but do not use the sports facilities at the beach. This should not be interpreted as a lack of desire to participate in sports activities, however, as many people expressed interest in organized sports activities (see below). While many people said they come to the beach to relax and socialize, many expressed frustration that there were no sports facilities at this end of the beach.

The visitors to Jacob Riis Park visit a wide range of beaches, yet Jacob Riis Park fared quite well in their evaluation of each place. Seven people rated Jacob Riis as better than the other beaches that they visited, and five said the beach was comparable. Only four people indicated that Jacob Riis Park was worse (dirtier) than other beaches they frequented, and eight people did not compare the other parks with Jacob Riis Park at all. Three people mentioned that Jones Beach is "more happening", but two of these people indicated that they preferred the low key, non-commercialized atmosphere of Jacob Riis Park.

IV. Visitor Responses: Values

The vast majority of the people interviewed said they come to Jacob Riis Park because of the tolerant, gay-friendly atmosphere. It is a space where they feel comfortable and free, and can meet like minded people. While eight people indicate that convenience influenced their decision to visit Jacob Riis Park, only two of these people said convenience was the primary reason for choosing this park. Many people choose Jacob Riis because of the friendly and safe atmosphere, and several said that it felt like home and that they could trust the people at the beach. Several people indicated that they preferred this beach over some of the other more popular beaches, because it is less crowded and less rowdy.

Bay 1 visitors overwhelmingly indicated that this area is meaningful to them as a space of freedom and liberation. Several indicated that this beach was very significant because it was one of the few beaches with a gay area where they felt comfortable and safe to express themselves. Many people also associate this beach with good times spent with family and friends. Several said they had met many good friends here over the years, many of whom they now considered family. The beach is also meaningful as a place to escape the city and enjoy a day of leisure with a sense that "you're living larger, the good life."

Most people interviewed at this location only go to Bay 1 when visiting Jacob Riis Park. They feel this is their area. While people choose Jacob Riis because of the tolerant atmosphere, many do not seem to think the tolerant attitude necessarily extends beyond Bay 1. One person said he would not feel safe expressing himself freely in other parts of the beach. Several people indicated that the rest of the beach was more family oriented, while Bay 1 was a more diverse mix of people and more open minded. Three people mentioned that they occasionally visit Ft. Tilden because it is secluded, and there are few people there. One older man indicated that the boardwalk was an important place for him, and one woman said she enjoyed taking long walks along the beach.

Bay 1 visitors are very attached to this beach and praise many aspects of the park. Several people said they loved the beach and would be extremely upset if it were closed down. People like the beach as a place to escape the city. They like the water, the sand, relaxing out in the sun and the sense of nature and tranquility they feel at the beach. The visitors also like the sense of freedom they feel at the beach and the friendly, open-minded people who come to the beach.

While the visitors are attached to the beach and several indicated that they loved the beach, there were many aspects of the beach that visitors were concerned about. On top of the list of complaints is the uncleanliness of the beach and the lack of trash cans. Several visitors felt that the shortage of trash cans contributes to the general dirtiness of the beach. Another serious concern of Bay 1 visitors is the absence of lifeguards. People were concerned about safety, and the safety of any children who visit. Another problem is the lack of bathrooms and

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the poor condition of the bathrooms that do exist. One visitor referred to them as "third world bathrooms." Several people also complained that there were no showers by Bay 1, and that the facilities in general were located too far from their area of the beach. One visitor indicated that distance to the bathrooms presented a problem for visitors alone at the beach, because they had to pack up all their belonging every time. Several people expressed concern that the dirtiness, lack of facilities and lack of lifeguards might be due to discrimination by the park because the visitors at Bay 1 are predominantly Black, Hispanic and gay. Several visitors complained that no sports facilities were located near Bay 1, four disliked the rule against nude bathing, one visitor wished there were grassy areas near the beach, one complained about the loud music, and one complained about the behavior of the vendors. Three visitors complained of the inconvenience of getting to the park, and one mentioned that it was difficult to even find directions to the park because there was no separate web page for Jacob Riis Park.

Visitors had a variety of suggestions for organized programs at the park. Several visitors wanted more sports activities at the beach. They mentioned volleyball, basketball, paddleball and tennis. Several people wanted to see sports equipment rental such as kayaks, boogie boards, jet skis, wind surfers, and snorkeling equipment. One visitor suggested a muscle competition on the beach, another suggested cultural programs, and three people wanted to see concerts on the beach. On the other hand, four people said that they did not want to see programs at the park because they come to the park for quiet relaxation and fear that programs could ruin the atmosphere.

Just over half of the visitors interviewed reported using the concessions. Seven said they never used the concessions. Evaluations of the concessions were mixed. While only three visitors rated the food services as good overall, six rated the quality of the food as good. Five said that the food was too expensive, and nine visitors reported that the food selection was slim. Visitors had several suggestions for improving the food services. Six visitors want to see fresh food, such as fruit and salads, and one suggested wraps. One visitor wants to see more Spanish food. Several people suggested restaurant ideas. Two suggested a restaurant with seats. One suggested an organic café, and one person wanted a juice bar. Three people found the food adequate but reported that the food concessions were not open enough hours.

Approximately half of the visitors interviewed travel to the park by car, seven travel by subway and bus and four travel on the bus only. Only one person said that visiting the beach was expensive. He said that "it added up" after tolls and parking, and he remembered when the parking was ten cents. Everyone else who answered this question said that it was inexpensive to come to Jacob Riis Park. Several people mentioned that with an unlimited Metro Card it was actually free to come to the beach. This compared quite favorably to the cost of the Long Island Railroad to other beaches. Most people did not comment on the parking lot. A few people commented on how cheap it was for New York parking. One person noticed that fewer police were patrolling the park this year, and he was somewhat concerned about safety in the parking lot.

Discussion

Several issues have repeatedly come up in Bay 1 interviews: 1) people overwhelmingly identify it as a gay area, 2) there is a sense of territoriality and importance associated with this bay, and 3) there is a feeling that this bay has been abandoned or neglected by the park, as indicated by the absence of a lifeguard, bathrooms, and concessions and the abundance of trash and debris on the beach.

Most people said that this was the gay section of the beach, and that they come to this beach specifically because it is a gay beach. In fact, most, but not all, only come to this particular bay, and many have been coming here for years. The bay is an important place for these visitors as an area where they feel welcome and free to express themselves openly and without worry of harassment. This sense of safety did not automatically extend outside of this bay. A couple of people said they wouldn't feel comfortable or safe even one or two bays over. On the other hand, this bay was cited by several people as an advantage of Jacob Riis Park over other beaches in the area. People repeatedly commented that they liked this bay because of the sense of openness, the diversity of the people here and the feeling of freedom they had in this bay. Many people mentioned that they had met good friends over the years here and had good memories associated with the beach. People feel in general that they can trust the people at this bay. There's a sense of kinship, a sense that everyone here is a friend or family member.

There definitely also seems to be a sense of territoriality associated with this bay. "This is a gay and lesbian beach - i.e. it's our beach," was a sentiment heard over and over. Several people said that they love this bay and that they would be very sad if it were closed down. This territoriality is also expressed in terms of outsiders entering the bay. Occasionally an outsider will come in to gawk or cause problems, and several people who come here regularly seem to make it their business to keep an eye on the visitors and to talk with newcomers in order to make sure no conflicts occur. In this sense, territoriality is not expressed in terms of exclusivity.

The attachment to the bay was also expressed through some visitors' strong criticisms of the its upkeep. Some people hinted that perhaps the neglect was indicative of discrimination of some sort or another. Others were more explicit in their concern that the park was discriminating against them because they were gay and predominantly Black and Latino. One person even suggested that the lifeguards didn't guard this bay because they felt uncomfortable around gay people. Not everyone mentioned that they felt the park was discriminating against them, but virtually everyone complained about the cleanliness of the bay and the bathrooms and the lack of a lifeguard. The bathrooms are generally not open, and those that are, are too far away and filthy and disgusting. People want garbage cans on the beach. There is only one garbage can near Bay 1, and people complained that it was usually overflowing with garbage. Several people suggested that another garbage can could be placed on the steps in front of the abandoned senior center. People complain that this bay is not kept up as well as others and that they themselves often have to pick up the trash others have left behind. Several people seemed to fear that the general neglect of the bay was a sign it was being phased out and would be closed soon. One long-time visitor suggested that money for the park was not reaching its intended designation. He questioned the rationale behind restoring a bathhouse that visitors cannot use and of building a pool right next to the ocean.

Many visitors also felt concerned about the lack of a lifeguard in this bay, especially since the first aid center is so far off. Several people expressed concern about the distance from the first aid center - "we'd be blue by the time we get there" was how one woman put it. People seemed particularly concerned about bringing children into this bay without a lifeguard, and some complained that when they came with their children or with friends with children that they had to go over to the other side of the beach because they didn't feel safe here. This presents a particular problem for visitors who do not feel safe in other parts of the beach. Several visitors were perplexed as to why a lifeguard was stationed just two bays over where few

people were sitting and no lifeguard was at the more crowded bay one area.

The concessions were another area of concern for many of the visitors. Several indicated that the concessions by bay one were rarely open, and that they closed early even on the days they were open. A couple of people said they would stay at the beach longer if the concessions were open later. Many people were not happy with the selection and quality of the food offered by the concessions. People are quite health conscious and want to see healthier food at the concessions.

People were quite concerned about the lack of a lifeguard, bathrooms and garbage cans at Bay 1, and several long-time users complained about the overall decline of the beach. Several lamented the loss of the beach's former charm. None of these concerns, however, seemed to deter people from coming to the beach. When asked why fewer people were coming to the beach, none of these were mentioned. The most common factor mentioned was lack of knowledge about the beach. Several people mentioned that ten or twenty years ago people stopped going to the beach because of toxic waste scares. People got out of the habit or don't know that the water is now safe. Furthermore, the beach is difficult to find. One older couple from Manhattan who used to come to the beach years ago started frequenting the beach again three years ago. They said they had a difficult time finding information about the beach and directions to the beach. This difficulty was confounded because Jacob Riis Park does not have its own web page separate from Gateway National Park, and they did not know until three years ago that Jacob Riis Park was a national park. This may be a more general problem given that even most regular visitors to the park still do not know it's a national park.

Bays 5 and 6

Ethnography

Bay 5 begins near the west end of the bathhouse and continues westerly to a point near the clock. The boardwalk sets back a bit after Bay 4, making Bay 5 a little wider. The boardwalk curves sharply inland beginning at the clock, so Bay 6 is much wider than Bay 5--although it is narrower than Bay 5 when measured longitudinally, along the water's edge.

In Bay 5-6, people sit singly or in groups, spacing themselves at more or less consistent intervals from other parties. The most popular part of the beach for sitting and sunbathing is the first 20 or 30 feet above the high-tide line. The closest spacing is parallel to the water, because most visitors want to be close to the water, and perhaps because people tend to orient themselves toward the water rather than facing up or down the beach. Thus on a busy day, a party that leaves only six or seven feet between themselves and the next party along the water front will be much farther away from the nearest party behind or in front of them. It's rather like shore front property, where the lots tend to be narrow and deep. Spacing intervals are more or less consistent at any one location. They change, of course, according to the degree of crowding--smaller intervals on a busy day, wider on a quiet one. Yet patterns of crowding are evident are perceptible on any given day: certain areas will be more crowded than others. On a recent Sunday, Bay 5 was more crowded near the 4/5 jetty than elsewhere. The rest of Bay 5 seemed somewhat more crowded than Bay 6. The greater width of the beach in Bay 6 seems to result in wider spacing, at least in the mid-beach zone, than in the narrower Bay 5.

