2017 Minnesota State Parks Visitor Survey

November 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources staff contributed to the development and completion of this research. From the Division of Parks and Trails: Erika Rivers, Phil Leversedge, Pat Arndt, Laura Preus, Rachel Hopper, Arielle Courtney, Jade Templin, Darin Newman, Brad Chatfield, and all staff involved in coordinating survey distribution.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Characteristics of Minnesota Residents visiting MN State Park

This section of the report focuses on Minnesota residents that visited Minnesota state parks and contrasts these visitors with the population of Minnesota as a whole. The age and party composition of Minnesotans visiting the state parks is shifting slightly younger in 2017 compared to 2012 (p.10-12).

- Adults between 19 and 40 years of age are a significantly lower percentage of the party composition in 2017 than in 2012 (23% vs. 27%).
- Children 12 years old or younger are a significantly higher percentage of the party composition in 2017 than in 2012 (24% vs. 19%).
- The age distribution of survey respondents mirrors the Minnesota population.
- In terms of party composition, the portion of Minnesota parties with children/teens is higher in 2017 than in 2012, and similar to 2007 (2007, 44%: 2012, 39%; 2017, 44%), reinforcing the idea that the shift towards older visitors seen in prior studies has slowed.

Minnesota residents visiting state parks continue to be concentrated in the non-Hispanic white population, with some gains in the representation of non-white and/or Hispanic Minnesota residents (p.12-14).

- In 2017 5.1% of park visitors are non-white and/or Hispanic, compared to 3.1% in 2012. In comparison, the non-white and/or Hispanic population in Minnesota has grown by 20% between 2010 and 2017.
- The non-Hispanic white population has shown little growth over the last 10 years and is expected to decline over the coming decades, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
    - ➢ These trends along with the current park visitation patterns will continue to exert pressure on efforts to maintain and expand visitation at state parks.

Minnesota residents visiting state parks come from throughout the state. The distribution of Minnesota residents visiting state parks mirrors the distribution of the Minnesota population, based on the Explore Minnesota tourism regions. Out-of-state visitors are slowly growing as a percent of all visitors, comprising 19% of 2017 visitors compared to 16% in 2001 (p. 14-15, 23).

The educational attainment and household income of Minnesota residents visiting the state parks in this study is consistent with prior studies. These park visitors from Minnesota have more formal education and higher median household income than the general Minnesota population (p. 15-17).

Prior use of Minnesota state parks is changing, reflective of an increase in first time visitors. These changes are happening at varying rates, thus significant differences occur across different timeframes in the comparisons below (p. 17-18).

- While over half of state park visitors from Minnesota continue to be repeat visitors to the same park, the percentage is significantly lower than in 2012 (2017, 59%; 2012, 72%).
- The history of visitation among Minnesotans is shifting slightly. The percentage of visitors that have visited state parks for one year or less is significantly higher in 2017 than in 2007 (2017, 8%; 2007, 5%).
- The percentage of visitors that have visited state parks for one year, five years or 10 years or less has increased, and visitors with 20 years and 30 years or less experience has decreased compared to 2007.
    - ➢ These shifts reflect both park visitors visiting different parks, rather than returning to the same park, as well as visitors who are visiting any state park for the first time.

Characteristics of the State Park Trip

Social and digital media are growing significantly as important sources of park information, along with 'places I stay' and 'recreational opportunity maps and directories'. Print-based sources such as *Minnesota Explorer* and the state highway map are declining as important sources of park information (p. 19-21).

- Information sources don't vary significantly between campers and day visitors.
- Older adults rely on printed information sources as well as more traditional media such as TV. Other information sources also vary across age groups.
    - ➢ Digital and print media can be designed and targeted based on age.

State park visitors are traveling further and the percent of day visitors on trips has increased compared to prior studies (p. 24-25, 28-29). The planning interval for park visits is trending longer, compared to 2012.

- While one-third of park visitors decide to visit the day they arrive at a park, this is primarily day visitors. Planning intervals are trending longer, with 42% of campers planning 1-5 months in advance compared to 33% in 2012.
- Younger park visitors and visitors with income under $50,000 are significantly more likely than older visitors and higher income visitors to spontaneously visit state parks.

Park visitor participation in activities in 2017 is very similar to 2012 and 2007. Hiking remains the most common activity and the only activity mentioned by a majority of visitors (72%) (p. 21-22, 29-30).

- Campers are significantly more likely than day visitors to engage in 10 out of the 19 activities listed in the survey. Campers are also significantly more likely to bring a dog or other pet to the park (29% vs. 16%).
- Attending a staff-led program attracts seven percent of visitors to state parks.

Only 20% of the nights spent by visitors on overnight trips away from home are spent in the park they were visiting. Among the nights spent in the park, the majority continue to be spent in the campground rather than cabins or yurts (p. 25-26).

- While the number of park visitors continues to increase, day visitors are growing faster, so they make up a greater percentage of the visitors compared to 2012.
- The percent of all nights visitors are spending away from home that are spent in state parks has declined by 10 percentage points since 2012 (2017, 20%, 2012, 30%).
    - ➢ Stronger demand for accommodations through visitors' longer travel distances and more day visitors on trips is being met outside the state parks. (This assumes that day visitors at one park aren't using another state park for accommodations.)
    - ➢ This stronger demand presents an opportunity to the state parks to capture a greater percentage of the nights visitors are spending on their trips, if there is additional capacity in state parks or more capacity can be built to host more overnight visitors.

- While the percentage of campers wanting an electrical site has remained steady since 2012, the portion of campers who wanted and got an electric site in 2017 has fallen significantly from 90% in 2012 to 83% in 2017 (p. 27-28).
    - ➢ Further analysis is needed to understand the impact of this electric site shortfall on camper reservations.

<u>Satisfaction with the State Park Trip and Perceived Value of Fees</u>

The overall trip satisfaction top box rating (completely satisfied) is 54%, the top two box rating (completely satisfied and very satisfied) is 89% (p. 30-32).

- Day visitors are significantly more likely than campers to report being 'completely satisfied', while campers are more likely to report being 'somewhat satisfied.'
- A majority of longer-term visitors continue to report their experience has gotten better over time. However, the perception of park-experience quality across all

long-term visitors is trending back towards the lower levels seen in 2007, after improvement in 2012.

- ➢ Addressing reasons for lower camper satisfaction rates will improve overall trip satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the top 10 factors visitors consider most important (excluding park natural landscapes) to an enjoyable visit is 65% or lower. Trails, trail signage and campground issues are among the top 10 factors with the lowest satisfaction ratings. Further analysis is detailed in the report (p. 32-40).

Annual vehicle entrance permits are significantly more likely to be rated a 'good value' and daily vehicle entrance permits are significantly more likely to be rated a 'fair value' (p. 40-41).

- The July 1st cost increase in daily vehicle permit had no significant impact on the perceived value of the daily permit.
    - ➢ Given the lower rating of daily permits compared to annual permits, further price increases may be best applied to the annual permit.

<u>Support and Opposition to Potential Changes, Use of Contact Information</u>

Visitors are most supportive of more hiking opportunities, wider campsites, and more learning opportunities. The changes most opposed by visitors include four of the six revenue-generating changes along with three items visitors have opposed in prior studies. More details are in the report (p. 42-45).

- ➢ Focus on improved building and ground maintenance, trails and signage is further supported by these responses and the dominance of hiking as a park activity.
- ➢ Given the support for learning opportunities, focus on the scheduling, types and quality of programming is warranted.

One-third of visitors consider any use of DNR-collected contact information as unacceptable. Half of campers support use for updates on transactions or trips. Nearly half of park visitors (45%) support the use of contact information for DNR-related research or issues. Variations in support by age and income are detailed in the report (p. 45-46).

- ➢ Roll out the use of contact information first among campers for transactions and trip updates, progressing to DNR-related uses.
- ➢ Day visitors are less engaged, so opportunities to obtain their opt-in for DNR-related contacts could strengthen their involvement, build rapport and potentially stimulate more visits.

- Use by other organizations should only follow greater acceptance of DNR-related uses.

BACKGROUND

The 2012 state park visitor study is the latest in a series that date back to 1987. This tracking study is rooted in an understanding of park visitors: who they are and what they desire from the parks. Studies such as this reflect the Minnesota State Parks and Trails Division belief that a successful park system depends on staying close to the visitor, understanding both their perception of the park experience and how that experience may be enhanced. They help to realize the vision of the Minnesota State Parks and Trails Division: "Our vision is to create unforgettable park, trail, and water recreation experiences that inspire people to pass along the love of the outdoors to current and future generations."

The 2017 study does not include an update to park visitor trip spending. This economic activity was last done in 2012 and is anticipated to be repeated in the next survey in this series scheduled for 2022.

This document contains the results of the 2017 research. Topics include visitor demographic characteristics, trip characteristics, in-park experience, and preferences for potential park management changes. When possible, 2017 information is presented in the context of previous studies, so trends become evident. Please note that Tables 1-10 are based on Minnesota visitors only and tables 11-29 are based on all visitors. The number of responses for each question are noted on the tables as 2017 n=#. This number varies depending upon the number of respondents who answered a question (sometimes respondents choose to skip questions), the sub-group of respondents being reported or the exclusion of 'don't know' responses.

Overall, the 2017 results confirm many of the patterns and trends found in the 2012 study, the most recent previous study (Reference 1). Statistically significant differences are noted throughout the report.

METHODOLOGY

The 2017 park visitor study focused on visitor activities, trip characteristics, satisfaction with their experience, perceived value of park fees and opinions on potential changes to park facilities, services and programs. The study was conducted during the high use season (Memorial Day to Labor Day). Nearly all of the state parks across the parks system participated in the study.

Parks were randomly assigned to a sampling schedule that included random assignment to a specific week within the collection period and then randomly assigned to a weekday (Tuesday) or weekend (Saturday) distribution. Print surveys were distributed by park staff to one person in a party. Park visitors were stopped as they exited the park and given the survey to complete and send back via US mail. Before leaving park visitors provided their name and address on reminder postcards, which were collected by park staff. These reminder postcards and a second survey were mailed to non-respondents. Overall, 1735 surveys were distributed to park staff and only 71 were not distributed by park staff due to various logistical and staffing issues. For the first time, the survey was also available online, providing park visitors a choice to complete the survey via the web or mailing the paper version. Of the 934 surveys completed, 12% were completed online, a worthwhile result for the first online version. The total return rate was 59%, which is much higher than is typically seen in self-administered mail surveys and sufficiently high to allay concerns about potential response bias.

Figure 1

Survey responses are weighted by 2016 park visitation to make it representative of the park visitor population. Weighting is done using a combination of type of visitor (day visitor, camper), day of the week (weekdays, weekend/holidays), and Explore Minnesota region of the park (see Figure 1). A slight difference in weighting for Region 1 was used to ensure the weighting was within weighting norms, without significantly impacting the results.

