

# Research Literature—Then and Now

NPPC Market Research Summit | Yosemite National Park | Winter 2011

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## Where have we been? What do we know? Where should we go?

### National Park Promotion Council

Assist the National Park  
Service in promoting the  
national parks.



*Thanks to the NPPC Leadership & the Summit Planning Committee:*

#### **NPPC Founders**

John Poimiroo, Interim Executive Director  
Terry McRae, Hornblower Cruises and Events  
Derrick Crandall, National Park Hospitality Association

#### **Research Summit Planning Committee:**

Norma Nickerson, University of Montana  
Deb Collins, Delaware North Companies  
Greg Dunn, The YPartnership  
Cassandra Johnson, US Forest Service  
Pavlina Latkova, San Francisco State University

#### **Research Committee Co-Chairs:**

Nina Roberts, San Francisco State University  
Emilyn Sheffield, California State University, Chico

### National Park Promotion Council

- Promote all National Parks
- Unify Select Park Stakeholders for Second Century Success
- Increase Visitation...
  - At Appropriate Sites
  - Enhancing Great Experiences
  - Protecting Resources
- Unified Promotion & Messaging
- Visitor Publications
- Cooperative Programs
- National Park Welcome Centers
- International Travel and Trade Programs
- Coordinated Media Outreach



### NPPC Research Committee

- Advise on Research Topics & Priorities
- Develop/Define Key Metrics to Evaluate NPPC Promotion Efforts
- Develop List of Potential Research Sponsors and Grants
- Synthesize/Share Key Findings From Recent Research

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## Part 1: A Little Context Please...

### Taking the Pulse—A Quick Audit

Two interns completed a quick “pulse check” during the summer and fall of 2010 by investigating the national park themed research associated with a dozen national parks. Six high visitation parks with gateway communities and six urban parks were selected. These parks were located in different NPS regions and represented coastal, mountain and heartlands parts of the United States. The interns contacted destination marketing organizations and reviewed VSP (Visitor Service Project) studies to gain a sense of the types of visitor and market research studies completed by private firms and public agencies. Time does not permit a thorough review of their findings but some interesting trends emerged. In the next two days you will hear more about the VSP project and the Comprehensive Survey of the American Public. You’ll also hear from a panel of state tourism and park professionals as well as several examples of private sector marketing research. *Special thanks for Nora Trice, a summer 2010 intern at Hornblower Cruises in San Francisco and Christine, a SFSU student.*

### A Call to the Research Committee for Relevant Research.

Members of the research committee provided several resources and Dr. Jim Gramann forwarded several NPS-sponsored research compilations. Selected topics from each compilation appear in the slides below. Links to the reference documents will be posted on the NPPC website. *Special thanks to Diane Breeding for her assistance in assembling some of these materials and to Jeff and Amy Gerbic for their assistance in reviewing the bibliographies.*

#### Three Question Summary for Research Summit (2010)

Breeding, D. & Gramann, J.

- Why aren't some people coming to NPs?
  - Visitation Trends
  - Race, Ethnicity, Age, SES
    - Comp Survey
    - Visitor Service Project
- Why Not?
  - Relevance
  - Barriers/Constraints
- How Reach?
- Great Sub-headings

#### Modeling of NPS Visitation Trends: Lit Review & Ann. Bibliography (2010)

Tyrell, Virden, Burkett, & Ackerman

- Micro Trends
  - Behavior, Choice, Settings
- Macro Trends
  - Population, Leisure, Income
  - Leisure Technology
  - NPs as Destinations
- Data Analysis
  - Micro Survey Data
  - Macro Trend Data (Projection)
- Key Variables and Models

#### Key Findings from Journal of Park and Recreation Administration (2010)

Jiang, K. (PhD Candidate TAMU)

- Marketing/Visitor Segmentation
- Visitor Experience/Impacts
- Interaction w/ Communities
- Environment Related Issues
- Financial Status/Partnerships/Fees/Pricing
- Visitor Management/Park Development
- Employee

#### Factors That Influence Visitation to the National Parks (2006)

Glass, R. (NPS Intern)

- Constraints
  - 20 common constraints
- Trends
  - Demographic Changes
  - Participation Trends
- Children's Leisure
  - Parental Role
  - Predictor of Later Behavior
  - Gender
  - Technology

### More Resources on the National Park Service Social Science Website.

The NPS Social Science website includes links to the Public Use Statistics (visitation and other stats) for each NPS unit as well as the Money Generation Model 2 reports on selected parks. There are also links to the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit (for VSP studies), the NPS Focus Digital Library and Research Station, and other social science resources and research.