Many people bring folding chairs to sit on and coolers containing food and drinks. Some sit

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directly on a blanket or towel, or lie down to sunbathe. Many parties bring an umbrella for shade, a few put up something more substantial, like a tent. One or two umbrellas look like rentals, but the vast majority are brought here. Beach goers have their own blankets, chairs, coolers: why shouldn't they have their own umbrellas too? Years ago many visitors even rented their bathing suits at public beaches--a nice woolen one for 25¢ an hour. No more. Today, umbrella rentals seem to be going the way of bathing suit rentals.

Bays 5-6 seem very relaxed and quiet, loud boom boxes not much in evidence. The crowd is very mixed--white, black, Hispanic; families, young singles, older folks. Blacks seem somewhat more numerous along the 5/6 border, near the clock, and near Bay 4, but that observation is based on too few visits to know whether it is consistent. Twenty-five years ago, Bays 5 and 6 were cited by Kornblum, et al., as a predominantly black stretch of beach, at least on crowded days. No longer; now light-skinned people predominate.

The boardwalk at bay 5-6 has two sets of outdoor showers, the clock, and the food concession and restrooms at the west end of the bathhouse. It gives access to the playground, ball courts, the official barbecue area, and a path to the bus stop and parking lot. There are flat benches with no backs on the seaward side of the boardwalk and regular park benches with backs on the landward side. The Riis boardwalk was described in Kornblum's 1975 report as a kind of flamboyant happening, somewhat like the famous Venice Beach in Los Angeles. Now it is much quieter. Still, people stroll along the boardwalk, and sit or hang out in groups on its benches. The surface is actually concrete, the boards having been removed thirty or more years ago. One consequence is that the boardwalk is a popular shortcut for official and unofficial vehicles. The pedestrian here is frequently disconcerted by the sound of some oversized van roaring up behind him--sometimes a succession of such vehicles. Another vehicle often seen on the boardwalk is the bicycle. The concrete surface is much more suitable for bikes than an actual boardwalk, and lots of cyclists come and go here, including bicycle-mounted Park Police officers.

Findings

I. Interview Information

Twenty-three interviews were collected in Bay 5-6. Most interviews--18 out of 23--were done on weekends. The interviewing was done largely on weekends and in the afternoon so as to have access to the greatest number of people.

II. Visitor Demographics

The ratio of men to women was much more even at Bays 5 and 6, in the middle of the beach, than at Bay 1, where men outnumbered women by three to one. In Bay 5-6 the visitors interviewed were predominantly from Brooklyn. The three visitors not from New York City were ex-New Yorkers now living in Pennsylvania (2) and Maryland (1), who return to Riis Park out of long-standing attachment to the beach.

The data suggest that Bay 5-6 attracts predominantly middle and working class visitors. There were more high school than college graduates. Interviewees reflect a diversity of occupations, but people are predominantly professionals and semi-professionals, city workers, and union trades people.

Historically an African American beach, Bay 5-6 has become ethnically mixed. The 23 interviews included nine persons of African heritage, four Hispanics, one Asian, and nine

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persons of European heritage. For whatever reason, Riis Park seems to be popular with Catholics: the visitors sampled were about 70 percent Catholic in Bay 4-5. The Bay 1 sample was much less Catholic--about one in three, and just under half in the picnic areas.

Protestants and Jews, the other major religious groups in New York, were poorly represented. From the interviews, it appears that beach visitors are much more likely to be U.S.-born than picnic area visitors--about 75 percent U.S.-born among the beach samples as compared to two-thirds foreign-born among the picnickers.

III. Visitor Responses: Park Use

Appendix 3. shows that in Bay 5-6, about half our sample (12) visit the park every week or every other week. In all three beach bays, more than one-third of the sample were long-time visitors of ten or more years. Bay 5-6 and Bay 14 were similar in having few single visitors--only one in each sample, in contrast to the eight single visitors in the Bay 1 sample.

Among beach-based visitors, sunbathing and swimming were the predominant activities cited, and more than half the picnic area sample also mentioned swimming. Bay 5-6 visitors go to other beaches more than those in Bay 14. Among the Bay 5-6 sample, six people went to Jones or Long Beach, ten used the main Brooklyn beaches--Coney Island, Brighton, and Manhattan Beaches, and four mentioned other Rockaway beaches. Most Bay 14 visitors stay at Riis or go only to other Rockaway beaches.

Not surprisingly, comparisons of Riis to other New York City beaches were generally favorable, while comparisons to other Rockaway and Long Island beaches were generally unfavorable. Visitors saw the beach as much cleaner and more family-oriented than Coney Island, and more open and spacious than Manhattan Beach. People preferred the surf here to the calmer surf at the Brooklyn beaches. Those who mentioned Orchard Beach thought the water here was much cleaner than there, and the facilities in better shape. Long Beach, Jones Beach, and the Rockaway beaches were seen as nicer and cleaner than Riis, and Jones and Long Beaches as having better facilities. Yet at least one man preferred the layout at Riis to that at Jones, finding the walk from the parking lot too long there. He also thought Jones Beach was more crowded than Riis. Several people saw their choice as a tradeoff: Riis as less convenient but nicer than Brooklyn beaches, and as more convenient but not as nice as Long Island beaches.

IV. Visitor Responses: Values

Convenience was given as a reason for choosing Riis Park by 14 people, more than half the interviewees in Bay 5-6. Seven people came out of "habit" and another seven gave reasons such as "clean," "quiet," and "relaxing." "Convenience" subsumes a number of visitor concerns, such as the ease of parking here, the park's proximity to Brooklyn, and the lack of traffic on the way here as compared to beaches farther east on Long Island or in New Jersey. The term "habit" masks some very significant cultural associations for some visitors in Bay 5-6. Three of the visitors we consulted in Bay 5-6 were members of an extended association of Black Americans and Caribbeans who are longtime Bay 5 visitors, their families having come here in some cases for generations. Visitors of various ethnicities in Bay 5-6 remarked on the clock as a meaningful landmark and an important orienting device.

Convenience was also what numerous visitors in Bay 5-6 said they liked best about the park. The layout and spacing of the park seemed to work to the advantage of Bay 5-6 visitors. Bay 5-6 is convenient to the boardwalk services and to the parking lot. Visitors here mentioned

favorably the space available adjacent to the beach for cooking out and places for children to play. Several visitors commented on the skill of the lifeguards and on the general safety they sense on this beach. The sight of rangers roving the beach on 4-wheels and lifeguards at work seemed to reassure these visitors.

A number of visitors at Bay 5-6 (see "Dislikes and Desired Changes") thought the beach was not well enough maintained, objecting to both litter and, in some cases, shell fragments and sticks in the sand that they said cut their feet. Several people scoffed at the idea that beachgoers in New York would adopt the carry-in-carry-out policy borrowed from wilderness parks that is now in effect on the beach. A few longtime Black American and Caribbean visitors were sharply critical of the park management for allowing the facilities to become so deteriorated. They wondered where the money was going.

No one in Bay 5-6 seemed aware of any programs offered. Several people suggested water safety instruction, and water games and other activities for young people. A first-time Bay 5 visitor compared Riis Park very favorably to Coney Island except for the lack of volleyball nets on the beach, which she had enjoyed in part for the opportunity to meet other people. A few others also liked the idea of volleyball or other beach-like games, not necessarily on the beach itself. By contrast, two members of the Bay 5 longtime users' "club" objected to volleyball on the beach, saying it was illegal and that people could get hurt.

Many beach visitors never use the food concessions. Some had ideas for making them more attractive, like offering more varieties of foods, or offering seafood and sit-down service. Several Black visitors in Bay 5-6 thought that the food offerings should more reflect the cultural diversity of the beach--not just North American hamburgers. One man suggested putting a nice restaurant in the old bathhouse. Few people felt strongly about the concessions, however; people seem to like bringing their own food to the beach and might not change their habits even with much better offerings. Those who used them were likely to say they were alright, about what one would expect.

One Black Caribbean woman interviewed in Bay 6 said she took the bus, and a Black American woman in Bay 5, not counted as a separate interview, took the subway and bus from Manhattan. The other visitors in our sample drove their cars to the beach. People were quite content with the parking and thought the fee was reasonable. One couple in Bay 6, who sometimes leave the park to have lunch at a restaurant, objected to having to pay again on returning in the afternoon. Also, two men criticized the shabby appearance of the parking lot.

Other than members of the Bay 5 longtime users' club, hardly anyone there guessed that the park was run by the National Park Service.

Discussion

Bay 5-6 seems to be one of the most popular, crowded sections of the Riis Park beach. There are many regulars here, partly because the clock serves as an important orienting landmark. A number of people say they meet their friends here or that their friends will know to find them here. Historically, Bay 5-6 was identifiably African American. It is much less so now, but remains popular with Black Americans and Caribbeans. There is an extended group of African-heritage families and individuals who hold a proprietary attitude toward Bay 5. These people have been coming here for many years. One woman there said "We have a big attachment to Bay 5. Blacks started coming here to Bay 5 in the '30s. My grandmother came,

my daughter. We have a tremendous love for this space: It's ours." One member of this group said they number about 150 on any given Sunday. Some of the longest-standing, most devoted members hold informal titles, e.g. the "King of the Beach." We interviewed the "Prince of the Beach" and, later, another man who declared himself the "Mayor of the Beach." The Mayor has been coming here since the 1940s, and travels now with his family from their home in the Maryland suburbs of Washington. We also met the "Queen."

Many members of this informal club are well known to the rangers: they greet one another like old friends and chat together for five or ten minutes on the beach or along the boardwalk. The members we spoke with were unhappy with the deterioration of the park and the decline in attendance. Two men remembered livelier times when Tito Puente would come here and perform. One of them remembered a plan to put in a performance facility here, and a Black Caribbean woman thought live music here would be great--as long as it didn't attract the wrong crowd. Some members of this club have met with park officials to express their views. One man, coming from a meeting with Deputy Superintendent Garrett that morning, said "We're back to square one. Nothing's maintained or refurbished. No hoops; there's grass growing up in the basketball courts. The bathhouse is closed. I have not seen any improvements in two years. The money is appropriated; where is it going?" To Sandy Hook, he thought, where "...they have seven beaches--beautiful, new everything." Another member noted that it's a wealthier community out there. These men spoke of misplaced priorities; they thought the park should renovate disused existing facilities like the bathhouse before putting in a swimming pool. A woman member we consulted on another day said "...the condition [of Riis] is way beyond a question of not enough funds. It's been going on for a long time. Look--this is Howard Beach! Gotti, for goodness sake, the man lived practically next door. There's something bad going on here, something you can't find out--or if you do, you'll die."

On a brighter note, several Bay 5-6 visitors commented on the availability of the back beach area, that Riis is a beach with a park attached to it. That means that there's room to cook out here comfortably, and playgrounds for the children. Although one European American visitor disliked all the cooking-out in the back beach, thinking it dirty and noisy, another white woman enjoyed the good cooking smells. African Americans, in particular, like the availability of ball courts at Riis Park, although they note that these facilities are in poor condition. A few people thought the boardwalk surface should be smoother and kept free of sand: a White American woman felt she couldn't rollerblade here as it is, and a Black American man showed me drifts of sand on the Bay 5 boardwalk.

