National Park System
1998 Visitor Survey Card Data Report

Introduction

To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), a visitor survey was conducted in 310 units of the National Park System in FY98. The survey was developed to measure each park unit's performance related to NPS GPRA Goals IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and appreciation).

The results of the Visitor Survey Card (VSC) survey are summarized in this report. A description of the research methods and limitations is on the back page.

Below (left) is a graph summarizing visitor opinions of the "overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities" in the National Park System. The satisfaction measure is the combined percentage of "good" and "very good" responses. This is the primary performance measure for Goal IIa1. (The satisfaction measure may not equal the sum of "very good" and "good" percentages due to rounding.)

Below (right) are the survey results for GPRA goal IIa1.

Understanding the Results

Inside this report are graphs that present the combined survey results for the National Park System. The report contains three categories of data - park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Within these categories are graphs for each indicator evaluated by park visitors. For example, the park facilities category includes indicators such as visitor center, exhibits, restrooms, and so forth. In addition, responses for indicators within each category are averaged into a combined graph for the category (e.g., combined park facilities).
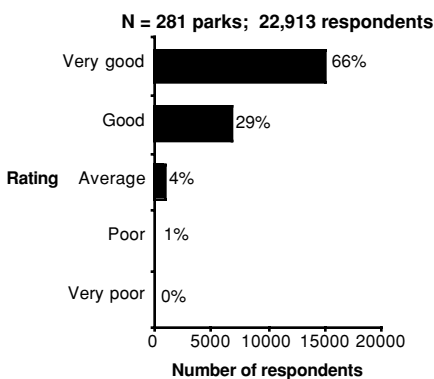
Each graph includes the following information:

- the number of parks and visitor responses for the indicator;

- the percentage of responses which were "very good," "good," "average," "poor," and "very poor;"

- a satisfaction measure that combines the percentage of total responses which were "very good" or "good;" and

- an average evaluation score (mean score) based on the following values: very poor = 1, poor = 2, average = 3, good = 4, very good = 5.

Very Poor |___|___|___|___|___| Very Good
          1   2   3   4   5

The higher the average evaluation score, the more positive the visitor response.

Overall quality of facilities, services & recreational opportunities

N = 281 parks; 22,913 respondents

Rating	Percentage
Very good	66%
Good	29%
Average	4%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents: 0 5000 10000 15000 20000

Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

GPRA Reporting Results for Goal IIa1

Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities:
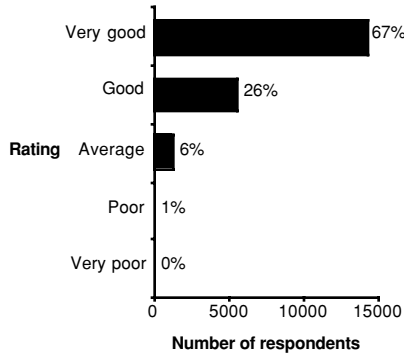
95%

Systemwide response rate:

24%
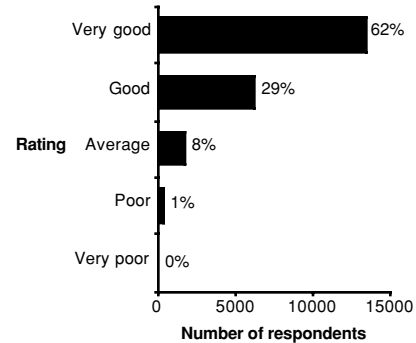

National Park System
Park Facilities

Visitor center

N = 281 parks; 21,227 respondents

Rating	
Very good	67%
Good	26%
Average	6%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents

Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Exhibits

N = 281 parks; 21,725 respondents

Rating	
Very good	62%
Good	29%
Average	8%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents

Satisfaction measure: 91%
Average evaluation score: 4.5

Restrooms

N = 281 parks; 19,901 respondents

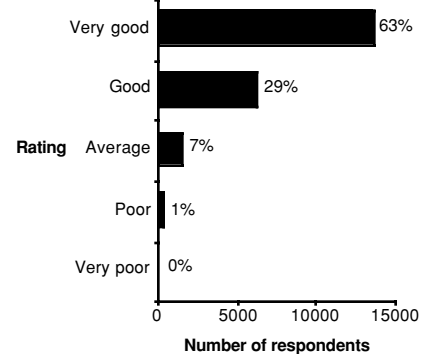| Rating	
Very good	50%
Good	31%
Average	14%
Poor	4%
Very poor	1%

Number of respondents
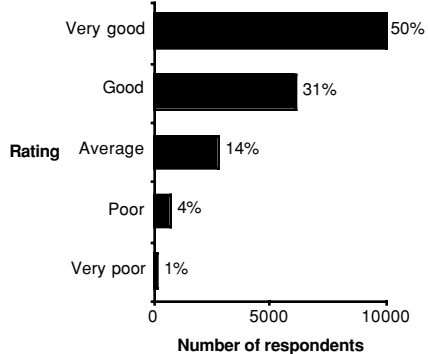
Satisfaction measure: 81%
Average evaluation score: 4.3