Aside from the addition of the online version, the 2017 distribution followed the same basic research methodology of prior park visitor studies.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINNESOTANS VISITING STATE PARKS

Age and Party Composition

State Park visitation from Minnesotans currently draws substantially from all age classes in the Minnesota population (Table 1). This year the age composition table is based on visitor-reported numbers of people in their party. In 2017 there is a statistically significant increase in children and significant decrease in the percentage of younger adults, 19-40 years of age, compared to 2012.

Table 1

Party Composition and Age Distribution of Minnesotans visiting MN State Parks

	2001	2007	2012	2017
Average Party Size	3.1	3.2	2.9	2.8
Age Class				
Adults (41 and older)	69% **	71% **	47%	46%
Adults (19 to 40)	-----	-----	27% *	23% *
Teens (13 to 18)	7%	10%	8%	8%
Children (12 or under)	24%	20%	19% *	24% *

Median age	2001	2007	2012	2017
Adult Visitors	44	48	51	51
MN Population	36	37	38	38

2017 n=735

* Significant difference

**Note: 2001 & 2007 versions only included one adult class

The survey respondent population is seen in Table 2. The 2017 survey, like past surveys, didn't gather age information for each visitor, but did ask the survey respondents to provide their age. Table 2 uses that information to create age classes for respondents only, rather than using that information to extrapolate the ages of all visitors. Consideration should be given to adding a question that gathers information on all ages in a visiting party to future visitor surveys. The value of such information, such as providing a comparison to the Minnesota population, needs to be weighed against the additional respondent burden of such a question in an already lengthy survey.

Table 2

Age distribution of Minnesota respondents visiting MN State Parks

(MN respondents only)

Age class	All visitors (percent)	Day visitors (percent)	Campers (percent)	MN population, 2016** (percent)
18-29 years old	11%	12%	10%	20%
30-44 years old	29%	28%	35%	25%
45-64 years old	42%	42%	44%	35%
65 +	18%	19%	11%	20%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Median age

Adult Visitors	51
MN Population	38

2017 n=746

** Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimate, 2016.

Party composition is another measure that can shed light on trends in the age structure of park visitation. In 2017, the portion of parties from Minnesota with children/teens is about the same or more than in previous years of 2001, 2007 and 2012 (Table 3). The 2017 percentage of adult only parties and parties with teens/children is more similar to 2007 than 2012. Since children/teen parties are a higher portion in 2017 than in 2012, it reinforces the idea that the pace of the age shift has slowed in the youngest age classes.

Table 3

Party composition of Minnesotans visiting MN State Parks

Party composition	Park visitors, 2001 (percent)	Park visitors, 2007 (percent)	Park visitors, 2012 (percent)	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)
Adult only parties:				
1 adult, 0 teens/children	14%	11%	15%	12%
2 adult, 0 teens/children	33%	35%	38%	30%
3+ adult, 0 teens/children	11%	11%	9%	14%
Subtotal percent	*58%*	*56%*	*61%*	*56%*
Parties with teens/children:				
1 adult, 1+ teens/children	6%	9%	5%	5%
2+ adult, 1+ teens/children	34%	34%	31%	33%
0 adult, 1+ teens/children	3%	1%	2%	6%
Subtotal percent	*42%*	*44%*	*39%*	*44%*
Total percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=757

Race and ethnicity

State Park visitation is concentrated in the non-Hispanic white population, a pattern of participation that has been largely stable since 2001 (Table 4). While nearly 20% of the Minnesota population is currently non-white and/or Hispanic, only 5% of park visitors from Minnesota come from these populations. On a per-capita basis, the non-white and/or Hispanic populations (as a group) are under-represented in park visitation, with 26% of this Minnesota population visiting state parks. This is an improvement compared to 2012, when only 18% of the non-white and/or Hispanic population visited state parks.

While the growth of non-white and Hispanic park visitors rose from 3.1% in 2012 to 5.1% in 2017 (Table 4), the non-white and Hispanic MN population between 2010 and 2017 has risen by 20% (Table 5). The non-Hispanic white population — from which state parks draws most visitors — has shown little growth over the last 10 years in Minnesota and nationwide (Table 5) and is expected to decline from 198 million in 2014 to 182 million in 2060 nationwide, according to recent population projections from the U.S. Census Bureau (Reference 5). These population trends, in conjunction with the visitation patterns by race and ethnicity, will continue to exert pressure on efforts to maintain and expand visitation at state parks.

Table 4

Race and ethnicity distribution of Minnesota respondents visiting MN State Parks
(MN respondents only)

	Park visitors, 2001* (percent)	Park visitors, 2007 (percent)	Park visitors, 2012 (percent)	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)	MN population, 2016** (percent)
Race & Ethnicity					
White, Non-Hispanic/Latino	96.5%	97.2%	96.9%	94.9%	80.5%
Non-white and/or Hispanic/Latino	3.5%	2.8%	3.1%	5.1%	19.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.0%
Race					
White	96.9%	97.7%	97.3%	95.3%	83.3%
Non-white	3.1%	2.3%	2.7%	4.7%	16.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	100.0%
Ethnicity					
Non-Hispanic/Latino	99.5%	99.5%	99.6%	99.6%	94.8%
Hispanic/Latino	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	5.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	100%

2017 n=748
*Note: 2001 race calculations done without the "other" race class, which was not used in 2007 and 2012
**Source: American Community Survey, 2016 1 year estimate, tables B03002, B02001

Table 5

Changing racial and ethnicity composition of population in Minnesota and U.S., 2010 to 2016

(Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census)

Race & ethnicity	Population 2010	Population 2016	Numerical change	Percent change
Minnesota				
White, non-Hispanic	4,411,174	4,444,184	**33,010**	**1%**
Non-white and/or Hispanic	899,410	1,075,768	**176,358**	**20%**
Total	5,310,584	5,519,952	**209,368**	**4%**
U.S.				
White, non-Hispanic	196,929,412	197,479,450	**550,038**	**0%**
Non-white and/or Hispanic	112,420,277	125,648,065	**13,227,788**	**12%**
Total	309,349,689	323,127,515	**13,777,826**	**4%**

Source: 2010, 2016 American Community Survey, table B03002

Origin region

State Park visitors from Minnesota come from throughout the state (Table 6). The 2017 Minnesotan's origin region is very similar to the Minnesota population, with over half coming from the metro area. In 2017 the regions were changed from what was used in prior studies to more closely match the Explore Minnesota Tourism regions. Based on the stability of the past origin statistics, it is anticipated that the origin region distribution seen among park visitors will remain stable going forward.

Table 6

Explore MN Origin region of Minnesotans visiting MN State Parks

Region of origin**	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)	MN population, 2016* (percent)
Northwest	6%	6%
Northeast	7%	6%
South	18%	17%
Central	13%	13%
Metro	56%	59%
Total	100%	100%

2017 n=757

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Regions were different prior to 2017

Educational attainment

State Park visitors from Minnesota have far more formal education than the general Minnesota population, a consistent finding since 2001 (Table 7). Post-graduate degrees account for a quarter of the 2017 visitor population, compared to only 12% of the Minnesota population.

Table 7

Educational attainment of Minnesotans (age 25+) visiting MN State Parks

Educational attainment group	Park visitors, 2001 (percent)	Park visitors, 2007 (percent)	Park visitors, 2012 (percent)	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)	MN population, 2016* (percent)
High school graduate or higher	99%	99%	98%	99%	93%
Bachelor's degree or higher	57%	59%	60%	58%	35%
Post-graduate degrees	20%	22%	24%	26%	12%

2017 n=731

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Household income

State Park visitors from Minnesota have a higher median household income than the general Minnesota population (Table 8). Visitors tend to be more middle income than the general population; while the lowest income groups are under-represented in park visitation. This is consistent with prior studies.

Table 8

Household income of Minnesotans visiting MN State Parks

Income Class	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)	MN households, 2016* (percent)
Less than $20,000	5%	13%
$20,000 to $29,999	6%	8%
$30,000 to $39,999	6%	9%
$40,000 to $49,999	7%	8%
$50,000 to $59,999	7%	8%
$60,000 to $74,999	13%	10%
$75,000 to $99,999	25%	14%
$100,000 to $149,999	19%	17%
$150,000 or more	14%	13%
Total	100%	100%
Median	*Between $75,000 and $99,999*	*Between $60,000 and $74,999*

2017 n=712

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Table B19001

Prior use of state parks

Over half of State Park visitors from Minnesota continue to be repeat visitors to the specific park at which they were surveyed (Table 9, top box). The 2017 portion of repeat visitors to the same park is 59%. This is lower than has been reported at any time since 2001 and statistically significantly lower than in 2012 (72%).

Visitors have been coming to Minnesota state parks on average for 25 years, and the history of visitation is shifting slightly (Table 9, bottom box). The proportion of visitors who have been coming to parks one year or less, five years or less and 10 years or less has increased compared to 2007, and visitors who have been coming for 20 years or less and 30 years or less have decreased compared to 2007 visitors. The percent of visitors that have visited state parks for one year or less is significantly higher in 2017 than 2007 (8% vs. 5%). This is reflective of an increase in first time visitors.

Table 9

Prior Use of Minnesota State Parks by Minnesotans

Have you ever visited this state park before?
(responses of park visitors from Minnesota)

Response	Park visitors, 2001 (percent)	Park visitors, 2007 (percent)	Park visitors, 2012 (percent)	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)
Yes	74%	67%	72% *	59% *
No	26%	32%	27%	39%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Significant difference
2017 n=753

For how many years have you been visiting Minnesota State Parks?
(responses of park visitors from Minnesota)

Response measure	Park visitors, 2001	Park visitors, 2007	Park visitors, 2012	Park visitors, 2017
Median years	N/A	23	28	25
Mean years	N/A	25	27	25

Cumulative percent in year range	Park visitors, 2001	Park visitors, 2007	Park visitors, 2012	Park visitors, 2017
One year or less	N/A	5% *	5%	8% *
Five years or less	N/A	14%	18%	17%
Ten years or less	N/A	27%	28%	29%
Twenty years or less	N/A	49%	42%	47%
Thirty years or less	N/A	67%	62%	66%

* Significant difference
2017 n=733

Outdoor recreation involvement of state park visitors

As seen in previous studies, State Park visitors from Minnesota come from households that are significantly more involved than the general Minnesota population in a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits in Minnesota. State Park visitors are more likely than Minnesota households in general, to have fishing and hunting licenses as well as registrations of boats, ATVs, and snowmobiles (Table 10).

Table 10

Do you or a member of your household have this license or registration?
(responses of park visitors from Minnesota)

2017 n=	Type of license or registration	Park visitor households*	All Minnesota households*
		---------- Percent of households with license or registration ----------	
752	Current MN fishing license	53%	38%
746	Current MN hunting license	31%	26%
750	A boat currently registered in MN	39%	27%
741	An ATV currently registered in MN	18%	10%
742	A snowmobile currently registered in MN	12%	5%

*Sources: MN State Park Visitor Survey, 2017; and MN DNR, Licensing and Registration records for 2016

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STATE PARK TRIP

Information sources

Compared with 2012, general websites and social media have grown significantly as important sources of park information, along with places people stay and recreational maps and directories. Other sources have declined or stayed about the same (Table 11). In 2017, the MN DNR website is the leading information source for visitors, eclipsing both word of mouth ("family and friends") and general websites. Other leading information sources are the MN State Parks and Trails Guide, information at one or more MN State Parks, and the MN state highway map. Both the MN state highway map and the Minnesota Explorer newspapers have continued their decline in importance from their 2007 levels of 40% and 26%, respectively and are significantly lower than in 2012. Both DNR website use and use of general websites is much higher in 2017 than in 2007.