People here most often cite the convenience of Riis Park--it's not too far from their homes in Brooklyn and Queens, and the parking is reasonably priced and always plentiful. Two additional comments on the parking: one Hispanic man thought the lot makes the park seem like an abandoned place; and a Polish-born couple thought that visitors who want to go out, say, for lunch, should not be charged again when they return. People in Bays 5-6 find that Riis Park compares favorably with the Brooklyn and Bronx beaches: the beach and the water are both cleaner, the surf more challenging, and the park is more spacious. People like the mellow atmosphere here too: people get along well, they don't fight. One regular visitor, a Black Caribbean woman, said there's a lot of love here. She also found it very safe here, partly because of the alertness and skill of the life guards, and she was not the only one to appreciate the life guards. Visitors also find the beach less crowded than Jones Beach, and one man thought the parking here much more convenient than at Jones Beach.

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As for cleanliness, more people find the beach dirty than find it clean. Some object to all the little sticks and shell fragments in the sand and to trash on the beach. Several longtime visitors thought it had gotten dirtier. Some compared it unfavorably to other Long Island beaches, even to others in the Rockaways. One woman, however, was pleased by the daily mechanical cleaning of the beach. Many visitors missed the presence of trash baskets on the beach and scoffed at the idea that beach goers in New York City will carry their trash off the beach. No men but a few women found the restrooms unclean.

Many people use the food service seldom if at all. Some find it o.k.--overpriced, perhaps, but that's to be expected at the beach. Some would like to see more variety--e.g., fruits, salads, Caribbean food.

Except for members of the longtime Black visitors' "club" described above, almost everyone here assumed that the park was operated by the city.

Bay 14

Ethnography

The Riis Park beach ends at Bay 14. The boundary with the Fort Tilden beach is marked by a low, concrete retaining wall that once supported a fence that kept people out of Fort Tilden. Now, the Tilden beach is easily accessible, and many visitors cross over the boundary. The Riis Park boardwalk also ends at Bay 14, from which it connects to State Road/Rockaway Point Boulevard via Beach 69th Street. Although closed to general traffic within the Riis Park boundary, Beach 69th Street is frequently used by Park Service and Park Police vehicles driving over the Riis boardwalk as a connector to Fort Tilden. It is also used by the many cyclists travelling between the boardwalk and the roadways within Fort Tilden.

The boardwalk ellipse ends at a point just east of the Bay 13/14 jetty, and from that point the boardwalk resumes its regular, lateral alignment for the short distance to Beach 69th Street and the park boundary. The condition of the ship rail fence that lines most of the Riis Park boardwalk becomes more and more deteriorated as one moves along the ellipse west from the mall. The fence disappears completely somewhere in Bay 13, at about the location of a squat, shuttered structure that once housed a food concession. As a result, the Bay 14 boardwalk is nothing but a flat expanse of concrete elevated three or four feet above the beach surface. Behind the boardwalk is a rather desolate expanse of sand and coarse grass, elevated somewhat above the pavement grade, that seems unvisited. A portable toilet is located on Beach 69th Street around the corner from the boardwalk.

The boardwalk at Bay 14 has no facilities and is a sort of cul-de-sac for boardwalk activity as well as official surveillance. As such, it is a redoubt of groups of beer-drinking young adults who hang out here undisturbed for hours. On a recent Sunday there were four such groups, one a pair of men, the others each having five or six members, mostly men. Three of the groups were all white. At least some of these people are regular visitors at these specific locations, over periods of many years. Some stand around on the concrete surface near their coolers, drinking and socializing. Since there is no fence here, some visitors sit on the concrete, their legs dangling over the side.

The crowd in Bay 14 is nearly all white, although not exclusively so, but mixed in age. There

are families as well as young adult singles. In fact, it is not much of a crowd: there were only 50 to 70 people in the whole bay on a nice, hot Sunday in July with a pleasant onshore breeze. Many were lying down or sitting on the beach rather than in chairs. There were eight umbrellas in sight and one tent. Visitors also walk along the beach which continues from here through the many bays of Fort Tilden.

Whereas the beach surface at Bay 14 and the rest of the Riis strand is made flat and smooth by the mechanical sweeping procedures described above, the Tilden beach is much more rustic. Its surface is uneven because no one here intervenes in the natural processes that form drifts and swales in the sand. The Tilden beach is also narrower because the naturally forming sand dunes have been allowed to remain. The jetties at Fort Tilden are all rock, in contrast to the wooden pilings at Riis. The rocks attract visitors to sit and look out at the water. There appears to be no regular cleaning of the Tilden beach, partly because its uneven surface is unsuited to mechanical sweeping, and as a result, lots of flotsam and jetsam left by the tides lies strewn around on the sand. This material includes consumer wastes like clorox bottles and various pieces of driftwood, as well as beverage containers left here by visitors.

As a military base, Fort Tilden was designed with high fences and thick vegetation along its boundaries to keep people out. Although it is just as open to the public now as Riis Park, both Riis and Tilden face each other blankly across Beach 69th Street, an anomalous expanse of concrete bordered by pine woods and rusty, chain-link boundary fences.

Findings

I. Interview Information

Twenty interviews were collected in Bay 14. Seventeen of the 20 were done on weekends, so as to have access to the greatest number of people. Most field work was done in the afternoon for the same reason.

II. Visitor Demographics

From the visitor interviews it appears that men are more numerous at the two extremes of the beach, particularly in Bay 1, where they outnumbered women by three to one. The interviews collected in Bay 14 had half again as many men as women. The ratio was much more even at Bay 5-6. In Bay 14, the visitors in our sample were predominantly from Brooklyn. The three Bay 14 visitors from Queens were local residents of Rockaway, whereas the Queens residents in Bay 5-6 were from all over Queens. We think the Brooklyn visitors in Bay 14 come disproportionately from the Bay Ridge section. One interviewee there said that Bay 14 used to be called the Bay Ridge bay.

The data suggest that the Riis Park beach attracts predominantly middle and working class visitors. Like Bay 5-6, Bay 14 had more high school than college graduates, and professionals and semi-professionals, city workers, and union trades people were the dominant occupations. The income data for Bay 14, where half the persons in the sample had household incomes of more than \$90,000 per year, suggest a wealthier profile here than in the other areas studied. These data may be misleading, however, as six of the ten people in that category comprised only two households. Still, visitors in Bay 14 may be somewhat more prosperous on average than other Riis Park visitors. The income entry in Appendix 3 shows incomes in the three beach bays as all much higher than those of the picnic areas.

Bay 14 interviewees were predominantly White: 17 of 20. The three Hispanic visitors in the

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sample were members of one family. We think these data are generally representative of Bay 14, which seems to be favored by white visitors and is known historically as a bay patronized by white young adults.

Bay 14 had the highest proportion of Catholics, about 75 percent, as compared to only about 33 percent in Bay 1. The other five included one Protestant, two Russian Jews, and two people who identified as having no religion.

III. Visitor Responses: Park Use

Bay 14 has a higher proportion of frequent visitors, people who come several times a week, than Bay 5-6 or Bay 1. In all three bays, more than one-third of interviewees were long-time visitors of ten or more years. Bay 14 was similar to Bay 5-6 in having few single visitors--only one in each sample. Seventeen people were there with family and/or friends.

Sunbathing and swimming were the predominant activities cited in Bay 14. Localism was much more apparent here than elsewhere: eleven people said they went nowhere else, and other Rockaway beaches were much more often cited (10 mentions) than either Brooklyn beaches (2) or Long Island beaches (3). Although the data in Appendix 3 do not clearly demonstrate it, Bay 14 visitors move back and forth between Riis Park and the Fort Tilden beach, and a number of them mentioned parking at Tilden.

IV. Visitor Responses: Values

The most frequent reasons for choosing Riis Park today "clean/quiet/safe/relaxing" (7) and "habit" (6). People may not say "habit," but if they have been coming here for years and say they rarely go elsewhere, then it seems fair to say that their choice is from habit. As in Bay 5-6, habitual visitation in Bay 14 reflects strong cultural associations. Irish Americans from Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, had particularly strong feelings for Bay 14 which they had acquired during their youth and nurtured by returning here year after year.

As in Bay 5-6, "convenience" represented a plurality of the things Bay 14 visitors liked best about the park--especially that it is close at hand. A significant number liked the clean, even pristine, and secluded atmosphere. Some compared Bay 14 favorably with more crowded bays to the east. The layout and spacing of the park seemed to work less to the advantage of Bay 14 visitors than those in Bay 5-6. People at Bay 14 noticed the lack of services--no lifeguards, bathrooms, or showers (see "Dislikes" in Appendix 3); and no food concession.

A few visitors at Bay 14 objected to the trash that has accumulated on the Fort Tilden beach, and a few thought that the Riis beach was not as clean as they remembered. One thing some Bay 14 visitors liked best about the beach was the tolerant policy on drinking alcohol--that drinking is allowed, or that you can open a beer on the beach without getting a ticket.

People in Bay 14 were more likely than in Bay 5-6 to show no interest in the idea of programs--six out of 20 people. Several people suggested programs such as water safety instruction, water games, and other activities for young people.

Fourteen out of 20 interviewees said that they never use the food concessions. Negative and mixed comments on the food services predominated. Several people observed that the concession building closest to Bay 14 was no longer open. No one other than a ten year-old boy was enthusiastic about the food available.

Of the people interviewed at Bay 14, 19 people came to the beach by car; the other person did not answer the question. People were quite content with the parking--with one exception everyone thought the fee was reasonable. The exception was a man who thought the fee was o.k., but then went on to say they should lower it to help fill up the lot. Only one person objected to the distance from the parking lot. Several people, however, said they did not use the main lot at Riis because they were able to park at Fort Tilden or on the street. The firemen, for example, could park in a restricted zone next to the firehouse. A few people wanted something like a season pass for locals, where they could come and go without paying each time.

Interestingly, people in Bay 14, who appear to have more ties to the immediate area, were much more likely to know that the park is a National Park than people in Bay 5-6. Nine out of 20 knew of NPS management; another man thought the park was managed by the U.S. Park Police.

Discussion

As in Bays 5-6, visitors in Bay 14 most often cite the convenience of Riis Park. Visitors here are predominantly White and tend to come from the Rockaways or nearby sections of Brooklyn. For several people, however, the appeal of Bay 14 goes beyond convenience. A number of visitors had very strong attachments to this bay, left over from its 1970s heyday as a teenage hangout. A retired policeman from Bay Ridge and his wife, only in their early 40s, had both grown up coming here, and said he still knew people here, "...like the guys standing over there on the concrete (boardwalk): Neighbors, friends, people I grew up with and met through coming here. This side of the beach is all Brooklyn, down there, Queens. They used to call this the Bay Ridge bay." His wife, also a retired police officer, said it "...used to be every weekend, this was the place. We used to hitchhike to the beach from Bay Ridge! Yeah, all the time, a group of girls. Put out your thumb, got a ride. Right on the Belt Parkway." Another White American visitor said that Bay 14 used to have a big teenage scene back in the '70s. A fireman in his thirties said he has been hanging out on the boardwalk here with his friends for 18 years--"in this exact spot!"