Walkways, trails, and roads

N = 281 parks; 21,696 respondents

Rating	
Very good	63%
Good	29%
Average	7%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

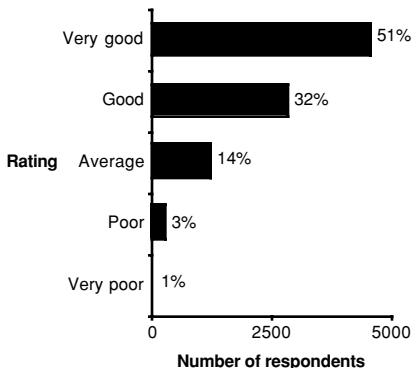**Number of respondents**

Satisfaction measure: 91%
Average evaluation score: 4.5

Campground and/or picnic areas

N = 268 parks; 8,855 respondents

Rating	
Very good	51%
Good	32%
Average	14%
Poor	3%
Very poor	1%

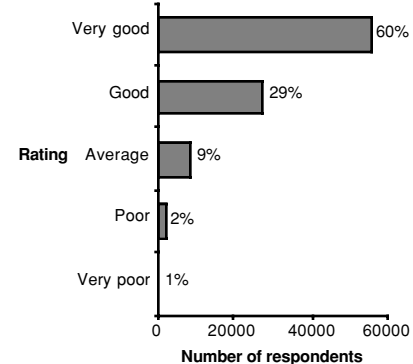**Number of respondents**

Satisfaction measure: 83%
Average evaluation score: 4.3

Combined park facilities

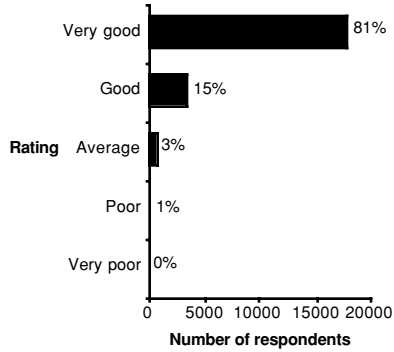**N = 21,725 responses (based on 5 indicators)**

Rating	
Very good	60%
Good	29%
Average	9%
Poor	2%
Very poor	1%

Number of respondents

Satisfaction measure: 89%
Average evaluation score: 4.5

National Park System
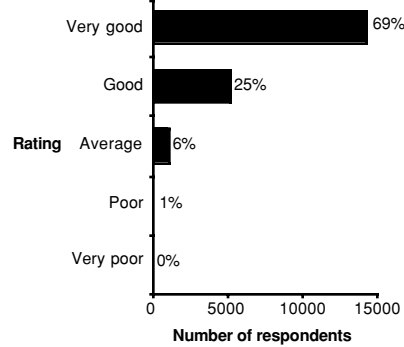## Visitor Services

Assistance from park employees

N = 281 parks; 22,148 respondents

Rating	
Very good	81%
Good	15%
Average	3%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents (0, 5000, 10000, 15000, 20000)

Satisfaction measure: 96%
Average evaluation score: 4.8

Park map or brochure

N = 281 parks; 20,824 respondents

Rating	
Very good	69%
Good	25%
Average	6%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents (0, 5000, 10000, 15000)

Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Ranger programs

N = 281 parks; 10,375 respondents

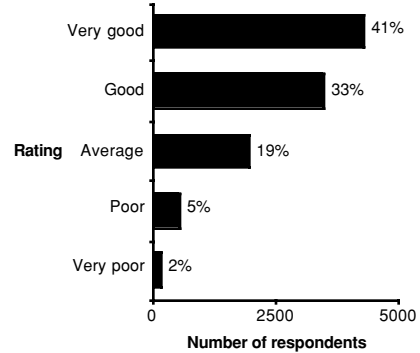| Rating	
Very good	72%
Good	21%
Average	5%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents (0, 2000, 4000, 6000, 8000)
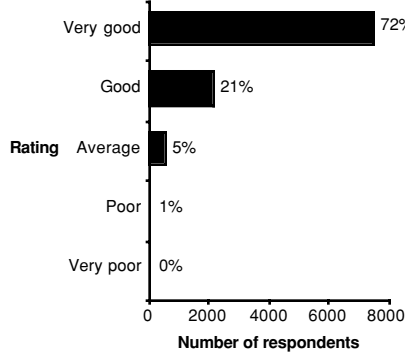
Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Commercial services in the park