When viewing this data, it is worth taking into consideration that the survey's list of sources doesn't identify a source as print or online (some exist in both print and the digital space), leaving it subject to differing respondent interpretations. In future surveys, a review of the list's length, potential removal of little-used sources and specifying a source as print or digital would be worthwhile

Table 11

When you obtain information about Minnesota State Parks, what are your most important information sources?

(table values are the percent of visitors indicating a source as important)

		-------------- 2017 data --------------			-- 2012 data --	-- Compare 2017 to 2012 --
Category	Information source	All visitors (percent)	Day visitors (percent)	Campers (percent)	All visitors (percent)	All visitors (2017 - 2012)
Minnesota DNR Sources						
	MN DNR website	65%	64%	76%	64%	1%
	Minnesota State Parks and Trails Guide	51%	51%	48%	49%	2%
	Information at one or more Minnesota State Parks	35%	36%	28%	33%	2%
	Minnesota State Park & Trail Program and Special Events Catalog	11%	11%	8%	9%	2%
	Minnesota State Parks and Trails Facebook	11%	11%	9%	----	----
	MN DNR telephone information center	4%	4%	4%	5%	-1%
	MN DNR electronic information kiosk	3%	3%	1%	2%	1%
	PRIM recreation maps	2%	2%	3%	3%	-1%
Explore Minnesota Tourism sources						
	Explore Minnesota Tourism website	28%	28%	25%	27%	1%
	Minnesota Explorer newspaper	10%	10%	7%	16%	-6% *
	Highway information centers	9%	10%	6%	11%	-2%
	Explore Minnesota Tourism phone information center	4%	4%	3%	2%	2%
General Sources						
	Websites	59%	59%	59%	40%	19% *
	Family and friends	58%	58%	57%	54%	4%
	Recreational opportunity maps and directories	25%	26%	19%	15%	10% *
	Minnesota's State Highway Map	23%	24%	20%	31%	-8% *
	Social Media**	19%	20%	16%	4%	15% *
	Places I stay (e.g., resorts, campgrounds)	18%	18%	19%	10%	8% *
	Travel guides/agents	11%	11%	7%	8%	3%
	Newspapers or magazines	11%	12%	3%	10%	1%
	Chambers of commerce/convention and visitors bureaus	9%	10%	5%	12%	-3%
	Other road maps	8%	8%	7%	11%	-3%
	Community Events (e.g., Boating/camping/sports shows, fairs)	7%	7%	6%	5%	2%
	Outdoor equipment stores	5%	5%	5%	6%	-1%
	Radio	4%	4%	3%	3%	1%
	TV	4%	4%	2%	6%	-2%

2017 n=901

* Significant difference from 2012

**2012 Twitter, Facebook categories combined into social media.

Campers and day visitors share the same basic ranking of information-source importance. Older adults rely on printed information sources such as the state road map and *Minnesota Explorer* newspaper, as well as TV, Explore Minnesota phone center, Chamber of Commerce/visitor bureaus more than younger visitors. Social media is considered an important source by 19-27% of visitors under age 65 and only 11% among visitors 65 years of age and older. Family and friends is indicated more frequently as an important information source by adults under 45 years of age than adults 65 years and older. The importance of outdoor equipment stores, radio, newspapers, travel guides, community events and other information sources also vary across some age groups. More details can be seen in the cross tabulation tables.

<u>In-park activities</u>

Park activity participation in 2017 is largely the same as in 2012 and 2007. Hiking/walking is by far the leading activity (Table 12). Campers are significantly more likely to engage in hiking/walking, water activities, biking, visiting historic sites, bird watching and relaxing than day visitors.

Participation in many activities varies by age. For example, visitors under 30 years of age are more likely to engage in jogging or running as well as self-guided nature walks than older visitors. Visitors 45 years of age or older are more likely to bird watch than those less than 45 years old. Swimming, picnicking, fishing, relaxing, canoeing and shopping activities also vary across some age groups. More details can be seen in the cross tabulation tables.

One in six visitors brings their dog or other pet with them to the parks. Campers are significantly more likely than day visitors to be accompanied by a pet.

Table 12

Which of the following activities did you participate in while visiting this park on this trip?

(table values are the percent of visitors indicating they participated in the activity)

	--------------- 2017 data ---------------		
Activity	All visitors (percent)	Day visitors (percent)	Campers (percent)
Hiking/walking	72%	70%	87% *
Observing/photographing nature	42%	43%	39%
Sightseeing	32%	32%	37%
Taking a self-guided nature walk	26%	25%	31%
Looking at kiosks or visitor center exhibits	25%	25%	31%
Picnicking	25%	24%	30%
Shopping in the park's nature store	24%	23%	30%
Visiting historic sites	19%	18%	26% *
Bird watching	17%	16%	23% *
Swimming	16%	13%	35% *
Did nothing/relaxed	16%	12%	35% *
Camping†	14%	0%	100% *
Bicycling	12%	9%	29% *
Fishing	12%	10%	21% *
Canoeing/kayaking	7%	6%	18% *
Taking a naturalist-led program	6%	6%	5%
Motorboating	4%	4%	7%
Jogging/running	3%	3%	4%
Geocaching	2%	2%	5% *

2017 n=922

† based on visitor designation as camper

Did you bring your dog or other pet to the park on this visit?

	--------------- 2017 data ---------------		
Response	All visitors (percent)	Day visitors (percent)	Campers (percent)
Yes	17%	16%	29% *
No	83%	84%	72%

2017 n=923

*next to % denotes statistically significant difference between camper/day user

Origin region of all visitors

Most state park visitors are from Minnesota, with the metro region the origin of 45% of all 2017 visitors. Due to the realignment of the Minnesota origin regions mentioned previously, data from prior visitor studies is not displayed here.

Non-Minnesotans are slowly growing as a percent of all visitors, with the 19% seen in 2017 being significantly higher statistically, than the 16% seen in 2001. (Note: This table includes all visitors, while the preceding origin table (Table 6) includes only Minnesota visitors.)

Table 13

Explore MN Origin Region of State Park Visitors

Origin of visitor**	Visitors, 2017 (percent)
Northwest MN	5%
Northeast MN	6%
South MN	15%
Central MN	10%
Metro MN	45%
Minnesota subtotal	81%
Outside of Minnesota	19%
Total percent	100%

2017 n=934

**Regions were different prior to 2017

Travel distance from home

State parks serve a large local market and a growing long-distance (tourist) market (Table 14). Nearly one-quarter of all visitors are within 25 miles of home, while 51% are over 100 miles from home. Campers are significantly more likely than day visitors to travel between 51 and 200 miles. The median travel distance of all visitors in 2017 is higher than in 2012 or 2007.

Table 14

Travel distance from home for Minnesota State Park visitors

	--------------- 2017 visitors ---------------			--2012--	--2007--	--2001--
Miles from home	All visitors (percent)	Day visitors (percent)	Campers (percent)	All visitors (percent)	All visitors (percent)	All visitors (percent)
25 or less	23%	26%	3%	33%	27%	29%
26 to 50	9%	9%	9%	11%	12%	13%
51 to 100	17%	15%	23%	12%	15%	15%
101 to 200	23%	21%	38%	20%	21%	18%
over 200	28%	29%	27%	23%	25%	25%
Total percent	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Median miles	*101-200*	*51-100*	*101-200*	*80*	*97*	*80*

2017 n=914

Type of state park visitor

Nearly nine of ten park visitors are day visitors, and most of the day visitors are coming to the park from home (Table 15). The 2017 portion of day visitors from home has fallen back to 2001's level, reinforcing the rise in travel distance seen in Table 14. (Note: The portions of visitors who are campers and day visitors come from the visitation database; the portions of day visitors who are from home or on trips come from the visitor survey.)

Table 15

Type of State Park Visitor

Type of visitor	Visitors, 2001 (percent)	Visitors, 2007 (percent)	Visitors, 2012 (percent)	Visitors, 2017 (percent)
Day visitor from home	49%	52%	55%	49%
Day visitor on trip away from home	37%	35%	32%	37%
Day visitor subtotal	*86%*	*86%*	*87%*	*86%*
Camper	14%	14%	13%	14%
Total percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=934

Accommodations for visitors on overnight trips

Most park visitors on overnight trips away from home spend their nights outside the park (80%), with resorts, other campgrounds and friends' cabins as the primary accommodations (Table 16). For the 20% of nights spent in the park, the large majority are spent in the park campground, with only a small percentage staying in camper cabins or yurts. Park visitors are increasing and overnight use is increasing. However, the percent of all nights visitors are spending away from home that are spent in state parks has declined by 10 percentage points since the 2012 survey, when 30% of nights were in state parks. This indicates more demand for accommodations.

Table 16

Where are your nights spent on this overnight trip away from home?
(for park visitors on overnight trips)

Type of overnight accommodation	Percent of all nights
Campground in this state park	16%
Indoor lodging in this state park	3%
Subtotal: in this state park	*20%*
Resort, motel or bed & breakfast inn	28%
Other campground (public or private)	20%
Friend's or relative's house or cabin	25%
My cabin	5%
Other accommodation	2%
Subtotal: outside this state park	*80%*
Total	100%

2017 n=442

State park camper equipment

The equipment used by state park campers is mainly tents and vehicles, including pop-up trailers or motorhomes/5th wheel/hard-side trailers (Table 17). The 2017 portion of visitors who stayed in camper cabins maintains the increase seen in the 2012 survey. If camper cabins are excluded, the portion of campers using tents and vehicles is about 50/50, and has been relatively stable since 2001. The type of camping vehicle used in state parks continues to trend away from pop-up trailers, which are also being manufactured at a lower volume than in the past.

Table 17

What type of camping equipment did you use on this visit?

Camping equipment	Campers, 2001 (percent)	Campers, 2007 (percent)	Campers, 2012 (percent)	Campers, 2017 (percent)
Tent	49%	49%	44%	44%
Pop-up trailer	18%	14%	13%	10%
Motorhome, 5th wheel, or hard-sided trailer	29%	30%	34%	36%
Stayed in camper cabin	2%	3%	7%	8%
Other	2%	4%	3%	2%
Total percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=125

EXCLUDING CAMPER CABINS

Camping equipment	Campers, 2001 (percent)	Campers, 2007 (percent)	Campers, 2012 (percent)	Campers, 2017 (percent)
Tent	50%	50%	47%	48%
Pop-up trailer	18%	14%	14%	11%
Motorhome, 5th wheel, or hard-sided trailer	30%	31%	36%	39%
Stayed in camper cabin (excluded)	----	----	----	----
Other	2%	4%	3%	2%
Total percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=115

State park campers and electrical sites

The percentage of campers wanting an electrical site has remained steady since 2012. A majority of state park campers (87%) either get an electric site if they want one, or do *not* get an electric site if they do *not* want one (Table 18). The portion of campers who didn’t want and didn’t get an electric site has remained the same. The portion of campers who wanted and got an electric site has fallen from 90% in 2012 to 83% in 2017, a significant difference in the fulfillment of electric site requests.