Links:

- NPS Social Science Website: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/index.cfm>
- NPS Focus Digital Library and Research Station: <http://npsfocus.nps.gov/nps/home.do?searchtype=nps/home>
- Visitor Service Project: <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.htm>

# NPS Social Science Website

Social Science Collection  
399 studies | 251 since 2000

## Social Science Division Featured Content

### Public Use Statistics



The Public Use Statistics Office, based in Denver, Colorado, coordinates visitor counting protocols Systemwide and provides visitation statistics and forecasts for areas administered

by the National Park Service. [Learn more...](#)

### Money Generation Model Report



The Money Generation Model (MGM2) study provides updated estimates of National Park Service visitor spending for 2008 and extends the analysis to include impacts of the National Park

Service payroll on local economies. [Learn more...](#)

## Useful Resources

- University of Idaho Park Studies Unit
- Michigan State University NPS Money Generation Model Website
- NPS Focus Digital Library and Research Station
- Social Science Program Briefing Statement (PDF - 316KB)



The screenshot shows the NPS Focus digital library & research station interface. It includes a navigation menu with links for Home, Browse subjects, Browse parks, Advanced search, Research on- & off-line resources, About, and Help. The main content area displays search results for the term 'Social Science Studies Collection and 20000101 and 20091231', showing 136 to 150 of 251 records. Two results are visible: 'Bandelier National Monument Visitor Center Formative Evaluation (Technical report)' and 'Lincoln Home National Historic Site Visitor Study, Spring 2005 (Technical report)', both with a 100% relevance score. The interface also includes options to sort by Title or Relevancy and a link to revise the search.

## Links to other annotated bibliographies and resource materials.

- Recreation Visitor Research – Studies of Diversity” (USFS, 2008)  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw\\_gtr210/psw\\_gtr210.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr210/psw_gtr210.pdf)
- “Association of Race, Class, and Gender in Outdoor Recreation” (Rodriguez & Roberts, 2002)  
[http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Rodriguez\\_Roberts\\_Rep.pdf](http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/Rodriguez_Roberts_Rep.pdf)
- NPS Comprehensive 2000 Study – Race/Ethnicity (Solop, et.al)  
<http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/archive/EthnicAndRacialDiversity.pdf>
- “Race, Ethnicity and the National Park System” (Floyd, 1999)  
[http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/archive/SSRR\\_2.pdf](http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/docs/archive/SSRR_2.pdf)
- US Army Corp of Engineers – Bibliography of Research on Race/Ethnicity  
<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/ethnic/pdfs/mpr96-1.pdf>
- “Ethnicity, race, and outdoor recreation: A review of trends, policy, and research (Gramann, 1996)  
<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/ethnic/ethnic.cfm>

### **Note:**

Selected key findings from the applied and theoretical research literature are shared in the following sections. This is a “40,000 foot” summary and individual studies are not cited. Please contact either of the presenters if you are interested in learning more about a particular finding.

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## Part 2: Race, Ethnicity, Culture | Recreation Activity and Style | Barriers and Constraints

### In general, across cultures, people go to national parks to:

- Enjoy nature
- Escape
- Relax
- Nostalgic
- Socialize
- Introspection
- Physical Fitness
- Achievement
- Learning
- Risk-taking

### Latinos, Asians, and African Americans are...

...under-represented among visitors compared to their percent of the U.S. population. The largest gap appears within African American and Black women have some of the lowest participation/visitation rates. Some of the most significant opportunities will occur within the Latino community.

“History” and “Culture” are key factors that matter and **recreation participation** between racial and ethnic groups is determined by norms, value systems, and leisure socialization patterns.

**Different style and activity preferences** present many opportunities to connect...

- Active/Social Recreation
- Individual/Familial

### Recent immigrants/first generation

- Leisure time with extended family
- Children often in the center of decisions
- Acculturation increases with time and overall experiences in the U.S.
- Recreation and Leisure...
  - Helps to maintain cultural connections
  - Provides reminders of home
  - Creates opportunities to share experiences  
(evidence of “word of mouth” as key communication channel)

### Common Constraints Across the County

“Lack of Time” is most often cited but other important constraints include:

- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of companions, physical limitations of companions
- [Perceived] crowding
- Economic/class disparity, costs (oil prices, user fees, equip/gear)
- Distance and origin of travel
- Video games, movies, Internet use
- Vacation planning problems
- Negative environmental factors affecting recreation choice
- Social isolation, location