Not surprisingly, visitors here make use of Fort Tilden as well. One of the two firemen we consulted does a lot of fishing off the Tilden beach. A White American woman had a parking permit for Fort Tilden. Some visitors here seldom go to beaches other than Riis and Tilden. Some Bay 14 visitors have Fort Tilden parking permits or have other local privileges that make it unnecessary to use the main Riis Park parking lot. Parking was something of a concern, however, as the Tilden parking situation seems to be for insiders and the Riis Park lot is a long walk away. Partly because people here are more local and have more knowledge of Fort Tilden, they are more likely to know that the park is operated by a federal agency. Although some identified that agency as the Park Police, others knew of Gateway and of its various constituent parts. One couple thought the Staten Island unit had better facilities than Breezy Point/Jamaica Bay: the woman commented "All the money's going to Staten Island. We want to know why!"

Most visitors we consulted thought the beach should be cleaner and that trash baskets should be put back on the beach. Some of these comments were more specifically addressed to the Tilden beach, which looks much less picked-up than the Riis beach. One woman asked why the rangers weren't distributing trash bags the way they were last year. Yet others thought it

was pretty clean. The fireman-fisherman thought the lack of trash baskets left the beach dirtier than it should be but it was still "pretty pristine." He also thought the Park Service had done a tremendous job of sand replenishment here in June. A Russian woman liked the "nice sand, clean sand." The retired policewoman thought the water here is very clean, "even during the needle summer!" She added, "It's so important--the parks and the water--it really is, to have a nice place where everybody can go."

People like Bay 14 because it's not as crowded as other parts of the beach. Their biggest complaint is of the lack of services: no showers, no food, and no proper restroom. A Hispanic woman complained that the women's restroom at the mall was filthy. A few people commented on the lack of life guards at this end: one thought that led to people bunching up in the bays that do have life guards. In some ways, visitors here like the low official presence in Bay 14: a group of regulars believed that alcohol consumption is legal in federal parks and liked the fact that they can drink beer on the boardwalk here undisturbed.

The Back Beach Areas: Wood Park, The Mall, and the Clock

Because there was considerable similarity in the three picnicking areas, the three back beach areas are analyzed together. An ethnography of each area is presented and followed by a summarization of the findings, a general discussion, and a list of highlighted issues.

Ethnography

Wood Park

This area is located at the eastern end of the park; it is adjacent to the East Lot parking area for handicapped visitors, the boardwalk in front of Bays Three and Four, a small open field on its eastern side, and the park drive that exits towards Neponsit. The grassy areas near and around the entrance to the East Lot and across the drive in front of the parking lot are also within the boundaries of Wood Park picnicking and playground area.

In the very center of Wood Park are three tall wooden play structures set in a sand box enclosed by a low, thin cement curb. On the drive side, there are several groups of backless benches close to the playground, and beyond this lies a cement pathway lined with trees. The pathway stretches along the entire back beach area. On the other sea side of the play structures lies an open space and some pieces of weed covered asphalt which suggests that there was once a facility situated here. An isolated water fountain, which appears to function, is also placed in this undefined area; the spigot seems somewhat remote from the dark wooden playground equipment. Closer to the parking lot is a low chain linked fence that separates two sets of swings from the center of the playground. The swing seats and ground padding have been removed, yet the metal frame remains standing. No trees are located in the center play space of Wood Park and the ground is a mix of sand and bits of grass. Three fourths of the playground's perimeter has some shade and thick grass with some patches of exposed sand. Further away from the playground's center, near the parking lot and the formal entrance to the park grounds is a small island of manicured grass. Beyond this lies other grassy enclaves somewhat enclosed by trees and bushes; these areas were not formally planned for shading picnickers, although this is the manner in which they are generally used.

On summer weekdays this area of the park is very quiet. There may be a handful of families picnicking usually families from Brooklyn and Queens whose members happened to have a day off from work and decided to spend it in the park. They come with barbecues and beach equipment and generally sit under the trees that are close to the boardwalk. Women may also

be found in the play area supervising small children on the play equipment. On weekdays these visitors appear to park in the East Lot.

During the weekend on a sunny and hot day this area is transformed into an active family barbecue area. Families generally arrive around 8:00 in the morning and they stay in the park until the early evening. Throughout the morning caravans of cars, small vans and 4 X 4s can be seen pulling up to the curb in front of Wood Park. The passengers of these vehicles jump out and begin making several trips back and forth to the grass as they unload their bundles of grills, coolers, lawn chairs, grocery bags, baby carriages, party balloons, mini sound systems, and an occasional visitor in a wheelchair.

The perimeters of the playground and the spaces closest to the parking lot are where most of the trees are located at Wood Park, therefore, the first groups to the park generally set up for the day under in these areas. Some visitors looking to sunbathe, or who come to Wood Park with a tent, choose to settle in the open field. Others looking for space and shade not far from the parking lot settle in the grassy areas across the drive from the playground. The visitors in the Wood Park area appear to make use of the bathrooms adjacent to East lot, the beach and showers of Bay 4, the playground and the open lawn between the playground and large parking lot. Adults tend to keep guard of the small spot in the park they have staked out for themselves while teens and children abandon the elders in order to roam around the park. Throughout the day a black 4 X 4 with government plates slowly cruises through the area on the cement paths. From the car window, park rangers and EMT's advise visitors about some of the park rules and answer the questions of visitors who approach their vehicle.

In general, weekend picnickers are groups of families and friends that number between 6-15 people per group. Often, many of these groups cook out in conjunction with two to five groups other families, thus, the total number of some parties can range between 30 and 75 individuals. Many of the groups include individuals that represent two and three generations of a family.

The Clock

This back beach area is in line with the Clock on the boardwalk at Bay 5/6 and in between a baseball diamond and the playground with sprinklers. The Clock picnicking area also includes grassy areas that stretch toward the bathhouse but are met by the metal corral formerly used to organize lines of people waiting for the bus. The area is partially closed in by chain-linked fence that wraps around the ball field, and by a tall set of bushes around the playground and in front of the boardwalk.

Two cement walkways traverse this area. These paths connect the picnic area to two entrances to the boardwalk, an entrance to the playground, and the paths that lead towards the bathhouse, parking lot and the mall lawn. An intersection of these pathways roughly marks the center of the Clock Picnicking Area. In this space one finds the remains of eight backless benches and a cement water fountain. The fountain is out of order and only three of the benches have wooden slats to sit on. Overgrown bushes from the playground cover some of the remaining cement bench legs.

The Clock Picnicking Area has approximately 7 cookout grills in the open space that is closest to the beach. Several wire garbage bins are sprinkled throughout the area, and a large red metal drum for coal disposal is situated near some of the grills. The park delivered new picnic

tables to the area this summer. Now the area has approximately a dozen new wooden tables in addition to two fairly worn out ones.

The Clock Picnicking Area has a combination of shaded and open spaces. The area closest to the boardwalk is predominately without shade although there are a few small, twisty pines. Visible are also several bare trees, presumably dead. The back wall of a closed down concession booth on the boardwalk and the walls of a closed-off concrete tool shed near the ball field fence provide a small amount of shade. The space closest to the parking lot with many tall trees has lots of shade, a floor of pine needles and big branches from which to hang hammocks, party balloons and family reunion banners. Beyond this area in the direction of the bathhouse is some open lawn space and an enclave of low bushes that cast off a bit of shade.

In general, the Clock Area is small enough so that after repeated visits to the park both visitors and ethnographer begin to recognize one another. Its close to the playground and boardwalk, and one observes a great amount of movement of visitors between these three points. One also frequently observes young children running back and forth on their own between adults in the Clock area and the playground.

The Mall

This area includes the long, rectangular formal lawn flanked by walkways, 19th century styled lampposts and benches near the boardwalk. It also encompasses the shaded clearings behind the buildings of Bay 9, and the open islands of grass and bushes in front of the handball courts. A few visitors were also interviewed directly on the boardwalk. This summer the lawn space and shaded areas on the east and west sides of the mall are fenced off for restoration. Visitors appear to have knocked down the green wire fencing in several places in order to get access to the trees.

This area of the park is heavily populated on the weekends, and sparsely visited on the weekdays. The people who generally settle in this area on the weekends tend to be families and groups of friends who arrive as early as 8:00 in the morning with the intention of staying until late in the afternoon. Ethnically, these families are predominately Hispanic, Russian, and Caribbean of African and Indian descent. Apart from the picnickers, throughout the course of the day there also tends to be steady flow of a diverse mix of visitors passing through to the beach, golf course, bathrooms and concession stand.

The picnickers come with lawn chairs, blankets, coolers and portable grills. They set up underneath the available shade including the thin areas up against the new fences, and literally, the inches of shade along the walkways. Along the edges of the mall lawn the shade is limited and thus many groups spread out from the fence into the formal pathways. Some visitors string hammocks between the lampposts and trees that are located within the boundaries that are currently off limits to visitors. Some also clear out spaces deep within the bushes behind the brick building which stands between this area and the boardwalk. When this space is vacant it is common to see piles of dumped charcoal, patches of burnt grass and paper plates that did not make their way into the trash bins. Some visitors who prefer the sun set out blankets and chairs on the open lawn. Some visitors to this area come prepared for the lack of shade and set up puff tents, and portable cocktail tables with umbrellas. In the area of the mall closest to the parking lot it is common to observe pick up volleyball games taking place around a net that has been installed by the visitors.

Findings

I. Interview Information

In the Back Beach Areas, a total of sixty-four interviews were collected. Eighteen were collected in Wood Park, twenty-four in The Clock barbecue area, and twenty-two at the Mall lawns, the back beach and the boardwalk. All but two interviews were collected on the weekends and on the Fourth of July. An effort was made to collect interviews on the weekdays, however, it has been an unusually cool and rainy summer; on the week days that the research team conducted fieldwork virtually no visitors were present in these areas of the park. The majority of interviews were collected midday between noon and five o'clock.

II. Visitor Demographics

Nearly an equal number of males and females were consulted. The majority of the visitors' consulted are between the ages of 21 and 50.

Nearly half of the visitors consulted identified themselves as Hispanic. Nearly a quarter identified themselves as Black American, and nearly another quarter as White European. The remaining visitors identified themselves as either White American, Black Caribbean, Caribbean of Indian descent or Arab. This study did not set out to randomly sample the population, but it is likely in a more random sample of the picnic areas that more Black Caribbeans and Caribbeans of Indian descent would be consulted. These are two distinct visitor populations who are also numerous in the park.

Half of the visitors consulted are new immigrants from Central and South America, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and the Middle East. The other half are born in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. The majority of the Spanish-speaking immigrants were born in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Columbia. The White Europeans were born in Russia and Poland, and, the vast majority of the U.S. born visitors identified themselves as Black American and Hispanic.

Among the population consulted in this study there is an unusually high number of Catholics. Nearly half of the visitors identified with this religion. The remaining visitors identified with a diverse range of religions such as Baptist, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, no religion and a host of other Christian religions.

The majority of visitors interviewed live close to the park. Half of the individuals consulted reside in Brooklyn and more than a quarter live in Queens. Nine other New Yorkers live in a variety of neighborhoods in Manhattan, the Bronx and Long Island. Two individuals traveled from out of state to the park in order to participate in family reunions.

About half of the visitors reported that they had completed high school or grade school, or had never attended or completed any level of education. A small portion of these individuals are youths who are still attending school. A third of the visitors reported that they had obtained college degrees. The visitors reported that they worked at a variety of professional and service sector occupations such as teaching, nursing, livery service, factory work, and domestic labor. Two religious leaders and a social worker attending the park with groups related to their occupations were also interviewed.