Table 18

State Park Campers and Electrical Sites

Want an electrical site?	Campers, 2017 (percent)	
Campers who wanted an electric campsite:	57%	
Got an electric site	47%	
Did not get an electric site	10%	
Percent that got what they wanted	*83%*	*(83% =47%/57%)*
Campers who did not want an electric site:	43%	
Got an electric site	3%	
Did not get an electric site	40%	
Percent that got what they wanted	*93%*	*(93%=40%/43%)*
Total	100%	

2017 n=125

Advance planning for park trip

One-third of all visitors is spontaneous and decides to visit the park on the day of the outing (Table 19). Campers — not surprisingly — plan further in advance than day visitors; 40% of campers plan at least 3 months in advance. The percentage of campers who use a 1 to 30 days planning interval has fallen from 41% in 2012 to 36% in 2017, while the percentage of campers using a 1 to 5 months planning interval has risen from 33% in 2012 to 42% in 2017. Though these changes are not statistically significant, they reflect a trend toward a longer planning interval among campers. This reflects both the reservation policy change to require all sites to be reserved and an increased demand for campsites, while the supply of sites has remained nearly the same.

Park visitors younger than 30 are significantly more likely than visitors 30 to 64 years of age not to plan their visit and spontaneously go to a state park. While only 8% of all visitors plan 15-30 days in advance, visitors between 30 and 44 years of age are the least likely to use this planning interval. In terms of income, park visitors with income under $50,000 are more likely than all other income categories to not plan and spontaneously go to a state park. While only 8% of all visitors plan 15-30 days in advance, visitors with income of $150,000 or more are likely than other income categories to plan 15-30 days in advance.

Table 19

How many days (or months) in advance did you plan this trip to this park?

Days/months in advance	2017 All visitors (percent)	2017 Day visitors (percent)	2017 Campers (percent)	2012 Campers (percent)
None: decided trip on day of park visit	33%	38%	3%	5%
1 to 7 days	27%	29%	14%	21%
8 to 14 days	7%	6%	12%	12%
15 to 30 days	8%	8%	10%	8%
1 to 2 months	11%	10%	21%	18%
3 to 5 months	8%	6%	21%	15%
6 to 12 months	4%	3%	16%	18%
Over 12 months	1%	1%	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=908

Attraction to park of attending a park program

Attending a park program attracts less than one in ten visitors and this has remained steady compared to the 2012 survey. Adult only parties are significantly more likely than parties with teens or children to report attending a park program didn't attract them to the park. There are no significant differences based on camper/day visitor or age of respondent.

Table 20

Did attending a park program (e.g., a staff-led program) attract you to the park on this visit?

	---------------Response (percent)---------------			
Visitor group	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
All visitors	**7%**	**89%**	**4%**	**100%**
Type of visitor				
Day visitors	7%	89%	4%	100%
Campers	3%	92%	5%	100%
Party composition				
Adult only party	5%	92% *	3%	100%
Teens/children in party	9%	86% *	5%	100%
Age of respondent				
18-29 years	11%	85%	5%	100%
30-44 years	5%	89%	6%	100%
45-64 years	7%	91%	3%	100%
65 years or older	6%	90%	4%	100%

2017 n=909
* Significant difference

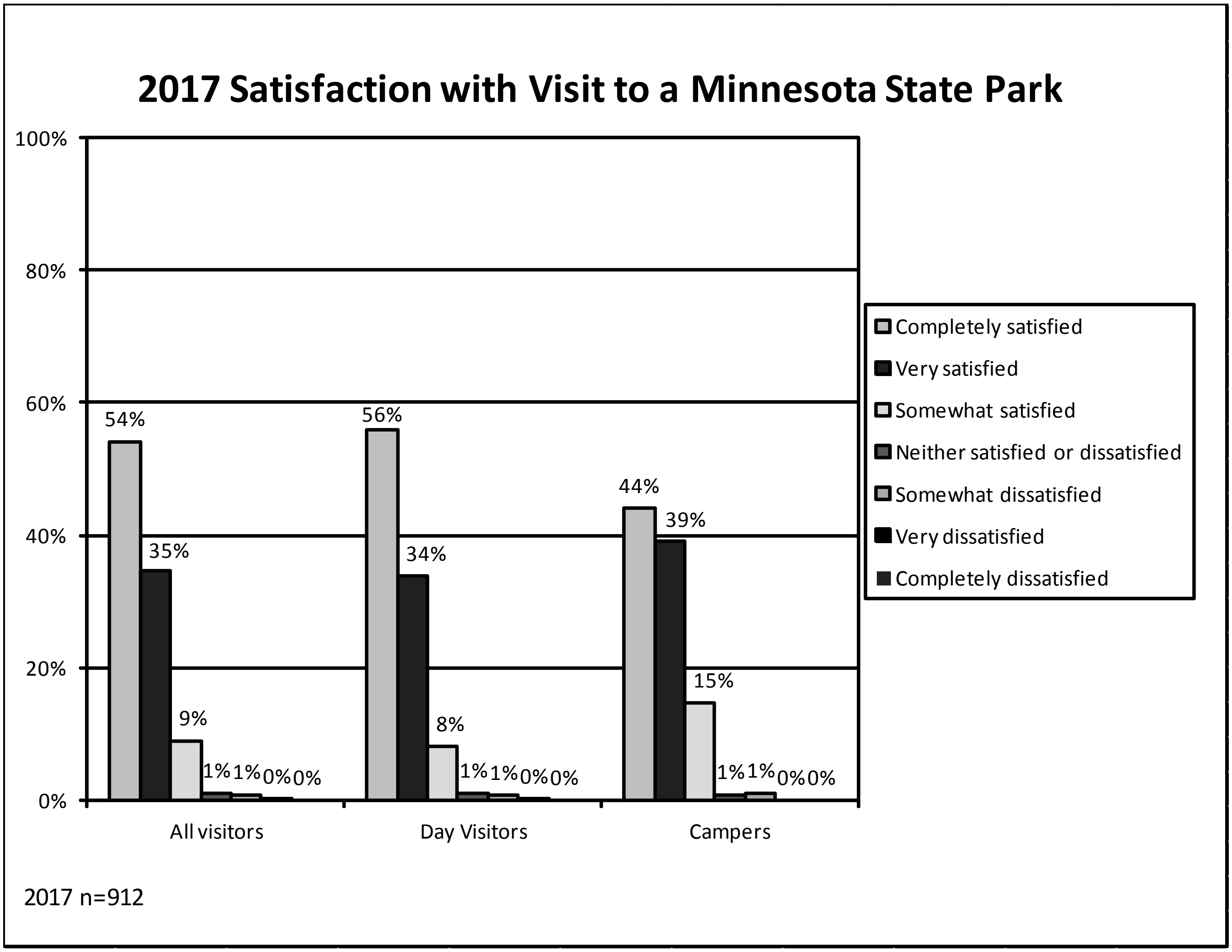
SATISFACTION WITH THE STATE PARK TRIP

Providing high-quality outdoor recreation experiences is a cornerstone of MN DNR efforts to retain and recruit recreation participants. High-quality experiences bring current participants back for more, and help recruit new participants when current participants share their satisfying experiences through word of mouth, a trusted form of communication.

Overall trip satisfaction

The chart below displays only 2017 overall satisfaction because the rating scale's language was changed this year to provide a better measure of satisfaction, thus a comparison to prior years would be inaccurate. In 2017 over half of park visitors report they are 'completely satisfied' and nearly 90 percent of visitors (89%) report being 'completely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' (Figure 2). For the remaining 11%, trip satisfaction could be improved, since they report being 'somewhat satisfied' or 'dissatisfied' to varying degrees. Day visitors are significantly more likely than campers to report they are 'completely satisfied', while campers are more likely to be 'somewhat satisfied'.

Figure 2



A majority of longer-term visitors (62%) believe the park experience has gotten better over time (Table 21). Few think it has gotten worse. While not statistically significant, the perception of park-experience quality is trending to the lower levels seen in 2007, after some improvement in 2012.

Table 21

Over the years you have visited the parks, has the quality of your park experience declined or improved?

(based on respondents who have been visiting Minnesota state parks for 10 or more years)

Response	Park visitors, 2007 (percent)	Park visitors, 2012 (percent)	Park visitors, 2017 (percent)
Greatly improved	12%	19%	17%
Improved	50%	48%	45%
Stayed about the same	25%	24%	28%
Declined	6%	3%	6%
Greatly declined	0%	1%	0%
Don't know	5%	5%	5%
Total percent	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=637

Satisfaction with specific items important to an enjoyable park visit

In the visitor survey, respondents are asked to rank the importance of 29 items that are potentially important to the respondent's enjoyment of the park. After the importance rating, the respondent is asked to rate their satisfaction with the item in the park. The combination of importance and satisfaction ratings is an effective approach to understanding the visitor's perspective on what is working well in the park, and what could be improved to make their park visit more enjoyable.

While the online survey could have asked satisfaction ratings for only those items rated as very important, it was decided that the online survey should mirror the print survey so online respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with all items, regardless of their importance rating of an item.
Of highest importance for all visitors (at least 70% rate as very important) are:

- Natural landscape items (park beauty, natural setting, lakes/rivers in park)
- Staffing and maintenance items (cleanliness of grounds/facilities, well protected natural resources)
- Trails and trail signage under recreation facilities and information/interpretation.

The importance of trails is no doubt connected to the prevalence of hiking and walking as the primary activity that visitors engage in when experiencing the park. For campers, the quality of campgrounds and associated facilities are the most important.

Although there is a large amount of communality of item-importance rankings across age of visitor, there are some notable differences. Visitors over the age of 65 are more likely than younger visitors to consider availability of park staff to answer questions and helpfulness of staff as very important, while they are less likely than 30-64 year old visitors to consider trails in the park as very important. Visitors 45 years or older are more likely than younger visitors to consider general informational brochures/maps provided, visitor center exhibits, videos and displays, attentiveness of park staff, and someone to greet me when I arrive as very important. The importance of quality of facilities in the picnic grounds, and lack of disturbances by other visitors rises as visitor age rises. Visitors over 45 years of age are more likely than those 30-44 years old to consider designated places to swim as <u>not</u> important (18-20% vs. 8%).