N = 279 parks; 10,485 respondents

Rating	
Very good	41%
Good	33%
Average	19%
Poor	5%
Very poor	2%

Number of respondents (0, 2500, 5000)
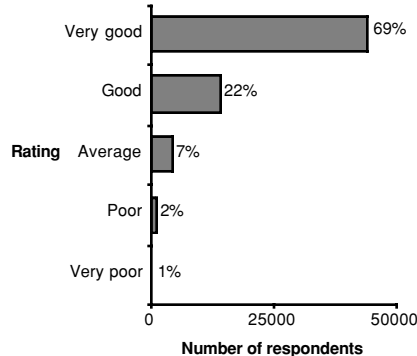
Satisfaction measure: 74%
Average evaluation score: 4.1

Combined visitor services

N = 22,148 responses (based on 4 indicators)

Rating	
Very good	69%
Good	22%
Average	7%
Poor	2%
Very poor	1%

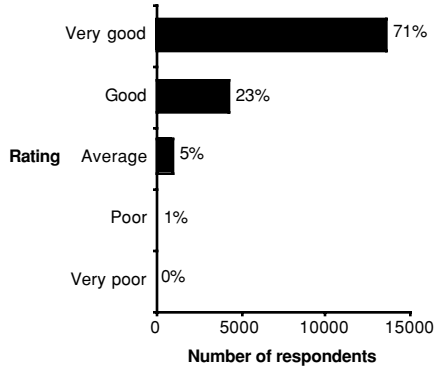**Number of respondents** (0, 25000, 50000)

Satisfaction measure: 91%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

National Park System
Recreational Opportunities
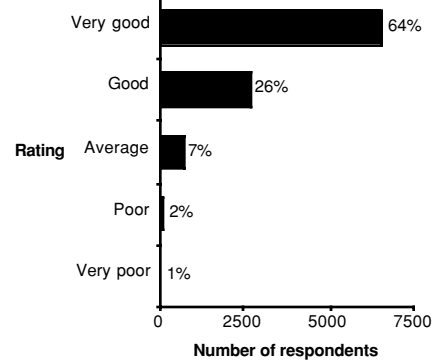
Learning about nature, history, or culture

N = 281 parks; 19,154 respondents

Rating	Percent
Very good	71%
Good	23%
Average	5%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents

Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Outdoor recreation

N = 258 parks; 10,200 respondents

Rating	Percent
Very good	64%
Good	26%
Average	7%
Poor	2%
Very poor	1%

Number of respondents

Satisfaction measure: 91%
Average evaluation score: 4.5

Sightseeing

N = 281 parks; 19,276 respondents

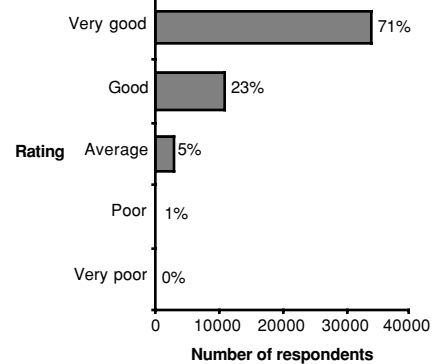| Rating	Percent
Very good	74%
Good	21%
Average	4%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents
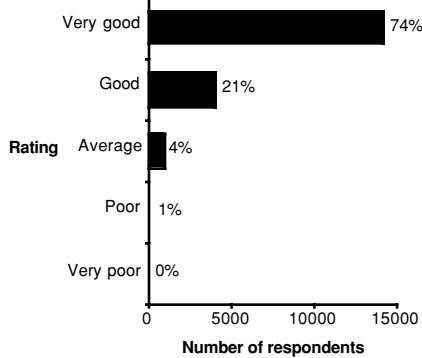
Satisfaction measure: 95%
Average evaluation score: 4.7

Combined recreational opportunities

N = 19,276 responses (based on 3 indicators)

Rating	Percent
Very good	71%
Good	23%
Average	5%
Poor	1%
Very poor	0%

Number of respondents

Satisfaction measure: 93%
Average evaluation score: 4.6

Research Methods

Survey cards were distributed to a random sample of visitors to 310 parks in the National Park System during the period June15 – September 15, 1998. At each park, visitors were sampled at selected locations representative of the general visitor population.

Returned cards were electronically scanned and the data analyzed. Responses from individual parks in the National Park System were combined into one dataset. Data from parks with less than 30 returned cards, or from parks with discrepancies in data collection methods, were omitted from this report. Frequency distributions were calculated for each indicator and category.

All percentage calculations were rounded to the nearest percent. The response rate was calculated by dividing the total number of returned survey cards by the total number of survey cards distributed. The sample size ("N") varies from figure to figure, depending on the number of responses.

The results do not necessarily apply to visitors during other times of the year, to park visitors who did not visit the survey locations, or to park units in the National Park System that did not participate in the survey.