Economically, the visitors are a mix of middle class, lower than middle class and poor families. Of the individuals who reported their income and number of household members, a significant number live in large households that are supported by limited incomes (e.g. 5 individuals reported 4 or more household members and an income of less than 20,000; 3 visitors reported

7-8 household members and an income of less than 30,000; one visitor reported 12 household members and an income of less than 50,000). One Puerto Rican woman identified her income as "low, low, low, the lowest you can have."

III. Visitor Responses: Park Use

More than half of visitors indicated that they tend to arrive at the park before 12:00 noon. Many reported that they arrived early in order to secure a spot in the park for day-long picnicking. The vast majority of visitors claimed to come to the park on weekends. Many immigrants indicated that they work six days a week; on their one free weekend day they like to spend it at the park.

Frequency of visit patterns varied among individuals interviewed in the Picnic Areas. More than a third of the visitors visit the park infrequently: either once a summer for a party or family reunion, or two to three times during the summer season for cookouts. A third of the visitors consulted visit more regularly such as every other weekend, every week or several times a week. Approximately a quarter of the visitors consulted were new visitors to the park and hadn't yet established patterns of use.

Picnickers are a combination of long-term users and new visitors to the park. A third of the visitors interviewed have been visiting the park for over 10 years. Many said that they grew up coming to the park. Another third reported that the day of the interview was their first visit to the park, and some had only started to visit Riis on a regular basis over the last two summers.

By in large, visitors to the picnic area come in large groups. More than half come with their family and friends, and nearly a third come with informally organized groups of families. Sometimes these groups of families visit the park to celebrate a family reunion, birthday party, or an informal get-together of co-workers. Only four of whom were interviewed had come to the park with a formal organization such as a church group and a men's shelter.

Visitors in the picnic areas engage in passive and active activities at the park. Their primary passive activities include picnicking, socializing, relaxing, supervising children at the playground and on the beach, attending parties, and visiting the beach for a walk or to people watch. In terms of active activities, visitors to the picnic areas make use of many other facilities offered at the park. The visitors who were consulted indicated that they primarily swim, or play basketball, paddleball and baseball. A small number of visitors mentioned playing sports for which there are no designated or permanent facilities: soccer and volleyball.

Visitors to the picnic areas mentioned that they frequent numerous other beaches and parks. They mentioned Manhattan Beach, Coney Island and Brighton Beach, Jones Beach and Long Beach, and Sunken Meadow. Eleven percent of the responses mentioned that they only visit Riis Beach. Many visitors mentioned that they preferred Riis to these other beaches because barbecuing is permitted, it is less crowded, safer, cleaner sand and water, quieter and closer than some other beaches. Visitors also mentioned that other places didn't have the opportunity of picnicking close to the beach, bathrooms, showers, bathrooms and playgrounds. The positive aspects of other beaches and parks mentioned by the visitors were that Jones Beach has a restaurant, organized parking, beautiful landscapes, music, better swimming opportunities and in general is cleaner; Brighton Beach has better swimming opportunities and is easier to reach by bus; Sandy Hook and Fire Island are considered to have cleaner water and sand; Sunken Meadow and a park in Staten Island have more trees, and Sunken Meadow

IV. Visitor Responses: Values

Visitors cited a handful of reasons for choosing to visit Riis Park: for the family atmosphere, "habit," the beach, an event, barbecuing, and the atmosphere in general. Thirteen percent chose the park because it is a "clean/quiet/safe/relaxing" place, and another thirteen percent chose the park because they wanted to discover a new park and Riis had been recommended to them by friends and co-workers.

The majority of visitors in the picnic areas described their favorite places in the park as the barbecue areas and the grassy and shaded areas in general, the beach and water, and the Clock and Mall area in particular. Wood Park was rarely mentioned as a favorite place.

Visitors in the picnic areas had a positive opinion about many aspects of the park. Many cited that they liked the park because they always visit Riis and have a sense of attachment to the place. They also mentioned that they like the beach, and the convenience of the park. Many found the park to be clean, well maintained, and a good place for children to recreate. Many also responded positively towards the layout and spacing of the park. Visitors mentioned that they liked that the facilities were closely spaced and therefore easily accessed. They also said that close spacing enabled them to supervise young children and created a sense of safety in the park. Many visitors also commented positively on the atmosphere of the park and the nature and beauty of the park. Visitors mentioned that they felt "comfortable," "relaxed," "content," and "free of worries" in the park.

While visitors had many positive views of the park, the list of things they did not like about the park is fairly long although predominately related to picnicking and barbecuing activities. The primary issue that visitors responded to is the lack of trees, the dead trees, the lack of shade and the poorly maintained grounds. Many visitors in the picnic areas came to the park to barbecue but found the landscape to be lacking in shelter and in trees from which to hang hammocks. Visitors interviewed in the Mall area as well as visitors who had been pushed out of the Mall area due to picnic relocation heavily criticized the layout and spacing of the park. Other complaints centered on the lack of other picnicking amenities. They expressed a desire for more cookout grills and grills that are cleaner and in better condition than the ones presently in the park.

Visitors also frequently cited the poor condition of the playgrounds and sports facilities. Visitors expressed interest in seeing the following facilities in the park: new playgrounds, new monkey bars, more sprinklers in the playgrounds, a playground closer to the Mall area, a water park, a pool, a permanent place to play volleyball, a designated soccer field, a place for rollerblading, new tennis courts, places to play cards and board games, a boat rental at the bay, a place to change clothing, shelters on the beach, and a hotel concession.

The visitors in the picnic area had basically two suggestions for programs and special events. Many visitors would like to see programs developed for children and youth of all ages. These programs include opportunities to develop swimming skills, and to compete at other athletic activities, artistic activities, and board games. Many Spanish-speaking adults also mentioned a desire for musical programs at the beach. A handful of visitors were not interested in programs and special events because they were concerned that events would bring more visitors and change the atmosphere of the park.

The majority of visitors in the picnic areas revealed that they do not use the food concessions. Of the visitors who make use of the boardwalk concession, visitors had both positive and negative views of the concessions. Many with positive views did not have high expectations; they were glad that food was available in the event that they needed to purchase a snack or water.

The overall majority of visitors consulted in the study come to the park by car. Only a few came by bus and by private buses coordinated by an organization with whom they were attending the park. The vast majority of participants in the study felt that the parking services were fairly priced. Only a four felt that the parking lot is expensive. Two of these individuals felt that parking became expensive if one frequents the park several times a week, or if one needs to leave the park to pick up visitors who may be arriving late to an event. Four visitors did not like that the parking concession does not permit multiple entries. Several of these visitors are locals who had forgotten supplies at home or needed to pick someone up but could not do so without paying a double parking fee.

A sizeable minority of visitors in the back beach areas knew that the park is part of the National Park Service territory (14%). The majority of visitors were unaware of this fact.

Discussion

Barbecuing close to the beach appeared to be the main attraction that drew many of the visitors in the picnic areas to Riis Park. Many claimed that barbecuing was a desired activity not accommodated for in other nearby public beaches. Some visitors even suspected that although they were barbecuing that it was not allowed. During the interview, some visitors revealed that they feared the volunteer was coming over to put a stop to their party, or they asked the interviewer if what they were doing was o.k.

Having said that visitors enjoy the barbecuing opportunity, many visitors are frustrated that there aren't more grills, tables and benches for barbecuing. One poor Hispanic immigrant commented that just because a lot of poor people come to this park the park shouldn't be poorly equipped. Many cried, "We need grills!" At the beginning of the data collection period, visitors also commented on the lack of picnic tables and benches. By mid July new wooden picnic tables had been installed and this change prompted many visitors to comment on the how the park staff was working to improve the conditions of the park.

Visitors complain about the lack of available shaded space throughout the back beach area. Visitors requested that the park, "'don't take down any more of the trees!" and the asked "why doesn't the park develop a program to replant trees every five years?" Shade is a primary amenity for barbecuing and visitors feel that shaded spaces are a limited good in the park. The shade is an important part of their cultural identification with the beach in that the beaches of Central and South America where the most recent visitors are from, usually have a tree lined edge or "cabanas" (tarps or open tents on ropes) are available for rent for relaxing and picnicking.

Long term visitors to the Mall area were particularly upset about the roping off of shaded spaces that have been used for picnicking over the past several years. Some recognized that trees were damaged and they often blamed the carelessness of other visitors for the deterioration of the trees. Nonetheless, they were not happy that the management had closed them out of "their" spaces. One family who was interviewed on the Mall as they were leaving the park claimed that they would not return as a result of this problem. Several families who typically picnic in the Mall were interviewed in Wood Park and the Clock areas and they talked about being unhappy about being shifted around.

Shaded areas aren't the only limited good in the park; spaces close to bathrooms, beach, parking, and secluded spaces also are in demand. An African American mother explained that she needed space from others because her children get into other people stuff, and an Ecuadorian father doesn't want to bother others with his barbecue smoke. Several Russian

visitors remarked that they prefer to be alone and hoped that others won't bother them. Hispanic families and a Hispanic church group claimed to be in need of more space in order to create cohesion between the small sub groups of their large parties.

The situation of limited shaded spaces in the park prompts many to arrive in the park at early hours in the morning just to reserve a spot, an aspect of visitation that many visitors complained about. One young man, for example, was dropped off at 7:00 a.m. with his sleeping bag in addition to a card table and cases of soda in order to hold a spot for his family. The early morning competition for park space is a reflection of how valuable park spaces are to the visitors. The visitors who obtained the "prime spots" commented positively on the fact that there were spaces in the park that enabled them to be close to the facilities and underneath shade. Many visitors, even if they didn't obtain shade, still commented liked the fact that the close spacing of picnicking facilities, the beach, bathrooms and playgrounds was an attractive feature of Riis park. Adults in both Wood Park and the Clock Area commented positively on the fact that the closeness and diversity of spaces in the park accommodated children and adults at the same time. "Grass for the adults and sand for the kids," is how one African American woman at the Clock put it. "My wife and I can relax here while the kids play on the beach," indicated a Puerto Rican father swinging in a hammock while drinking a beer in Wood Park.

The majority of visitors in the back beach come to the beach to with children. One visitors described his reason for coming to the park as "...its all about children!" A few mothers explained, "I want to make my children happy, give them a place to play, get them out of the apartment....get them some fresh air..." Visitors frequently mentioned that they liked the park but felt there was a great need to develop equipment, areas, activities and programs that engage children of all ages. Many said that the park was safe and they liked the fact that their kids could roam around without problems. One mother commented that cars drive too fast around the park and this presented a danger to her children. Many commented that their children get bored in the park. In Wood Park it is easily observed that families bring a list of equipment to entertain their young, including a portable sprinkler which one family hooked up in the playground. Families on the Mall commented that the playgrounds areas very far from this area, and they hoped for more activities for youth nearer to the Mall. They reported that they situated themselves at the Mall as a result of the lack of shade in other parts of the park that are closer to the playgrounds.

Bathroom cleanliness is viewed positively and negatively by the visitors in the back beach. The majority of visitors compliment the work of the park staff in maintaining the bathrooms. A few complain that Riis bathrooms are dirty just like any other city bathroom facility. One complained that the bathrooms close too early.

Many of the picnickers feel that the beach is clean, at least cleaner than other city beaches such as Manhattan Beach and Coney Island. One visitor pondered how it was possible that all of these beaches share the same shore, yet the water at Riis appears to be the cleanest?