Visitors 30 years old and older are more likely than visitors under 30 to consider well-maintained, clean grounds and facilities as very important (84-88% vs. 74%). Visitors who are 30-44 years of age are the least interested in availability of souvenirs to purchase (8% vs. 19-26%). Visitors under 30 years old are more likely than older visitors to see learning from a staff-led program as <u>not</u> important (51% vs. 25-28%). For the camping items, the importance ratings don't vary by age.

Comparing the portion of visitors considering an item 'very important' in 2012 and 2007 to 2017, three items have risen in importance over the period: availability of convenience items to purchase, place for pets, and quality of picnic ground facilities. One item has steadily fallen in importance over the period: someone to greet me on arrival.

Table 22

How important is this item to making your park visit enjoyable?
&
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this item in this park?

(Importance scale: 1=not important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important)

		Percent of "very important" responses		*Satisfaction ratings for "very important" responses (percent)*					
Item group	Specific item	All visitors	Campers	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Total Percent
2017 n=									
Natural landscape									
840	Beauty of the park	82%	-----	77%	19%	2%	1%	1%	100%
820	A natural setting for the park	82%	-----	80%	17%	2%	1%	1%	100%
818	Lakes and rivers in the park	70%	-----	72%	22%	2%	2%	2%	100%
Staffing and maintenance									
830	Well-maintained, clean grounds and facilities	83%	-----	65%	27%	4%	3%	1%	100%
794	Well protected natural resources	79%	-----	68%	28%	4%	0%	1%	100%
774	Helpfulness of park staff	56%	-----	82%	15%	3%	0%	1%	100%
765	Lack of disturbances by other park visitors	53%	-----	**60%**	26%	10%	3%	1%	100%
757	Sense of safety provided by presence of park staff	48%	-----	64%	20%	12%	3%	1%	100%
711	Availability of park staff to answer questions	42%	-----	70%	18%	6%	3%	3%	100%
715	Attentiveness of park staff to my needs	34%	-----	82%	12%	4%	1%	1%	100%
691	Someone to greet me when I arrive at the park	23%	-----	80%	13%	3%	1%	3%	100%
Recreation opportunities									
793	Trails in the park	77%	-----	63%	32%	3%	2%	0%	100%
611	Quality of facilities in the picnic grounds	56%	-----	**58%**	29%	7%	4%	2%	100%
482	Designated places to swim	36%	-----	**59%**	23%	8%	3%	7%	100%
420	Boating opportunities (e.g., canoe/kayaking, motorboating)	36%	-----	**57%**	24%	14%	3%	2%	100%
420	Fishing opportunities	33%	-----	63%	22%	12%	2%	1%	100%
Information and interpretation									
534	Trail signs for finding my way around the park	73%	-----	**53%**	31%	9%	6%	1%	100%
760	General informational brochure/maps provided	56%	-----	**53%**	32%	11%	3%	1%	100%
701	Learning about the park using a self-guided trail, brochure, kiosk, or other self-guided means	40%	-----	**55%**	30%	10%	3%	2%	100%
617	Visitor center exhibits, videos, and displays	28%	-----	65%	29%	5%	2%	0%	100%
388	Learning about the park from a staff-led program	20%	-----	71%	21%	2%	4%	2%	100%
Facilities and services									
426	Place or accommodations for pets in the park	39%	-----	**57%**	27%	13%	3%	0%	100%
421	Accommodations for large family or social groups	27%	-----	68%	22%	7%	3%	0%	100%
539	Availability of convenience items to purchase	25%	-----	66%	21%	6%	2%	5%	100%
534	Availability of souvenirs to purchase	19%	-----	69%	20%	5%	4%	2%	100%
Camping (camper responses only)									
189	Quality of the campground	-----	83%	**52%**	38%	8%	2%	0%	100%
185	Quality of facilities in campground	-----	74%	**48%**	35%	10%	6%	2%	100%
175	Secluded campsites	-----	65%	**38%**	36%	15%	7%	4%	100%
173	Campground near lake or river	-----	56%	71%	19%	8%	1%	0%	100%

2017 n for importance question for each item is displayed in the far left column

Bold indicates < or = 60% 'very satisfied'

After ranking the importance of an item for an enjoyable visit, visitors indicated how satisfied they are with the item in the park. The right side of Table 22 displays the item's satisfaction ratings from visitors who ranked that item as 'very important'. Satisfaction ratings from visitors who considered an item of lesser importance are not evaluated in terms of satisfaction, because they were not as salient to the visitor's enjoyment of the park.

Some items have high satisfaction ratings (among visitors rating it as 'very important') and some are lower. None of the natural landscape items is of lower satisfaction. High satisfaction rated items are where the parks are performing well. The lower satisfaction items are potential candidates for performance improvement initiatives. (These items are in bold and boxed in Table 22.) These include any items with "very satisfied" ratings of 60% or below (i.e., some 40% or more of visitors who judge the item 'very important' report they are less than 'very satisfied' with it in the park). The items include:

- Staffing and maintenance: lack of disturbance by other park visitors
- Recreation opportunities:
  - Quality of facilities in the picnic grounds
  - Designated places to swim
  - Boating opportunities
- Information and interpretation:
  - Trail signs
  - General informational brochures/maps
  - Learning about the park through self-guided means
- Facilities and services: place or accommodations for pets in the park
- Camping:
  - Quality of campground
  - Quality of facilities in the campground
  - Secluded campsites

As noted, the preceding lower satisfaction items are candidates for efforts to raise satisfaction. These items are identified on satisfaction ratings for visitors ranking the item as 'very important'. For some applications this is appropriate. For instance, if you are concerned about the quality of learning opportunities in the parks for those visitors seeking such learning, then this satisfaction measure is appropriate.

Another approach is to look at the mean satisfaction of all visitors and by party composition and respondent age. A mean satisfaction threshold of 4.1 is used to display items where improvements would do the most good for the most number of visitors. Table 23 shows these items ranked from lowest mean score to highest.

When assessed this way (Table 23), eight items have low mean scores across <u>all</u> party composition and respondent age categories. These eight could receive additional attention under the rationale that improvements would impact the most visitors. Three items are water related: places to swim, fishing and boating opportunities. Two items are facility related: accommodations for large family or social groups and place or accommodations for pets in the park. The remaining items are learning about the park from a staff-led program and availability of convenience items and souvenirs to purchase.

Table 23

Items with mean satisfaction score of 4.1 or lower among all visitors

(all visitors)

Response of all visitors		*--------- Party Composition ---------*		*------------------------ Age of respondent ------------------------*			
Specific item	All visitors	Adult only	Contains teens and/or children	29 or younger	30 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years or older
Learning about the park from a staff-led program	3.77	3.79	3.76	3.37	3.94	3.77	3.93
Designated places to swim	3.89	3.89	3.89	3.78	3.94	3.94	3.66
Fishing opportunities	3.90	3.98	3.86	4.01	3.74	3.98	3.80
Place or accommodations for pets in the park	3.92	3.97	3.85	4.01	3.81	3.91	3.66
Availability of convenience items to purchase	3.93	3.92	3.96	3.94	3.92	3.93	3.89
Boating opportunities	3.93	3.97	3.89	3.84	3.90	3.94	3.88
Availability of souvenirs to purchase	3.97	3.99	3.99	3.92	3.91	4.02	3.87
Accommodations for large family or social groups	4.01	4.01	4.05	4.02	4.01	3.98	3.87
Visitor center exhibits, videos, and displays	4.04	4.08	4.01	3.85	3.98	4.05	
Learning about the park from a self-guided trail	4.09	4.07	4.10	4.01	4.09		4.03
Someone to greet me when I arrive at the park			4.06	3.99			
Sense of safety provided by presence of park staff				4.03	4.10		
Trail signs for finding my way around the park				4.05	4.10		
General informational brochure/maps provided							
Trails in the park							
Well-maintained, clean grounds and facilities							
Well protected natural resources							
Lack of disturbances by other park visitors							
Beauty of the park							
Quality of facilities in the picnic grounds				4.00			
Lakes and rivers in the park							
Helpfulness of park staff							
Availability of park staff to answer questions							
A natural setting for the park							
Attentiveness of park staff to my needs							

Response of campers		*--------- Party Composition ---------*		*------------------------ Age of respondent ------------------------*			
Specific item	All visitors	Adult only	Contains teens and/or children	29 or younger	30 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years or older
Secluded campsites	4.01	4.09	3.92			3.82	4.05
Quality of facilities in campground							
Quality of the campground							
Campground near lake or river							

Reasons for dissatisfaction with specific items

Visitors were asked to tell us why they were dissatisfied with specific items and what could make it better. Some respondents answered the first part of the question, while other respondents chose to answer the second part of the question. The open-ended responses to this question were coded and can be seen in Table 24 below. The most frequently mentioned items are in the staffing and maintenance group and include trail wayfinding and maps, ground maintenance, and staff/office availability and service. The 'other' category includes comments on preserving nature, accessibility, fees, state funding and marketing.

Table 24

For any of the items that you were NOT satisfied with, please tell us why you were not satisfied
&
what we could do to make it better.
(Open-ended question)

Item group	Specific item	Percent of park visitors
Staffing and maintenance		
	Improve trail wayfinding and maps	20.9%
	Poor grounds and trail maintenance, need to improve	19.7%
	Positive experience (staff, park)	17.3%
	Staff/office hours, customer service	13.1%
	Unwanted noise, park rules	5.4%
Facilities and services		
	Provide improved, cleaner bathrooms/outhouses	9.4%
	Swimming beach/fishing/water recreation	7.5%
	Lack of cell service, utilities, safety concerns, provide more access	5.4%
	Pet policies and behaviors	5.1%
	Improve shower facilities	4.7%
	Availability of convenience items or souvenirs to purchase	4.5%
	More trails, recreation	4.0%
	Exhibits, programs, information	3.0%
Camping		
	Campsites too close together	5.8%
	Quality/quantity of cabins, campsites, shelters	4.3%
Park management		
	Reservation system, non-reservable campsites	2.5%
Other/miscellaneous concerns		
	Other	5.0%

2017 n=277

The full list of comments is provided in a separate Excel file. Some typical comments reflective of the most frequent responses include the following:

- *I THINK HIKING TRAIL SIGNAGE COULD BE IMPROVED. MANY OF THE "YOU ARE HERE" STICKERS WERE MISSING ON JUNCTION SIGNS.*
- *WE WERE CONFUSED ABOUT WHERE INSPIRATION POINT WAS. NOT MARKED WELL ENOUGH ON THE TRAIL. THE TRAIL SIGN BY THE VERY STEEP STAIRS LEFT US WONDERING IF WE WERE THERE. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS AT BOTTOM OF STAIRS. ALSO COULD MARK THE PAPER MAP BETTER AS TO PUTTING "STAIRS" IN THE DIAGRAM.*

