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Findings from a CA Dialogue on State Park Excellence

January 7, 2011
NPCC Research Summit
Yosemite, CA

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California State Parks Foundation

Your Voice for **Parks**



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About CSPF

- Founded in 1969
- Over 120,000 members statewide
- Dedicated to protecting, enhancing and advocating for California's state park system
- Key priorities:
 - Advocacy & policy development
 - Park restoration & capital projects
 - Volunteerism in parks
 - Supporting educational programs

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State Park Excellence Project

- Engage the public in a dialogue about state park role, amenities & services
- Identify a shared vision of excellence
- Identify barriers to achieving excellence in state parks
- Increase public support for an improved system and mechanisms to achieve excellence

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Data Gathering Methods

- Online web survey (Feb-March 2010)
- Public opinion poll (April)
- “Listening sessions” with park stakeholder groups (March – May)
- Individual interviews with park and conservation experts (Feb-May)



Guiding Questions

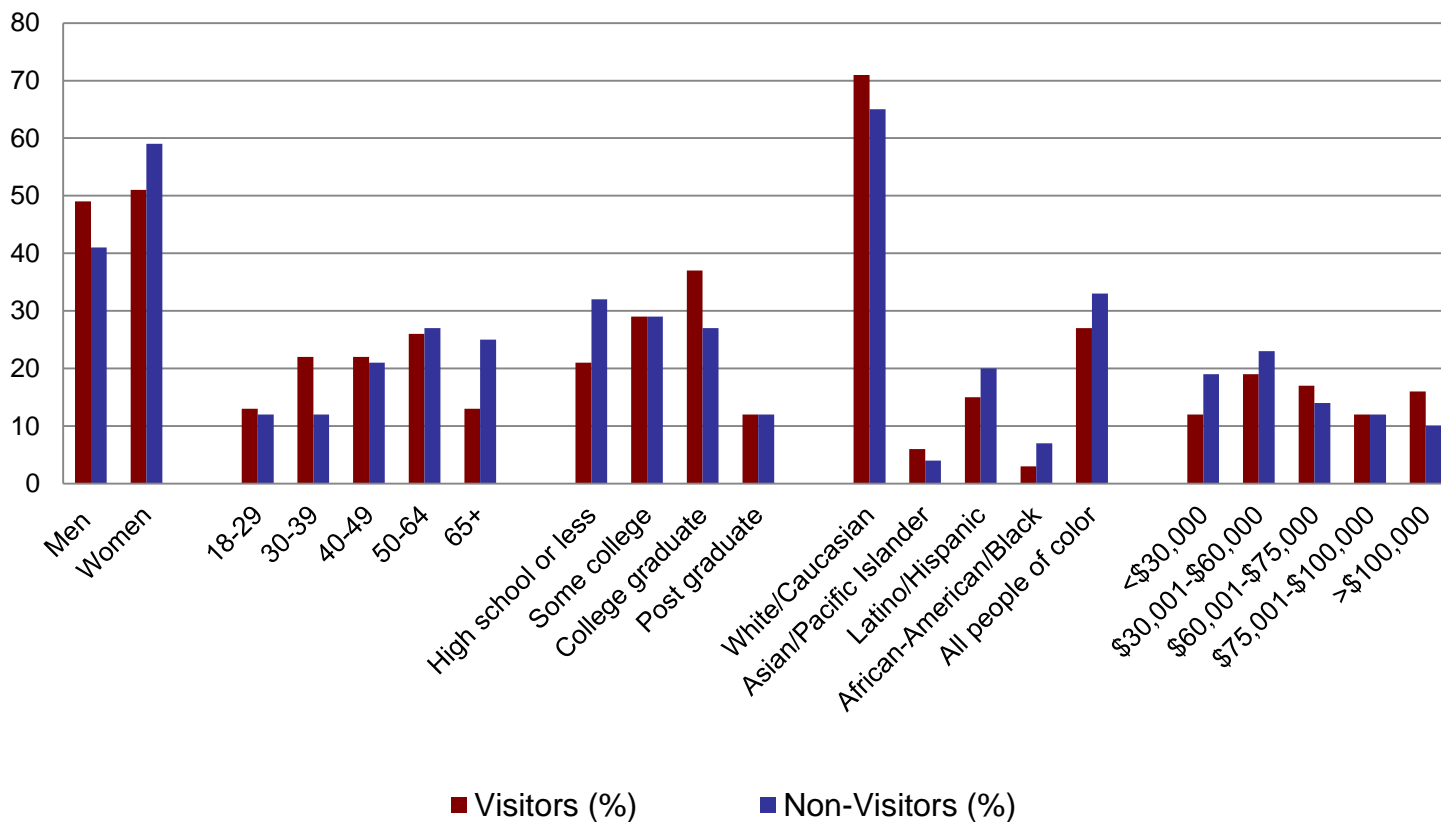
1. What is the primary purpose of California's state park system?
2. What are the most important features of an excellent state park system?
3. What programs, services, resources, activities, and amenities should be offered to achieve excellence?
4. What are existing barriers to current state park use and/or to achieving excellence?



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Visitors vs Non-Visitors

Demographics of Visitors and Non-Visitors



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Interest in Visitation

- Visitors
 - Interest more intense among whites & Latinos
 - Interest less intense in counties around LA County and with non college-educated women
 - Intensity increases with education, decreases with age



Interest in Visitation

- Non-visitors
 - Interest high among those with school-age children at home
 - White residents
 - Residents 18-29 years old
 - Residents of Sacramento County and northern counties of CA
 - Interest less intense among ages 65+



Barriers to Visitation

- Other competing life, social, work priorities
- Concerns about affordability

Non-visitors specifically cited:

- Geography – parks too far from home
- Lack of knowledge about how to utilize state parks and facilities
- Lack of companions to visit state parks
- Lack of equipment necessary to use state parks.



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Programs & Services Needed - Visitors

- Updated and marked trails, maps and park guides
- Self-guided tour/trail materials and information
- Increased maintenance of park facilities
- Increase in visible park employees

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Programs/Services Needed: Non-Visitors

- Increased maintenance of park facilities
- Better affordability of parks
- Visitor centers
- More opportunities for educational/interpretive programs
- Increase in visible park employees

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Next Steps

- PEP report release: Jan/Feb 2010
- More research needed in:
 - Levels of acceptable affordability
 - Identifying the right ambassadors to train, orient, or familiarize non-visitors
 - Effectiveness of virtual or technology-based “visits” as gateways to in-person visits



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