The cleanliness and maintenance of the park grounds in general get mixed reviews. Some feel that the park is lovely as it is. One visitor expressed the views of many more, however, when he described the park maintenance as, acceptable, not exceptional. Many complained that the grass should be better maintained, the trees should be replanted, and that there is often a lot of trash all over the park.

Safety at the park is viewed positively. Many commented that the park police presence creates the safe environment at the park. One visitor pointed out, though, that if there were more visitors the park would become unsafe and therefore it would need much more police presence.

The majority of visitors among the picnickers could be described as uninformed and uninterested in the concession stands and their offerings. Most visitors said that they prefer home cooked, fresh foods and came with large groups of people with the intention of sharing food that they prepared themselves. Some people complained that the food was expensive, and since they came with numerous people it wasn't economically feasible to buy food at the beach. Others expected the food to be expensive, but were none the less more interested in their own food. Some Hispanics said that they prefer a wider variety of foods such as grilled meats, even rice and beans, which they might eat if they visited the park with one or two individuals. If these visitors buy food at all it amounts to an occasional drink or ice cream. Some said that they rely on the concession stands for items that they forget such as lighter fluid and charcoal. Some commented that the concession stand should really develop the sale of barbecuing and picnicking items since visitors who come to the park in a car can not leave to purchase these things without paying the parking fee again. A few individuals commented that the concessionaires should put signs out to inform the visitors that they were present and of the items they had for sale. At least three visitors complained that they wanted to buy cookies, charcoal, and paper plates but they couldn't find what they wanted at the beach. A handful of visitors recommended installing popular food chains such as McDonalds or White Castle, which the visitors pointed out, seem to do well at Coney Island and the Rockaways.

The majority of visitors came to the park in a car and almost all of them did not find the parking lot services to be expensive. Several felt that it was unreasonable to charge visitors more than once a day as picnickers sometimes found that they left important equipment at home. Some visitors were frustrated by the abuse of East Lot parking privileges; they suspected that individuals who weren't physically challenged made use of the parking lot. One habitual and long term user whose spouse is handicapped was interviewed. He cited the parking lot as one of his main reason for coming to the park, and as his favorite place in the park. Handicap parking is very meaningful to these visitors.

Related to parking and vehicles is the issue of unloading at the back beach curbside. Visitors with a lot of recreational equipment tend to unload their cars at the back beach curb in front of the picnic areas. Several visitors said that they understood that parking in these areas is not allowed, yet they expressed a need for assistance in accessing the park. They dislike this park rule and also feel that the park staff has an unnecessary hostile approach to enforcing the rule.

The back beach is heavily populated by new immigrants whose first language may be Spanish, Russian, Polish and Hindi, and who may have limited English language skills. These visitors may be unfamiliar with or have difficulties understanding park rules. They may also be accustomed to using public park spaces in ways that are appropriate within the context of their homelands and cultures, but in conflict with National Park Service rules and the protection of park resources. For example, many Hispanic visitors enjoy relaxing in hammocks, however, this practice may be harmful to the trees, lampposts and fencing to which they tie up their beach gear. Many Caribbean visitors enjoy listening to music at high volumes and this practice both attracts and distracts other visitors. Many Eastern European visitors prefer minimal

interaction with park staff and other visitors, a preference which sometimes creates conflict for park staff who wish to relay important information about park use to these visitors. Beach side picnickers from countries with warm climates and hot beaches, enjoy natural shade and the protection of constructed shelters. In the absence of shading in the Picnic Areas visitors string tarps between tree trunks, throw mats of cardboard up into the tree branches, and prop up tents all over the Mall area. These practices are in conflict with the protection of the natural resources as well as the security of the visitors.

The findings also show that many visitors in the Back Beach Areas have low levels of education, high numbers of household members supported by low incomes, and many mentioned in the interview that they have limited time to recreate. These characteristics do not describe all of the visitors to the Picnic Areas, but it does suggest that many of the visitors probably live in economically difficult situations. As such, for many visitors the park is most likely an extremely important source of release and escape from the stressful conditions of the urban environment.

Many of the visitors are new visitors to the park and visitors who have a long history of visiting the park. The visitors are also largely from Brooklyn. This suggests that the park has been an important resource to Brooklyn residents for a long period of time and continues to draw visitors from these areas. Visitors from three organized groups who participated in the study also identified their organizations as based in Brooklyn. These organizations have been coming to the park for many years and each time bring new visitors with them. It will be important for the park to continue to reach out to communities and organizations in Brooklyn as a means of maintaining and building upon the current base of users

A host of visitors commented positively on the “friendly” and “family” atmosphere at the park. There was some criticism of other visitors negligence when it comes to picking up after themselves, but on the whole, visitors in the back beach found their neighbors to be friendly and another positive aspect of the park.

Some visitors’ expectations of the park increased once they were informed that Riis is part of the National Park Service. Some visitors expressed doubt that improvements would be made within a reasonable amount of time; one cynic asked, “how long did you say it would take?” Visitors who are evidently in opposition to the city’s mayor said that they were relieved that this park would not also be taken away from them.

With the exception of park staff monitoring visitors unloading their vehicles at the back beach, the park staff received positively by the public. Visitors praise their friendliness, and willingness to help visitors. Visitors in particular like that the staff gives out trash bags.

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY VISITORS

Appendix 3. summarizes our interview findings. Overall, Jacob Riis serves an incredibly diverse population of users, from poor recent immigrants who are coming for the first time, to wealthy professionals who have visited the park for over 20 years. Household income, education, and occupation is evenly distributed, so that from a socioeconomic point of view, it is truly a park for everyone. Even the distribution of first and once a summer users (32 people out of 131, or 24%) and frequent users—people who come one to four times each week—(46

people out of 131, or 35%) is somewhat balanced. There are more long term users than first time users (25 people have come for more than 20 years compared to 17 first time users), but the park still attracts an influx of newcomers while retaining strong ties to long terms users who come from local neighborhoods. Jacob Riis is a neighborhood park that serves the populations of Brooklyn and Queens, and draws upon the cultural and economical diversity of those communities.

At the same time there are distinct territories claimed by their users, and these territories and users have distinct needs and desires. In order to develop a plan of action for renovation and change, it is important to understand that the different areas of the park—the bays and back beaches—have clearly articulated, yet distinct concerns. From the perspective of planning and design, it is difficult, therefore, to develop one proposal that will meet the needs of all constituents. Instead, a series of strategies and directives are necessary, each distinct in its objectives and targeted at a discreet population.

For instance, the back beach picnickers are the newest visitors to the park. Based on the data presented in this report, these visitors--many of whom speak only Spanish and have recently come to the US from Central and South America--are the poorest and least able to provide services and resources for themselves. They need more picnic areas equipped with tables, shade (trees, tents, or cabanas), and grills. Bathrooms for the large number of children and elderly in these families, safe playgrounds so that children can play nearby and be supervised, and adjacent beach life guards are all necessary for their visit to be optimally successful and satisfying. These newcomers prefer to visit as large groups of families and friends. They prefer shade and are accustomed to hanging fabric for shade, and hammocks for seating. They also prefer their own foods rather than the food sold by the concessions. It is not just that the food at the concessions is expensive, it is also not what they would normally eat. These visitors are very concerned that their children learn as much as possible about their new life in the US, so programs including swimming, safety, as well as educational and recreational programs are desirable. But many of the parents can not read or write English, so letting them know about the programs will require specifically targeted and innovative forms of outreach. Finally, these groups enjoy music and dancing--especially Latino rhythms and salsa--and would enjoy summer afternoon concerts that remind them of home (and bring a bit of home to their new beach). Because these newcomers are the poorest visitors, and a population that Jacob Riis can effectively serve, their needs should be the first intervention made in the park.

On the other hand, however, Bays 1, 5-6, and 14, would prefer not to see resources distributed in this way. For instance, based on the research data, short-term changes at Bay 1 should focus on lifeguards, bathrooms, and garbage cans.

Lifeguards are a top priority for the safety of visitors and because the Bay 1 visitors identify with just this one particular part of the beach. For a variety of reasons (including identity, tolerance and safety issues) Bay 1 visitors have less flexibility of movement at the beach. Therefore, when there is no lifeguard these visitors are at risk. While immediate funding for another lifeguard may not be feasible, an arrangement could be made whereby a lifeguard would be posted at Bay 1 several times a week. Perhaps there could be a rotation system rather than shortening of the guarded area of the beach, or lifeguards could be placed in strategic locations, i.e. where there are larger crowds. Based on interviews with visitors and observations of the beach, Bay 1 often is left without a lifeguard at times when much less-frequented areas are protected.

For reasons of hygiene, safety and convenience a bathroom should be opened at Bay 1. Many visitors complain that people use the grassy areas rather than walk to the bathhouse. Some visitors fear leaving their belongings at the beach while they walk the distance to the bathhouse. A bathroom should also be in closer proximity for the elderly and visitors with disabilities. An inexpensive solution might be a lockable single-occupant bathroom.

The final short-term recommendation for Bay 1 concerns the garbage problem. Because of its location, large amounts of garbage collect along the back fences of the bay. This area needs to be cleaned more often. Part of the problem is the lack of garbage cans. Another garbage can could be placed on the steps in front of the abandoned senior citizens building. This would be off the beach but more centrally located than the garbage can on the boardwalk. If this cannot be done then garbage bags need to be distributed more frequently. Several visitors had never seen garbage bags distributed.

In Bay 5-6 the carry-in-carry-out policy together with mechanical sweeping is working pretty well and garbage cans do not seem needed. Here people felt strongest about the condition of facilities behind the beach: the rough concrete on the boardwalk with weeds coming through the cracks and sand drifts on the surface, the deteriorated ball courts, the closed bathhouse. The basic amenities are most important: a smooth, resurfaced boardwalk, free of sand; a railing in good condition, and basketball and handball courts in good working order. More showers--ideally in the bathhouse, with some changing facilities were their highest priorities. Bay 5-6 users are centrally located with lifeguards or bathrooms nearby, so the condition, not the absence, of the facilities becomes more important.

At Bay 14 people are familiar with the Fort Tilden beach and find it too dirty. Some way should be found of keeping the Tilden beach cleaner. Visitors complain about the lack of restrooms or showers or food concessions or life guards here. Perhaps there are not enough visitors to justify such amenities, but even some improvements would likely attract new visitors. People like the quiet, secluded atmosphere at Bay 14, but providing the basic amenities--bathroom and shower--would not change the atmosphere too much, and there are more bays to the west for people who want real seclusion. Parking is a problem at Bay 14: the main parking lot is quite far away, while the parking at Fort Tilden is mainly for people who are fishing. Also, there is no apparent need to maintain the fenced Fort Tilden boundary along Beach 69th Street. The woods could be thinned out to create pleasant picnic groves, using existing trees.

Almost all the users of the beach bays were not concerned with picnic tables, grills, playgrounds or music. These visitors come to Jacob Riis for the beach and swimming, so their concerns focus on the cleanliness of the beach, the availability of bathrooms and showers, and in the case of Bay 1, having a lifeguard nearby. The focus is on individual activities rather than family oriented activities. Probably the top priority overall--that includes both the picnickers and beach goers--is to provide more and cleaner bathrooms. But other than bathrooms, the needs of the different groups are distinct.

As a final conclusion a list of issues of concern to visitors has been compiled. This list is based on the user interviews. It is hoped that they can be useful as park managers consider the data presented in this report.