- *TRAILS IN THE PARK ARE NOT ALL MAINTAINED; THE FURTHER ONE IS FROM THE VISITOR CENTER THE LESS MAINTAINED; RATHER THAN UPKEEP AND REPAIR SOME TRAILS THEY WERE SIMPLY CLOSED PERMANENTLY DUE TO EROSION. OUCH!*
- *THIS USED TO BE MY FAVORITE PARK-BEAUTIFUL PICNIC AREA BUT NOW YOU DON'T MOW THE GRASS DECENT. ANOTHER HOUR YOU COULD HAVE IT ALL MOWED SO IT LOOKS INVITING AGAIN. A LITTLE WEED WHIPPING WOULDN'T HURT EITHER. ALL OTHER PARKS STILL MOW DECENT.*
- *MOWING WAS NOT DONE IN SITES WHEN PEOPLE LEFT. GRASS LONG & BUGGY. MOWING DONE BY BATHROOMS AREA & CAMP HOSTS. GRASS IN SOME SITES 12-14" LONG. SAW STAFF DRIVE MOWER DOWN ROAD WHEN HE COULD HAVE GONE ALONG GRASS BY ROAD & LAKE. …. POOR MAINTENANCE. … PEOPLE HAVE BROUGHT THEIR OWN WEED WACKERS TO TRIM THEIR AREA. REALLY SAD THAT MOWING IS NOT DONE. LOTS OF EXCUSES WHEN ASKED.*

- *LIMITED HOURS OF PARK OFFICE STAFF MADE THINGS DIFFICULT. MAPS FOR SELF-GUIDED TRAIL WERE NOT MADE AVAILABLE OUTSIDE.*
- *KEEP OFFICE HOURS AS DESCRIBED ON WEBSITE…. QUIET HOURS WERE NOT OBSERVED NOR ENFORCED.*
- *OVERLY BY-THE-BOOK STAFF. I WAS THERE WITH MY 90-YEAR OLD PARENTS FOR A PICNIC. RAIN WAS THREATENING. STAFF WOULD NOT ALLOW US TO USE THE SHELTER AREA, EVEN IF IT WERE NOT RENTED AND UNOCCUPIED. INSISTED WE HAD TO RENT THE SHELTER IF WE WANTED TO PICNIC THERE!*
- *SOME STAFF ARE MORE WELCOMING THAN OTHERS. ONE GENTLEMAN THAT I TOLD ABOUT A BIG TREE THAT WAS DOWN (BLOCKING THE MEADOW TRAIL) DIDN'T EVEN ACKNOWLEDGE GETTING THE INFORMATION I SHOWED. I JUST WANTED STAFF TO KNOW.*

Visitor recommended changes to better serve their needs

Visitors were asked what one thing in state parks they would change to better serve their needs. The open-ended responses to this question were coded and can be seen in Table 25 below. The three most frequently mentioned things were more access to cell service or other utilities, improved quality/quantity of cabins, campsites etc., and better grounds maintenance.

Table 25

If you could change one thing in the State Parks to better serve your needs, what would it be?

(Open-ended question)

Item group	Specific item	
Staffing and maintenance		
	Positive experience (staff, park)	10.7%
	Improve grounds and trail maintenance	9.0%
	Conserve preserve nature	7.6%
	More staff/office hours, better customer service	7.4%
	Better/more trail wayfinding	6.6%
Facilities and services		
	More access to cell service, utilities, address safety concerns	11.6%
	More trails, water and other recreation	8.3%
	Improve/cleaner bathrooms	7.2%
	Exhibits/programs, info	5.6%
	Shower facilities	3.4%
	Convenience items/souvenirs	2.9%
	Accessibility	2.7%
Camping		
	Quality/quantity of cabins, campsites, shelters	9.6%
	Campsites close proximity, noise, park rules	6.2%
Park management		
	Fees, costs	7.6%
	Reservation system, non-reservable campsites	6.7%
	Pet policy, behaviors	6.1%
	State funding	3.7%
	Marketing, website	2.5%
Other/miscellaneous		
	Other	3.4%

2017 n=590

The full list of comments is provided in a separate Excel file. Some typical comments reflective of the most frequent responses include the following:

- *IMPROVE CELL PHONE & WEB-BASED ACCESS WITHIN THE PARK*
- *PROVIDE ELECTRICAL HOOK UP AT ALL CAMP SITES*
- *PROVIDE MORE WATER HOOK UPS. FULL HOOK UP SITES WOULD BE AWESOME.*

- *I LIKE THE IDEA OF A COFFEE SHOP.*
- *MORE YURTS & CABINS AT THE PARKS WOULD BE WONDERFUL*
- *INCREASE AVAILABILITY OF MORE & SECLUDED CAMPING*
- *KEEP TENTING (NON-ELECTRIC) AREAS*

- *KEEPING GRASS TRAILS MOWED AND TRIMMING BRANCHES AND REMOVING FALLEN TREES FROM TRAILS SO THEY ARE CLEAR AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE.*
- *SPRAY FOR MOSQUITOS & DEER FLIES*
- *PAVE ALL THE ROADS!*

PERCEIVED VALUE FOR STATE PARK FEES PAID

Visitors have been asked since 1996 about the value they receive for fees paid. The 2017 responses are consistent with prior year results. Annual permits are significantly more likely than daily vehicle permits to be rated as a 'good value' (annual, 87%; daily, 70%) and daily vehicle permits are significantly more likely to be rated a 'fair value' (Table 26). The perceived value of camping fees is similar to the daily vehicle permit (good value, 72%).

Knowledge of perceived value for fees is an important consideration in user funding strategies. The higher the perceived value, the more willing visitors are to pay a higher fee. On July 1, 2017 there was a price increase for the daily vehicle permit, and based on this survey, the effect on the daily permit's perceived value is minimal. Looking at the pre- and post-increase perceived value of this permit, there is no significant difference in perceived value of the daily vehicle permit. Before the July 1st increase 73% of daily permit visitors rated it a 'good value', compared to 70% after the July 1st increase.

Table 26

For the money paid for an entrance permit (or camping), do you feel you are getting a good, fair, or poor value from Minnesota State Parks?

Annual vehicle entrance permit

Perceived value	2001	2007	2012	2017
Good	82%	80%	86%	87%
Fair	17%	18%	13%	12%
Poor	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=592

Daily vehicle entrance permit

Perceived value	2001	2007	2012	2017
Good	72%	74%	68%	70%
Fair	25%	21%	26%	27%
Poor	2%	4%	4%	1%
Don't know	1%	1%	2%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=251

Camping

Perceived value	2001	2007	2012	2017
Good	74%	65%	75%	72%
Fair	23%	32%	23%	25%
Poor	3%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	0%	1%	0%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

2017 n=125

CHANGES VISITORS SUPPORT/OPPOSE IN STATE PARK FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS

Strong support is given in 2017 to several possible changes, including expanded hiking opportunities, more learning opportunities (self-guided and staff-led), and more programs for children (Table 27). 'More hiking opportunities' is the most supported item (by far), which reiterates the high importance of trail-related concerns in the park. Also receiving strong support are more accommodations for people with mobility impairments, more spacing between campsites, separate tent and vehicle camping, more rustic camper cabins and walk-in campsites, cell phone coverage near park visitor centers and campgrounds, mobile-friendly apps and information, as well as not expanding the amount of park development to protect remaining resources.

Possible changes that receive strong opposition are familiar from previous studies: elimination of park entrance fees, more hunting opportunities, and more OHV opportunities (Table 27). Among the potential revenue-related changes private lodges, sponsorship rights, land leasing for commercial purposes and renewable energy/communication company easements also receive strong opposition.

Between the support and oppose extremes are possible changes to which visitors provide moderate support, are ambivalent about, and indicate the change may be controversial (sizable support and opposition to the possible change). Moderate support is indicated for expansions of the following: special events, geocaching opportunities, mountain biking opportunities, paved trails, wireless access, electrical hook-ups, dog-friendly cabins, play areas, land for recreation use, and facilities for large groups.

Though receiving moderate support, paved trails, wireless internet access near park visitor centers and campgrounds, and more land for recreation use have both sizable support and opposition. Other changes that may be controversial (receive at least 20% support and opposition) include expansions of campsites for motorhomes and revenue-generating services or programs as well as providing webcams of natural events/scenery, food/vending concessions, and coffee shops/gathering places.

Visitors are largely ambivalent about more horse trails.

There is broad agreement on the responses in Table 27 across type of visitor (day visitor, camper) except for items that are camper-focused, such as campsite spacing, electrical hook-ups, and sites for rigs, which drive more camper support. There are notable differences across many items based on age, which are connected to differences in activities they do. For example, young adults are more supportive of hiking, geocaching, more campsite spacing, walk-in campsites, separate tent and motorhome sites, and elimination of entrance fees. Older adults are more supportive of electrical hook-ups, volunteer-led learning opportunities, and more cabins. Younger adults are more supportive of customized mobile apps, while older adults are more supportive of wireless internet access.

Table 27

How much do you support or oppose each possible change being made for Minnesota State Parks?

(oppose/support scale: 1=strongly oppose, 2=mildly oppose, 3=neither oppose nor support, 4=mildly support, 5=strongly support)

Possible change	Average "oppose/support" response**	Oppose/support response: Strongly support (percent)	Mildly support (percent)	Neither oppose nor support (percent)	Mildly oppose (percent)	Strongly oppose (percent)	Don't know (percent)	Total (percent)
Changes visitors largely support (average greater than 3.5)								
Provide more hiking opportunities	4.22	43%	31%	19%	1%	0%	6%	100%
Provide more spacing between campsites	4.06	31%	21%	23%	1%	1%	23%	100%
Provide more self-guided learning opportunities and exhibits	4.05	30%	40%	22%	1%	1%	6%	100%
Provide more staff or volunteer-led learning opportunities	3.92	28%	31%	30%	2%	1%	9%	100%
Provide cell phone coverage near park visitor centers/campgrounds	3.80	32%	34%	16%	7%	7%	5%	100%
Provide more programs for children in the parks	3.78	19%	35%	31%	3%	1%	11%	100%
Provide more accommodations for people with mobility impairments	3.78	22%	29%	34%	2%	1%	12%	100%
Provide separate campgrounds for tent and vehicle campers	3.71	23%	24%	34%	4%	2%	14%	100%
Provide additional rustic camper cabins or yurts	3.69	19%	27%	32%	5%	1%	16%	100%
Do not expand the amount of development in state parks in order to protect remaining resources	3.65	28%	20%	30%	9%	4%	9%	100%
Provide state park information and applications customized for mobile devices	3.65	20%	35%	29%	4%	6%	7%	100%
Provide more walk-in/cart-in campsites	3.64	17%	15%	38%	2%	1%	27%	100%
Changes visitors moderately support (average greater than 3.2)								
Provide more special events in the parks	3.48	12%	30%	41%	5%	2%	10%	100%
Provide wireless internet access near park visitor centers/campgrounds	3.46	25%	24%	23%	11%	10%	6%	100%
Designate some dog-friendly camper cabins or yurts	3.45	19%	22%	34%	5%	8%	13%	100%
Provide more paved trails	3.43	22%	23%	29%	12%	8%	6%	100%
Provide more play areas in the parks	3.39	12%	27%	42%	8%	3%	9%	100%
Provide more opportunities to do geocaching in the parks	3.34	9%	17%	51%	4%	2%	16%	100%
Provide more electrical hook-ups for campers	3.33	16%	15%	35%	9%	6%	20%	100%
Develop more land in the state parks for recreation use	3.31	20%	22%	25%	16%	9%	10%	100%
Provide more facilities for multi-family or group gatherings or camping	3.31	8%	20%	50%	5%	3%	15%	100%
Provide more opportunities to ride mountain or fat bikes	3.29	14%	20%	38%	9%	7%	13%	100%
Changes visitors are ambivalent about (average between 2.7 and 3.2)								
Provide webcam coverage of park scenery and natural events	3.16	9%	27%	35%	10%	11%	10%	100%
Food, vending and gift concessions	3.08	9%	30%	32%	11%	14%	4%	100%
Expand revenue-generating programs or services at highly visited parks	2.97	7%	30%	26%	16%	16%	5%	100%
Provide coffee shops/gathering places in the parks	2.96	10%	25%	28%	15%	17%	6%	100%
Provide more horse trails	2.87	5%	6%	50%	12%	8%	19%	100%
Provide more campsites for motorhomes and similar large rigs	2.75	8%	10%	32%	20%	14%	17%	100%
Changes visitors largely oppose (average less than 2.7)								
Provide renewable energy and communication companies with access to easements on park land	2.58	5%	16%	29%	15%	24%	11%	100%
Provide more hunting opportunities	2.51	9%	8%	28%	14%	26%	16%	100%
Provide ride-in access to park campgrounds for off-highway vehicles	2.39	5%	10%	25%	20%	26%	14%	100%
Eliminate park entrance fees	2.38	9%	9%	23%	21%	31%	7%	100%
Private funded/owned and managed lodges	2.15	2%	11%	25%	18%	38%	7%	100%
Sponsorship and naming rights	2.12	3%	11%	22%	16%	41%	7%	100%
Lease park land/assets for related commercial purposes	1.89	1%	8%	17%	20%	46%	8%	100%