## Ethnic Minority View Also Includes:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✓ Historical context  | ✓ Lack of marketing efforts towards ethnic minority communities |
| ✓ Socialization as a child  | ✓ Fear and safety concerns                                      |
| ✓ Lack of comfort or “feeling welcome”  | ✓ Perceived discrimination (“Avoidance / Displacement”)         |
| ✓ Communication<br>(e.g., signage, language, interpretation, messaging, use of photographs) | ✓ “Social permission”   |

## What Do These Findings Suggest?

### We Can....

- Facilitate opportunities for non-users to understanding the meaning and significance of national parks to their lives and...
- Facilitate opportunities for parks and partners to learn from and better understand their publics

If there is a perception [in some racialized circles] that Whites have exclusive domain over the “Great Outdoors”, this has potential consequences for how ethnic minorities perceive parks, wilderness, and other public outdoor spaces.

The opportunities to participate in changing this perception are unprecedented and the time is now!

### We Can....

- Promote directly to racial minority market segments through ethnic media (e.g., newsletters, enews, radio/PSAs, ads, brochures)
- Strengthen and increase multilingual communication efforts
  - Inclusive Photos
  - Get Into Communities
  - Bi-lingual Staff, Signs, Interp Material

There are **similarities** amongst racial/ethnic groups with respect to interests, preferences, and concerns about park management. There are **differences** amongst racial/ethnic groups with respect to park use patterns, activity participation rates, and reports of racial discrimination (perceived or real).

*“In order to forecast what the demands for outdoor recreation will be one generation and two generations from the present time, it is especially important to know something about American attitudes toward the outdoors and the use of space, toward planning ahead for use of space, toward work and leisure, and toward vacations...”*

*—Margaret Mead, ORRC Report, 1962.*

## Part 3: The Travel Experience

### Pre-Trip Info and Decision | The Destination Experience | The Meaning of Place

#### Trip Info and Decision-making

- Decision window is shrinking
  - More Last Minute Decisions
- Information sources are changing
  - On-line increasing
  - New Gatekeepers
    - Social Media
- Women are decision makers
  - Children influence but women decide

#### Tourism Marketing

- More Diverse Traveling Public
  - Age
  - Income
  - Education
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - National Origin
- More Segmentation
  - Large
  - Distinct
  - Sufficient Buying Power
- Segmentation
  - Geographic
  - Demographic
  - Activity Type
  - Psychographic

#### The Destination Experience

- More Immersion
  - Experiential, Interactive, Adventure, Authentic
  - Action/Actor Oriented
- More Mediated/Supported
  - More Technology Used by Visitors
  - More Technology Used for Info, Interp, Education
  - More Product to Purchase
- More Nightlife
  - Especially for Younger Folks

## **The Meaning of Place**

- Level of Familiarity
  - Destination/Experience Naive
  - Experienced Participant/Visitor
- Likelihood Differing Meanings
  - Familiarity
  - Demographic Variables
- Place Attachment Important to Understand
  - Return Visitation
  - Support and Advocacy
  - Immediacy of Sharing

## **What These Findings Suggest for Inviting Broader Involvement**

- Address “Lack of Knowledge”
- Understand Importance of Story
  - Personal Stories | Credible Spokespersons
  - Deep On-line Content
  - Utilize Social Media | User Generated Content
- Recognize Differences
  - Within Groups
  - Psychographics (Attitudes, Intentions, Beliefs)

## **What These Findings Suggest for Adding Value to Visitors’ Experiences**

- Deepen Park Experiences
  - More Structured Experiences
  - More Personal “Like Me” Contacts
  - More Family/Group Experiences
  - Use Technology/Social Media to Create Relationships
  - More Insight into Psychographic Factors
  - Augmented Reality (total game changer)

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**Part 4: Coming Attractions....**  
**What You Can Expect | The Break Out Sessions | Ideas and Action Plan**

**What You Can Expect**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Comprehensive Survey of Am Public
- Visitor Studies Program
- Portrait of the American Traveler
- Web Analytics
- State Directed Market Research
- National Parks & The Economy

Why Aren't People Visiting?

Why Aren't Parks Relevant to Non-visitors?

What is Needed to Increase Relevance to Non-visitors?

**The Break Out Sessions.....**

- Segment Topics**
- Youth
  - Ethnic Minorities
  - Boomers
  - International
  - Traditional Users

- Trend Topics**
- Technology
  - Visitor Services
  - Health Connections
  - Communication Strategies
  - Jobs & Economic Stimulus

**NPS Second Century Commission**

**Empower a new-century National Park Service.**

We must equip the Park Service to accomplish its mission by:

- invigorating capacities in history, scientific research, and community assistance.
- building a more adaptive, innovative, and responsive organization.
- creating enduring bonds to the full diversity of America.