The Beach Bays

Bay 1

Maintain tolerant and gay-friendly atmosphere.

Provide lifeguards.

Improve cleanliness of the beach and provide garbage cans on the beach.

Open and maintain bathrooms.

Open a concession nearby with healthier food offered.

Develop sports facilities near Bay 1 that include the rental of water sports equipment.

Rent beach accessories such as beach chairs and umbrellas.

Bay 5-6

Put trash baskets back on the beach.

Repave the boardwalk; keep it clear of sand.

Repair the ship rail.

Maintain the women's rooms, keeping them cleaner.

Refurbish the basketball hoops and nets to keep in playing order.

Improve the food selection at concession stands.

Provide more showers and changing facilities.

Have some popular music concerts, e.g. jazz, Caribbean music.

Provide volleyball nets for spontaneous games.

Bay 14

Provide showers and a bathroom.

Provide a life guard.

Reopen concession stand with better food.

Provide fee-paid parking to make Bay 14 and surroundings more accessible.

Clear Fort Tilden beach of trash.

The Picnic Areas

Provide more spaces that are clearly designated and marked as picnic areas throughout the park.

Provide more trees, shade and other types of shelter in the picnic areas.

Develop picnic and playground facilities in the Wood Park area.

Improve maintenance of the grounds throughout the back beach.

Provide more cook out grills, and repair and maintain existing grills.

Provide more tables and benches, and maintain existing tables.

Provide more drinking fountains and repair existing fountains.

Modernize the playground equipment and add sprinklers to Wood Park playground.

Modernize and maintain sports facilities.

Develop permanent volleyball and soccer areas.

Develop recreational programs for children and young adults, and year round programs for youth.

Develop musical programs and night time/weekend events at the park.

Develop better outreach with local church groups, youth groups, senior citizen groups, summer camps, and other special interest groups.

Develop a wider variety of food selections including more foods that are popular among Hispanic and Caribbean populations.

Work with food concessionaires to develop adequate signage of what is offered.

Incorporate a multiple entry system for entering and exiting the parking lot.

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Caro, Robert. The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.

Lane, Frenchman and Associates, Inc. Cultural Landscape Report, Jacob Riis Park. Denver Service Center, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1992.

Wrenn, Tony P. General History, the Jamaica Bay, Breezy Point, and Staten Island Units, Gateway National Recreation Area, New York. National Park Service, 31 October 1975.

APPENDIX 1.

CONSENT FORM

(Written on letterhead for the The Graduate Center of CUNY)

Dear Participant:

The Public Space Research group of The Graduate Center of the City University of New York has been retained by the National Park Service to undertake a user study of Jacob Riis Park. We would like to interview you in order to better understand in what ways you value the park and what changes you would like to see in the future perceive. The study is sponsored by the National Park Service and will be used for planning and educational purposes only. Setha Low, a Professor of Environmental Psychology at the Graduate Center will supervise the study. Dana Taplin, Suzanne Scheld, and Larisa Honey, graduate students in anthropology and environmental psychology are the interviewers on site. We are prepared to interview you in English, Spanish, or Russian. We will maintain confidentiality of your interview by separating giving you a code number for locating and transcribing your tape. If you have any questions about this interview please feel free to contact Professor Low at 212 8178725 or the research officer at the Graduate Center, Hilry Fisher, 212 817 75523.

"I UNDERSTAND THAT MY INTERVIEW WILL BE TAPED AND TRANSCRIBED TO BE USED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY. CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE MAINTAINED IN THAT MY NAME WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE NOTES OF THE INTERVIEW."

Please check one of the following:

☐ My name may be cited when interview is referred to in the final report.

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____My name may not be cited when interview is referred to in the final report.

Write-in other restrictions

Signed: _____

Date: _____

If requested, a copy of the taped transcript will be sent to you for correction and comment.

Thank you for participating in this important research process.

Setha Low, Suzanne Scheld, Dana Taplin, and Larisa Honey of the Public Space Research Group

APPENDIX 2.

JACOB RIIS PARK INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

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Public Space Research Group University Center	The Graduate School and
Gateway National Recreational Area York	Of the City University of New
Jacob Riis Park, Jamaica Bay, NY York, NY 10016-4309	365 Fifth Avenue, New

Visitor Questionnaire

Date: ___/___/2000 Interview No.: ___ Area: ___
M C WP 1 14 Other: ___
Day of week: M T W Th F S Sn Fieldworker: LH SS DT SL
Location: ___
Time of day: ___ Weather: ___
Context: ___

1. How often do you come to the park? (Frequency of Visit)
2. What day(s) of the week do you usually come to the park?(Days of Week)
3. What time(s) of the day do you usually come to the park?(Times of Visit)
4. Who came with you to the park today? (Visit Group)
5. What is the primary activity you plan to do in the park today? (Primary Activity)
6. Where else or what other park could you go to do this? (Other parks and places)
Probe: How often do you go to these other places? Why do you go to these other places? How do these other places compare to Jacob Riis Park?
7. Why did you choose Jacob Riis Park today? (Choice)
8. What do you think about the facilities at the park that are here for (primary activity)? (Facility Evaluation)
9. What would you change to make them better? (Primary Facility Improvements)
10. What other activity(s) do you usually do in the park? (Other Activity)

11. What do you think about the facilities that are here for (other activity)? (Other Facility Evaluation)

12. What would you change to make them better? (Other Facility Improvements)

13. Are there any activities that you would like to do at Jacob Riis Park but are unable to because of existing regulations or inadequate facilities? (Desired Activities)

14. What is your best memory of Jacob Riis Park? (Special Meaning)

15. Are there any particular places in the park that are important to you (and your family)? (Park Places)

Probe: What are these places? What do you like about them?

16. How would you describe the people who come to Jacob Riis Park? (Social Diversity)

Probe: Does everyone get along? Do you feel welcome here? Do you think that some groups are excluded from the park or activities in the park?

17. What are programs that you would like to see offered at the park? (Programs)

Probe: Have you ever participated in any programs?

18. Which food services at the park do you use and why? (Food Services)

☐ Mall ☐ Clock ☐ Bath House ☐ Bay 1 ☐ Pushcart Bay 14 ☐ None

19. What do you think of the food services in the park? How would you change them? (Food Evaluation)

20. How did you come to the park today? (Travel) ☐ Car ☐ Bus ☐ Subway/Bus ☐ Bike ☐ Walk ☐ Other:

Probe: Does the cost of getting here influence your decision to come? What do you think of the parking service?

21. Do you know operates the park? (Park Knowledge) ___ No. ___ Yes: _____

22. Sex: M F	23. How old are you?
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24. Where do you live? _____	25. What is your zip code? _____
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26. What do you do for a living? _____	27. Highest level of education completed? GS HS Clg Grad
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28. How many members are there in your household? _____

29. Income: ___ up to 10,000 ___ 21,000-30,000 ___ 41,000-50,000 ___ 61,000-70,000 ___ 81,000-90,000
___ 11,000-20,000 ___ 31,000-40,000 ___ 51,000-60,000 ___ 71,000-80,000 ___ over 90,000

30. What do you consider to be your ethnicity/nationality/race? _____

31. What do you consider to be your religion? _____ 32. Where were you born? _____

33. Is there anything else you like to add that I haven't already asked? (Other) _____

APPENDIX 3.**I. Interview Information****Number of Interviews**

Bay1	24
Bay 5/6	23
Bay 14	20
Wood Park	18
The Clock	24
The Mall	22
Total of Picnicking Areas	64
Total of Beach Areas	67
Total Number of Interviews	131

Day of Interview

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Weekday	16	5	3	2	24	26
Weekend*	8	18	17	62	43	105

*Includes weekday holidays included

Time of Interviews

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Before 12:00	0	2	0	4	2	6
12:00-3:00	14	12	8	26	34	60
3:01-5:00	10	4	12	32	26	58
After 5:00	0	5	0	2	5	7

II. Visitor Demographics**Gender**

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
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Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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Male	18	10	12	28	40	68
Female	6	13	8	36	27	63

Age

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
0-10	0	0	1	2	1	3
11-20	0	0	1	5	1	6
21-30	4	5	3	16	12	28
31-40	9	6	6	17	21	38
41-50	9	6	6	17	17	34
51-60	3	4	2	2	9	11
61-70	1	2	0	4	3	7
71-80	1	1	0	1	2	4
No Response	1	0	0	0	1	1

Ethnicity/Race

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
White American	9	6	15	4	30	34
White European	2	3	2	13	7	20

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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Black American	3	7	0	14	10	24
Black Caribbean	1	2	0	2	3	5
Hispanic	8	4	3	27	15	42
Asian	0	1	0	0	1	1
Indian	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other	1	0	0	2	1	3

Birth Place

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
U.S.	18	16	15	20	49	69
Puerto Rico	1	0	0	8	1	9
Caribbean	1	2	1	4	4	8
Central and South Am.	2	1	0	15	3	18
Europe	1	3	4	15	8	23
Middle East	0	0	0	2	0	2
Asia and the Pacific	1	1	0	0	2	2

Religion

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Catholic	8	15	15	30	38	68
Baptist	1	2	0	2	3	5
Protestant	0	0	1	0	1	1
Other Christian Religion	1	0	0	6	1	7
Jewish	2	0	2	3	4	7
Muslim	0	1	0	3	1	4

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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Buddist	0	0	0	2	0	2
Not Religious	11	2	2	5	15	20
Other	1	0	0	2	1	3
No Response	0	3	0	11	3	14

Residence

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Brooklyn	8	14	16	35	38	73
Queens	5	5	3	19	13	32
Manhattan	9	0	0	1	9	10
Other	2	3	1	8	6	14
No Response	0	1	0	1	0	1

Education Completed

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
None	0	0	1	4	1	5
Grade School	1	0	2	14	3	17
High School	4	10	9	15	23	38
College	13	8	6	23	27	50
Graduate School	3	3	2	2	8	10
No Response	3	2	0	6	5	11

Occupation

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Administrator	1	0	0	1	0	1
Clerical/Secretarial	0	1	1	3	2	5
Craftsperson	0	0	0	1	1	2
Operator/Laborer	1	2	0	6	3	9
Professional	3	4	3	10	8	18
Salesperson	2	0	0	3	3	6
Supervisor/Foreperson	4	1	0	3	4	7
Technical/Semiprofessional	4	3	4	8	7	15
Student	0	0	2	7	2	9
Police/Other Uniform	1	2	2	1	5	6
Businessperson	2	3	0	3	5	8
Domestic	0	0	0	3	0	3
Homemaker	0	0	0	2	0	2
Tradesperson	1	2	3	0	5	5
Retired	2	3	2	3	7	10
Unemployed	0	1	0	2	1	3
Artist/Musician	3	0	1	2	4	6
Religious Leader	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other	0	0	0	1	1	2
No Response	0	1	2	3	3	7

Number of Members in the Household

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
1	9	7	2	8	18	26
2	8	5	1	4	14	18
3	2	3	5	10	10	20
4	0	1	5	17	6	23
5	3	4	2	7	9	16
6	1	1	5	8	7	15
7-10	0	1	0	4	1	5
More than 10	0	0	0	1	0	1
No Response	1	1	0	5	2	7

Income

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
11,000-20,000	1	0	0	10	1	11
21,000-30,000	3	2	0	14	5	19