** Average value excludes "don't know" response

2017 n varies by item, ranging from 861-885

Six items regarding revenue-related changes are an addition to this question in 2017. Park visitors are opposed (average less than 2.7) to four of the six items: leasing assets for commercial purposes, sponsorship and naming rights, privately managed lodges, and providing energy and communication companies' access to easements. Park visitors are ambivalent about (average between 2.7 and 3.2) expanding revenue-generating programs or services in highly visited parks and food, vending and gift concessions.

From 2012 to 2017, the possible changes visitors support/oppose in the parks have been largely stable. Three of the possible changes have statistically significant differences in the average. Providing more staff or volunteer-led learning opportunities has risen in the 'strong support' category, with a 2012 average of 3.58 to 3.92 in 2017. Developing park land for more recreation use has risen from being 'equally supported and opposed' to 'moderately support', with a 2012 average of 3.17 to 3.31 in 2017. Provide more hiking opportunities remains at the top of the 'largely support' category in 2017, with an increase in the average of 4.22 in 2017 compared to 4.17 in 2012.

Certain of the possible changes are relevant to campers as a group, so their responses are examined separately (Table 28). Some of these possible changes are largely supported by all campers, others are mixed, and the remaining have levels of support/opposition that varies by the type of camper (tent or vehicle camper).

All campers support four possible changes: more spacing between campsites, cell phone coverage, more walk-in campsites, additional rustic cabins and yurts. The first two were also supported by all campers in 2012. No changes are opposed by all campers. One possible change all campers are ambivalent about is designating some dog-friendly cabins or yurts.

A possible change tent campers support and vehicle campers moderately support is separate campgrounds for tent and vehicle campers. In 2012 vehicle campers were ambivalent about this change.

A possible change vehicle campers support and tent campers are ambivalent about is: more electrical hook-ups for campers. This possible change is most applicable to vehicle campers and one-third of tent campers neither support nor oppose it.

A possible change vehicle campers support and tent campers oppose is: more campsites for motorhomes and similar large rigs. This possible change is most applicable to vehicle campers.

Table 28

How much do you support or oppose each possible change for Minnesota State Parks

(Oppose/support scale: 1=strongly oppose, 2=mildly oppose, 3=neither oppose nor support, 4=mildly support, 5=strongly support)

2017 n=	Possible change	Average "oppose/support" response**	Oppose/support response: Strongly support (percent)	Mildly support (percent)	Neither oppose nor support (percent)	Mildly oppose (percent)	Strongly oppose (percent)	Don't know (percent)	Total (percent)
	Changes all campers support								
	Provide more spacing between campsites								
119	All campers	4.4	52%	25%	19%	2%	1%	2%	100%
50	Tent campers	4.4	56%	26%	15%	1%	0%	2%	100%
56	RV and Trailer campers	4.5	51%	24%	21%	2%	1%	1%	100%
	Provide cell phone coverage near park visitor centers and campgrounds								
120	All campers	3.9	40%	29%	14%	8%	8%	1%	100%
50	Tent campers	3.6	31%	27%	20%	11%	10%	2%	100%
56	RV and Trailer campers	4.2	51%	28%	10%	5%	5%	0%	100%
	Provide more walk-in/cart-in campsites								
108	All campers	3.9	20%	16%	49%	3%	2%	10%	100%
47	Tent campers	4.0	38%	19%	33%	1%	2%	8%	100%
49	RV and Trailer campers	4.0	5%	13%	64%	3%	3%	13%	100%
	Provide additional rustic camper cabins or yurts								
109	All campers	3.9	16%	27%	39%	6%	3%	10%	100%
45	Tent campers	3.7	18%	36%	28%	6%	3%	10%	100%
50	RV and Trailer campers	4.0	9%	18%	53%	7%	3%	11%	100%
	Changes tent campers support and RV/trailer campers moderately support								
	Provide separate campgrounds for tent and vehicle campers								
113	All campers	3.6	22%	24%	36%	8%	5%	6%	100%
46	Tent campers	3.9	32%	30%	23%	3%	3%	8%	100%
53	RV and Trailer campers	3.4	10%	19%	51%	9%	6%	5%	100%
	RV/trailer campers support and tent campers are ambivalent								
	Provide more electrical hook-ups for campers								
112	All campers	3.8	27%	22%	28%	9%	6%	7%	100%
45	Tent campers	2.9	9%	13%	36%	18%	11%	12%	100%
55	RV and Trailer campers	4.7	49%	28%	20%	0%	1%	2%	100%
	Provide wireless internet access near park visitor centers and campgrounds								
119	All campers	3.7	34%	25%	17%	10%	13%	2%	100%
50	Tent campers	3.3	23%	24%	25%	13%	13%	2%	100%
56	RV and Trailer campers	4.3	48%	24%	11%	7%	8%	1%	100%
	RV/trailer campers support and tent campers oppose								
	Provide more campsites for motorhomes and similar large rigs								
112	All campers	3.0	14%	15%	30%	19%	15%	7%	100%
45	Tent campers	2.3	2%	5%	33%	27%	23%	10%	100%
54	RV and Trailer campers	3.6	28%	25%	28%	11%	5%	3%	100%
	Changes all campers are ambivalent								
	Designate some dog-friendly camper cabins or yurts								
112	All campers	3.3	18%	19%	38%	7%	11%	8%	100%
45	Tent campers	3.3	17%	21%	34%	5%	13%	10%	100%
54	RV and Trailer campers	3.3	21%	14%	44%	8%	8%	5%	100%

2017 n for each item is displayed in the far left column. Average value excludes 'don't know responses.

Acceptable Contact Information

This year's survey included a new question regarding acceptability of additional uses of contact information visitors have provided to the DNR. One-third of visitors don't support the additional use of their contact information, with day visitors significantly more likely than campers to oppose any use (37% vs. 23%). Visitors who are 65 years or older and visitors under the age of 30 are significantly more likely than visitors who are

30-44 years old to oppose any use (65+, 41%; <30, 40% vs. 30-44, 27%). Visitors with less than $50,000 in income are more likely than those with $50-$99,999 or visitors with $150,000 or more in income to oppose any use of their contact information (<$50K, 43% vs. $50-$99,999, 30%; $150K or more, 21%).

Use of contact information for transaction updates is naturally favored more by campers than day users (52% vs. 25%). Younger visitors are significantly more likely than visitors 65 years of age or older to see transaction update use as acceptable (<29 years, 28%, 30-44, 40%, 45-64, 27% vs. 17%).

The use of contact information to communicate about park issues is seen as acceptable by significantly more visitors who are 30-44 and 45-64 years old than visitors who are 65 years or older and visitors under the age of 30 (30-44, 51%, 45-64, 46% vs. 65+, 31%; <30, 33%). Visitors with less than $50,000 in income are significantly less likely than visitors with higher incomes to see use of contact information to communicate about park issues as acceptable (<$50K, 33% vs. 43% to 49% for other income categories).

Table 29

If you provide contact information to the DNR, which, if any, of the following uses of this contact information would you consider acceptable?

		Age of respondent			
Proposed use of information	All visitors	29 or younger	30 to 44 years	45 to 64 years	65 years or older
Use my information for DNR research purposes to better serve the public	45%	38%	50%	45%	49%
Send information about parks and trails issues	42%	33%	51%	46%	31%
Send updates about my transaction(s) or trip	28%	28%	40%	27%	17%
Allow other researchers to use my information	14%	16%	18%	12%	17%
Allow other outdoor-oriented non-profit or government organizations to use my information	14%	18%	14%	14%	14%
None of the above	35%	40%	27%	33%	41%

2017 n=878

References

1. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. 2013. 2012 Minnesota State Parks Research Summary Report. Prepared by Tim Kelly, Operations Services Division.

2. Minnesota and national population information comes from: U. S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. Specific Census tables are noted in each report table.

3. U. S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060 *Population Estimates and Projections,* March 2015, publication P25-1143.

MINNESOTA STATE PARK VISITOR SURVEY

SECTION ONE — This section asks questions about your visit to this state park.

1. Which of the following activities did you participate in while visiting this park on this trip? (Check all that apply)

____Camping ____Picnicking ____Observing/photographing nature
____Hiking/walking ____Swimming ____Taking a naturalist-led program
____Bird watching ____Motorboating ____Canoeing/kayaking/paddleboarding
____Fishing ____Sightseeing ____Shopping in the park's nature store
____Biking (all types) ____Jogging/running ____Taking a self-guided nature walk
____Did nothing/relaxed ____Geocaching ____Looking at kiosks or visitor center exhibits
____Visiting historic sites
____Other (please describe)______________________

2. Have you visited this state park before? (Check one) ____Yes ___No ___Don't Know

3. How many people, including yourself, were in your party on this visit?
(Enter the number of people in your group for each age range. Enter "0" if none in an age range.)