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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31,000-40,000	5	0	2	11	7	18
41,000-50,000	4	6	2	8	12	20
51,000-60,000	2	4	0	3	6	9
61,000-70,000	3	2	1	4	6	10
71,000-80,000	2	0	1	5	3	8
81,000-90,000	1	0	0	0	1	1
More than 91,000	3	4	10	1	17	18
No Response	0	5	4	8	9	17

-

III. Visitor Responses: Park Use

Usual Time of Visit

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Before 12:00	11	8	10	37	29	66
12:00-3:00	6	3	6	12	15	27
3:01-5:00	1	1	0	1	2	3
After 5:00	1	0	0	0	1	1
Variable	8	4	0	0	12	12
First Time	0	0	0	10	0	10
No Response	0	7	4	4	11	15

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Usual Day of Visit

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Weekday	5	0	3	0	8	8
Weekend	14	11	8	49	33	82
Both	5	9	5	5	19	24
First Time	0	3	4	10	7	17

Frequency of Visits

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
First Time	0	3	2	14	5	19
Once a Summer	0	0	0	13	0	13
2-3 x a Summer	1	4	0	13	5	18
1 x Bi-Weekly	10	7	2	11	19	30
1 x Weekly	4	5	9	6	18	24
2-4 x a Week	6	3	7	6	16	22
3-5 x a Year	3	0	0	0	3	3
No Response	0	1	0	1	1	2

Years of Visitation

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
First Time	0	2	1	14	3	17
1-2 Years	3	1	0	6	4	10
3-5 Years	4	2	4	8	10	18
5-10 Years	3	6	3	11	12	23
10-20 Years	9	3	4	12	16	28
More Than 20 Years	2	7	7	9	16	25
No Response	3	2	1	4	6	1

Visit Group

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Alone	8	1	1	0	10	10
Couple	2	3	2	4	7	11

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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Family and Friends	14	16	17	36	47	83
Groups of Family and Family*	0	3	0	20	3	23
An Organization	0	0	0	4	0	4

*Includes family reunions and multiple family birthday parties

Passive Activities

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Reading	0	3	0	0	3	3
Picnicking	3	4	4	57	11	68
Sunbathing	18	15	13	8	46	54
Socializing	6	6	3	28	15	43
Attending a Party	0	0	0	14	0	14
Supervising Children	0	0	0	19	0	19
Collecting Shells/ Making Art/ Sand Activities	3	5	3	2	11	13
Walking	5	4	1	6	10	16
People Watching	2	0	3	9	5	114
Listening to Music	2	1	0	0	3	3
Relaxing	1	5	0	26	6	32
Cleaning Up the Park	2	0	0	1	2	3
Playing Cards/Board Games	2	0	0	2	2	4
Feeding The Birds	1	0	0	0	1	1
Visiting the Beach	N/A	N/A	N/A	10	0	10

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Active Activities

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Swimming	17	10	11	40	38	78
Biking	1	0	0	1	1	2
Volleyball	1	1	0	3	2	5
Baseball/Softball	0	0	1	2	1	3
Basketball	0	0	0	6	0	6
Paddleball	0	0	0	4	0	4
Soccer	0	0	0	4	0	4
Golf	0	0	1	1	1	2
Other Water Sports/ Beach Games	3	2	1	3	6	9
Other, General	0	1	1	0	2	2

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Other Parks/Beaches

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Jones Beach/ Long Beach	8	6	3	15	17	32
Manhattan Beach	0	4	1	11	5	16
Coney Island/Bright on	0	6	1	10	7	17
Rockaway Beaches	3	4	10	2	17	19
Orchard Beach	4	2	0	3	6	9
Prospect Park	0	1	0	5	1	6
Central Park	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sandy Hook/Other	4	4	2	1	10	11
Great Kills, S.I.	0	0	0	3	0	3
Fire Island	3	0	0	1	3	4
Sunken Meadow	0	1	0	9	1	10
Other Long Island Beaches	3	1	1	2	5	7

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Other Parks in Queens	0	0	0	3	0	3
Parks Up State	0	0	0	6	0	6
Fort Tilden/Breezy Point	4	2	0	0	6	6
Riis Only	2	3	11	7	16	23
Other	0	0	0	6	0	6
No Response	3	0	2	8	5	13

IV. Visitor Responses: Values

Choice

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Habit	2	7	7	15	16	31
Convenience	8	14	2	3	24	27
Tolerant Park	15	0	0	0	15	15
An Event	0	0	0	11	0	11
Barbecuing	0	1	2	11	3	14
For the Beach	0	0	2	13	2	15
Family Atmosphere	0	0	1	18	1	19
Atmosphere in General	6	1	3	11	10	2
Not Crowded	3	0	0	0	3	3
Nature	1	1	0	0	2	2
Clean, Quiet, Safe and Relaxing Place	4	7	7	8	18	26
Recommendation and Curiosity	0	1	0	8	1	9
Other	0	0	3	3	3	6

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

No Response

0

0

0

0

0

0

Special and Best Memories

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Memories/ Growing Up	0	2	7	15	9	24
Memories/ Romance	1	1	3	3	5	7
Memories /Family and Friends	8	6	7	35	21	56
Freedom and Liberation	12	2	0	9	14	23
Nature/Landscape	0	4	1	20	5	25
Health and Healing	2	1	0	1	3	4
Relaxation	3	1	1	12	5	17
Practical Reasons	7	7	4	13	18	31
Historical and Cultural Importance	2	3	0	4	5	9
Other	0	1	1	3	2	5
No Response	0	4	4	0	8	8

Favorite Park Place

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Bay 1	20	0	0	2	20	22
Bay 5/6	0	7	0	0	7	7
Bay 14	0	0	11	1	11	12
Fort Tilden	3	0	6	0	9	9
Beach and Water	1	3	3	19	7	26
Boardwalk	1	1	1	3	3	6
Clock	0	5	0	14	5	19
Mall	0	0	0	10	0	10
Wood Park	0	0	0	3	0	3
Barbecue Areas	0	0	0	17	0	17

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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Grassy/Shaded Areas	0	0	0	18	0	18
Playgrounds	0	2	0	4	2	6
Sports Facilities	0	1	1	5	2	7
Other	0	0	0	6	0	6
None	0	4	2	4	6	10
No Response	0	3	0	0	3	3

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

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Likes

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Habit and Attachment	0	1	2	22	3	25
Convenience	3	8	8	21	19	40
Cost	0	0	1	0	1	1
Layout/Spacing of Park	0	5	1	16	6	22
Showers, Bathrooms, Food Concessions	0	0	0	6	0	6
Picnic Facilities	0	2	0	14	2	16
The Beach	14	1	0	22	15	37
The Variety of Sports Facilities	1	1	1	11	3	14
Safe	1	1	0	7	2	9
Clean, Well-Maintained	1	2	5	17	8	25
Quiet and Relaxing	4	1	1	14	6	20
Good Place for Children and Family	0	1	1	17	2	19
Friendly Visitors	8	4	0	8	12	20
Friendly Park Staff	0	0	0	3	0	3
Nature and Beauty of the Park	3	1	5	12	9	21
Tolerant Park	11	0	2	5	13	18
Atmosphere in General	3	4	2	12	9	21
Not Crowded/Secluded	4	3	7	6	14	20
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Response	0	1	0	0	1	1

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Dislikes and Desired Changes

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Inconvenient	3	0	1	7	4	11
Poor Maintenance of Grounds and Facilities	0	9	3	23	12	35
Few Showers	4	1	2	9	7	16
Few Bathrooms	9	1	1	3	11	14
Dirty Bathrooms	5	2	1	2	8	10
Lack of Trash Cans on the Beach	11	4	3	3	28	31
Park/Beach is Dirty	12	5	2	1	19	20
Layout and Spacing	1	0	5	22	6	28
Cost	1	0	0	2	1	3
Few Picnic Tables	0	0	0	13	0	13
Few Barbecue Grills	0	1	0	25	1	26
Dirty and Broken Grills	0	0	0	10	0	10
Few Trees, Shade, Grass	1	0	0	30	0	30
Park Rules	4	2	0	2	6	8
Lack of Security	0	0	1	4	1	5
Lack of /Condition of Playgrounds	0	0	0	28	0	28
Lack of /Condition of Sports Facilities	5	2	0	21	7	28
Few Lifeguards	9	0	3	1	12	13
Visitors Behavior	1	3	2	2	6	8
Unfriendly Park Staff	1	0	0	3	1	4
Park Deterioration	5	2	1	3	8	11
Nothing	0	2	3	16	5	21
Other	0	5	3	6	8	14
No Response	0	2	1	5	3	8

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Programs and Special Events

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Activities for Kids	0	2	3	23	5	28
Musical Programs	3	2		10	6	16
Games and Sporting Competitions	5	6	1	7	13	20
Fitness Activities	2	0	0	0	2	2
Water Sports	7	0	3	5	10	15
Water Sports Equipment Rental	6	0	0	1	6	7
Beach/Picnic Accessory Rental	3	0	0	2	3	5
Outdoor Movies, Carnivals, Festivals	2	0	0	3	2	5
Cultural Events	1	3	0	1	4	5
Educational and Nature Programs	0	0	0	6	0	6
No Activities- t Would change the park 4	3	6	5	13	18	
Other	0	1	0	1	1	2
No Response	0	8	6	12	14	26

Food Services Frequented

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Bathhouse	0	10	0	10	14	24
Mall	0	0	4	6	0	6
Clock	0	0	0	2	0	2
Bay 1	14	0	0	1	14	15
Bay 14	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unspecifie d	0	0	0	3	0	3
None	7	8	14	34	29	63

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

No Response	3	5	2	8	8	16
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Evaluation of Food Services

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Area	Bay Total	Total
Positive	3	4	2	12	9	21
Negative	6	6	6	16	18	34
Mixed	10	5	4	2	19	21
No evaluation	0	3	2	26	5	31
No Response	5	5	6	8	16	24

Reasons Behind Food Evaluation

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Service	0	0	0	1	0	1
Poor Quality	5	5	4	1	14	15
Good Quality	6	0	1	2	7	9
Expensive	6	3	2	4	11	15
Inexpensive	0	0	0	2	0	2
Adequate Selection	4	0	2	5	6	11
Needs more Variety	9	10	8	1	27	28
Needs Signage	0	0	0	6	0	6
Open a Restaurant	4	0	2	2	6	8
Other	5	0	0	5	5	10
No Response	6	6	4	37	16	33

Travel

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Car	13	22	19	58	54	112
Bus	4	1	0	3	5	8
Train and Bus	7	0	0	0	7	7
Other	0	0	0	2	0	2
No Response	0	0	1	1	1	2

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Cost

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Expensive	1	3	1	4	5	9
Inexpensive	15	14	14	49	43	92
Variable	0	0	0	1	0	1
No Response	8	6	5	10	19	29

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131

Evaluation of the Edison Parking Lot

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Problems with Multiple Entries	0	1	0	4	1	5
Far from the Beach	0	0	1	2	1	3
Needs Group/Local Rates	0	2	1	1	3	4
Shabby	0	1	0	0	1	1
Cheap/O.K	3	11	12	54	26	80
Other	2	1	0	2	3	5
No Response	19	7	6	7	32	39

Park Knowledge

	Bay 1	Bay 5/6	Bay 14	Picnic Areas	Bay Total	Total
Yes	6	4	9	9	19	28
No	11	15	5	53	31	84
No Response	7	4	6	2	17	19

Number of interviews: Bay 1=24, Bay 5-6=23, Bay 14=20, Picnic areas=67, Total=131