_____ Adults (41 and older) _____Adults (19 to 40)
_____ Teens (13 to 18 years) _____Children (12 or under)

4. Did you bring your dog or other pet to the park on this visit? (Check one)

_____ Yes _____ No

5. About how many miles is this state park from your permanent home? (Check one)

____ 25 miles or less ____ 101 to 200 miles
____ 26 to 50 miles ____ Over 200 miles
____ 51 to 100 miles

6. Is this park visit part of an overnight trip away from home? (Check one)

_____ Yes _____ No *(If YES, please SKIP to question 8)*

7. How many hours were you in this park on the day of your visit? ____Hours
(please SKIP to question 13)

8. How many total nights will you be away from home on this trip? ____Nights
   8a. How many of these total nights will be spent at each of the following?
   (If "none", enter "0")

   Campground *in this state park?* ______Nights
   Indoor lodging *in this state park?* ______Nights
   Other campground (public or private)? ______Nights
   Resort, motel or bed & breakfast inn? ______Nights
   My cabin? ______Nights
   Friend's or relative's house or cabin? ______Nights
   Other (please describe)____________________________? ______Nights

9. Did you camp in this state park on this visit (includes staying in a camper cabin or yurt)?
(Check one)______Yes______No *(If NO, please SKIP to question 13)*

10. For the money paid for camping, do you feel you are getting a good, fair, or poor value from Minnesota State Parks? (Check one)
_____Good value _______Fair value _______Poor value _______Don't know

11. What type of camping equipment did you use on this visit? (Check one)
_____Tent
_____Pop-up trailer
_____Motorhome, 5th wheel, or hard-sided trailer (please indicate length including tow vehicle:_______feet)
_____Stayed in camper cabin or yurt
_____Other (please describe)_________________________

12. Did you have an electrical hook-up at your campsite? (Check one)
_____Yes, and I wanted electricity
_____Yes, but I didn't want electricity
_____No, and I wanted electricity
_____No, and I didn't want electricity

13. Which statement most closely reflects your feelings about this visit? (Check one)
_____Completely satisfied
_____Very satisfied
_____Somewhat satisfied
_____Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
_____Somewhat dissatisfied
_____Very dissatisfied
_____Completely dissatisfied

14. What type of entrance permit did you use to get into this state park? (Check one)
_____Daily vehicle permit
_____Parks and trails license plate
_____Annual vehicle permit
_____Other (please describe)_____________

15. For the money paid for this entrance permit, do you feel you are getting a good, fair, or poor value from Minnesota State Parks? (Check one)
_____Good value _____Fair value _____Poor value _____Don't know

16. How many days or months in advance did you plan this trip to this park? (Check one)
_____ None: decided trip on day of park visit
_____ 1 to 7 days
_____ 8 to 14 days
_____ 15 to 30 days
_____1 to 2 months
_____ 3 to 5 months
_____ 6 to 12 months
_____ Over 12 months

17. Did attending a park program (e.g., a staff-led program) attract you to the park on this visit? (Check one)
_____Yes _____No ____Don't know/not sure

18. Below is a list of items that may be important to making your visit to this park enjoyable. For each item, please tell us two things: (1) the importance of the item to making your visit enjoyable; and (2) how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the item in this park. (Circle one "importance" and one "satisfaction" response for each item)

	(1) Importance of item to your enjoyment?				(2) Satisfaction with item?					
	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Item does not apply
1. Lakes and rivers in the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
2. Learning about the park from a staff-led program	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
3. Learning about the park using a self-guided trail, brochure, kiosk, or other self-guided means	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
4. General informational brochure/maps provided	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
5. Availability of park staff to answer questions	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
6. Trails in the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
7. Quality of facilities in the picnic grounds	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
8. Well protected natural resources	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
9. Sense of safety provided by presence of park staff	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
10. Designated places to swim	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
11. Helpfulness of park staff	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
12. Lack of disturbances by other park visitors	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
13. Beauty of the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
14. Someone to greet me when I arrive at the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
15. Attentiveness of park staff to my needs	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
16. A natural setting for the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
17. Accommodations for large family or social groups	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
18. Fishing opportunities	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
19. Well-maintained, clean grounds and facilities	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
20. Place or accommodations for pets in the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
21. Visitor center exhibits, videos, and displays	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
22. Boating opportunities (e.g., canoeing/kayaking, motorboating)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
23. Availability of souvenirs to purchase (e.g., T-shirts, books)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
24. Availability of convenience items to purchase (e.g., bug spray)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
25. Trail signs for finding my way around the park	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Campground items	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
26. Quality of the campground	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
27. Secluded campsites	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
28. Quality of facilities in campground	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA
29. Campground near lake or river	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	NA

19. For any of the above items that you were NOT satisfied with, please tell us why you were not satisfied and what we could do to make it better:

____

____

SECTION TWO — This section asks questions about Minnesota State Parks in general.

20. For how many years have you been visiting Minnesota State Parks?_____Years
(If this is your first visit, please enter "1".)

21. Over these years, has the quality of your park experience declined or improved? (Check one)
___ Greatly declined ___ Declined ___ About the same ___ Improved ___ Greatly improved ___Don't know

22. Including this visit, how many days in the last 12 months have you spent time in . . .
. . . *this* Minnesota State Park? _____Days
. . . *any* Minnesota State Park? _____Days

23. Including this park, how many Minnesota State Parks have you visited in the last 12 months?
_____Parks

24. When you obtain information about Minnesota State Parks, what are your most important information sources? (Check all that apply)

General sources
_____ Family and friends
_____ Minnesota's State Highway Map
_____ Other road maps
_____ Social Media
_____ Community Events (e.g., Boating/camping/sports shows, fairs)
_____ Places I stay (e.g., resorts, campgrounds)
_____ Recreational opportunity maps and directories
_____ Travel guides/agents
_____ Newspapers or magazines
_____ Radio
_____ TV
_____ Websites
_____ Outdoor equipment stores
_____ Chambers of commerce/convention and visitors bureaus

_____ Other (please specify)____________________

MN DNR sources
_____ Minnesota State Parks and Trails Guide
_____ MN DNR telephone information center
_____ MN DNR website
_____ Information at one or more Minnesota State Parks
_____ MN DNR electronic information kiosk
_____ PRIM recreation maps
_____ Minnesota State Park & Trail Program and Special Events Catalog
_____ Minnesota State Parks and Trails Facebook

Explore Minnesota Tourism sources
_____ Explore Minnesota Tourism phone information center
_____ Explore Minnesota Tourism website
_____ Highway information centers
_____ *Minnesota Explorer* newspaper

25. If you provide contact information (such as name, address, and e-mail address) to the DNR, Which (if any) of the following uses of this contact information would you consider acceptable? (Check all that apply)
____Send updates about my transaction(s) or trip
____Send information about parks and trails issues
____Use my information for DNR research purposes to better serve the public
____Allow other researchers to use my information
____Allow other outdoor-oriented non-profit or government organizations to use my information
____None of the above

26. Below are several statements that describe possible changes for Minnesota State Parks and related services. Please indicate how much you support or oppose each possible change. (Circle one response for each statement)

Possible change for state parks and related services	Strongly oppose	Mildly oppose	Neither oppose or support	Mildly support	Strongly support	Don't know
In-park changes						
1. Provide more staff or volunteer-led learning opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
2. Provide more self-guided learning opportunities and exhibits.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
3. Provide more spacing between campsites.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
4. Provide more walk-in/cart-in campsites.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
5. Provide more paved trails.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
6. Provide more hunting opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
7. Develop more land in state parks for recreation use.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
8. Do not expand the amount of development in state parks in order to protect remaining resources.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
9. Provide more horse trails.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
10. Provide additional rustic camper cabins or yurts.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
11. Provide more accommodations for people with mobility impairments.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
12. Provide ride-in access to park campgrounds for off-highway vehicles.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
13. Provide more hiking opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
14. Provide more electrical hook-ups for campers.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
15. Provide more opportunities to ride mountain or fat bikes.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
16. Provide more campsites for motorhomes and similar large rigs.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
17. Provide wireless internet access near park visitor centers and campgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
18. Provide cell phone coverage near park visitor centers and campgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
19. Provide separate campgrounds for tent and vehicle campers.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
20. Eliminate park entrance fees (i.e., drop annual and daily entrance permits).	1	2	3	4	5	DK
21. Provide more special events in the parks.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
22. Provide more programs for children in the parks.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
23. Provide more opportunities to do geocaching in the parks.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
24. Provide more facilities for multi-family or group gatherings or camping.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
25. Designate some dog-friendly camper cabins or yurts.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
26. Provide more play areas in the parks.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
27. Provide coffee shops/gathering places in the parks.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Related park service changes						
28. Provide webcam coverage of park scenery and natural events.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
29. Provide state park information and applications customized for mobile devices (smart phones, tablet computers).	1	2	3	4	5	DK
Potential revenue related changes						
30. Lease park land/assets for related commercial purposes (e.g., commercial leases for marinas, restaurants, boat wash, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	DK
31. Sponsorship and naming rights (e.g., corporate sponsorships of buildings or other facilities, not state park names).	1	2	3	4	5	DK
32. Expand revenue-generating programs or services at highly visited parks (e.g., more yurts, food trucks, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	DK
33. Food, vending, and gift concessions.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
34. Provide renewable energy and communication companies with access to easements on park land.	1	2	3	4	5	DK
35. Private funded/owned and managed lodges (e.g., private lodge within a state park).	1	2	3	4	5	DK

27. If you could change one thing in the state parks to better serve your needs, what would it be?

____

____

SECTION THREE — This section asks questions about you so we can better understand park visitors.

28. Do you *or* a member of your household have . . . (Circle one response for each)

	Yes	No	Don't know
. . . a current Minnesota fishing license?	1	2	DK
. . . a current Minnesota hunting license?	1	2	DK
. . . a boat currently registered in Minnesota?	1	2	DK
. . . a snowmobile currently registered in Minnesota?	1	2	DK
. . . an ATV currently registered in Minnesota?	1	2	DK

29. What is the zip code of your permanent home? _______

30. What is your sex? ____ Male ____ Female

31. How old are you? ______Years

32. What is your race or origin? (Mark all boxes that apply)

___ White
___ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
___ Black or African American
___ Asian
___ American Indian or Alaska Native
___ Middle Eastern or North African
___ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
___ Some other race, ethnicity, or origin

33. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Check one)

___ Some high school
___ Graduated from high school or GED
___ Some college
___ Associate (2-year) college degree
___ Bachelor's college degree (BA, BS)
___ Some postgraduate study
___ Postgraduate degree

34. Please indicate below your total household income before taxes last year. (Check one)

____ Less than $20,000
____ $20,000 to $29,999
____ $30,000 to $39,999
____ $40,000 to $49,999
____ $50,000 to $59,999
____ $60,000 to $69,999
____ $70,000 to $79,999
____ $80,000 to $89,999
____ $90,000 to $99,999
____ $100,000 to $149,999
____ $150,000 to $199,999
____ $200,000 or more

Thank you for your input. Please place the survey in its envelope and drop it in the mail.

Survey
This survey number is only used to keep track of who has completed the survey and who has not. We will send replacement surveys to those who don't respond in three weeks. Your answers are strictly confidential and will never be associated with your name.

URL: