Florida National Scenic Trail Visitor Assessment

2008

Presented to:
National Forests in Florida, U.S.D.A. Forest Service
Florida Trail Association

By:
Rachel Albritton
Bin Wan
Taylor Stein

University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation

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Executive Summary

The University of Florida's School of Forest Resources and Conservation (SFRC) began a collaborative visitor assessment project for the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Florida Trail Association (FTA) in June of 2003. The purpose of the study is twofold. First, researchers are striving to determine reliable use estimates of annual trail visits to 27 segments of the FNST. Second, researchers are also gathering information on who FNST visitors are and develop a continual understanding of why they visit the trail. Following baseline data collection from 2003-2007, the visitor counts and visitor information has continued to be gathered in order to evaluate trends in visitation numbers as well trends in visitor characteristics. This report discusses the results of sites re-studied from June 1, 2007 – May 31 2008.

Study Methods

Data Collection: Trail Estimations

Three methods are used to collect FNST visitation data at annual survey sites:

1. Personal Observations
2. Mechanical Counters
    a. Infrared Eyes
    b. Pressure Pads (2003-2006 only)
3. Supplemental Materials (2003-2004 only)

Data Collection: Visitor Characteristics

In addition, visitor questionnaires are used to gather information on visitor characteristics at annual survey sites.

2007-2008 Results

Estimation of Trail Visits

The FNST is primarily meant to be a footpath covering the length of Florida; however several segments of the FNST are multiple use. Therefore, two annual estimates are reported. The first estimate is *pedestrian* visits only, which includes hikers, walkers, joggers, and runners. The second estimate includes those visitors who do not fall into the pedestrian category such as bikers, roller blade users, horseback riders, etc. and are categorized as *other users.* These two use categories are then summed together for both summer and fall/spring seasons to form an annual FNST visitation estimate. For the 2007-2008 study season, the FNST received an estimated 349,637 visits of which 52% were estimated to be pedestrian visits and 48% were estimated to be other visits.

Total estimation of annual visits: 349,637

- Total pedestrians: 180,302
- Total other users: 169,335
- Total estimated summer use (June 1- September 30) : 35,022
- Total estimated fall/spring use (October-May) : 314,615

Annual Use of the FNST

The FNST Visitor Assessment has collected data since 2003 on Florida National Scenic Trail visitation. Results have shown that the FNST receives between 225,000 and 350,500 visits per year (Figure 1). Survey methodology was modified over the course of the project to improve accuracy, so it is felt that numbers for the last four study periods most accurately reflect trail usage.

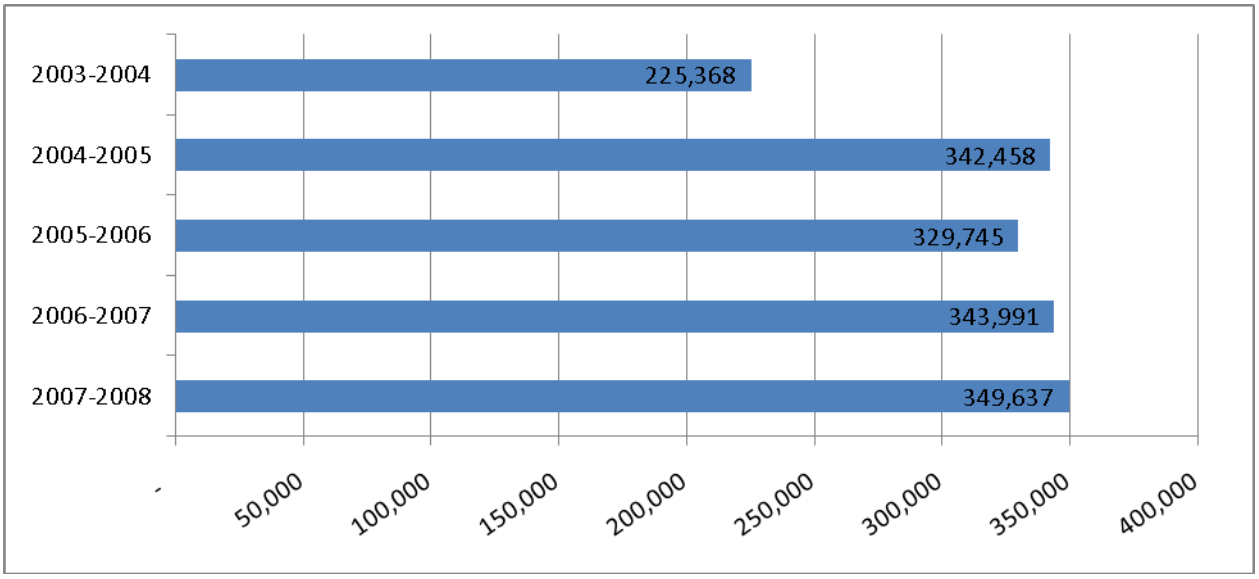

Figure 1. Annual use of the Florida National Scenic Trail 2003-2008

Visitor Questionnaires

In order to learn more about the characteristics of FNST visitors as it relates to their socio-demographic and trip characteristics as well their level of satisfaction with their visit, researchers conducted on-site exit interviews at the high use study sites from January – May of 2008. These results are as follows:

Participant Trip Characteristics

70% of respondents lived within 30 miles of the FNST
74% of respondents were repeat visitors to the FNST
50% of respondents spent (1) hour or less on the FNST
53% of respondents traveled in pairs, typically with a family member

Participant FNST Experience & Knowledge

39% of respondents stated they had a perfect experience along the FNST
46% of respondents reported a nearly perfect experience along the FNST
49% of visitors had no suggested improvements for the trail, stating they were happy the way it was
39% of respondents learned about the FNST due to their residential proximity to the trail

Visitor Demographics

58% of respondents were male
26% of respondents were 60 years of age or older
75% of respondents were married
65% of respondents had no children living at home
54% of respondents were college graduates
67% of respondents were employed
90% of respondents were white
26% of respondents reported an annual household income (pre-tax) of $90,000 or more

Introduction

The 1,400 mile Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) traverses through both urban and rural areas creating a footpath that stretches almost the entire length of Florida. As a result, the FNST is no more then 120 miles from all Florida residents, with the exception of the Florida Keys. The Trails dynamic location attracts thousands of visitors annually, and provides various passive recreation opportunities beyond hiking such as nature study, photography, and bird watching.

A nationwide survey of state and federal trail managers indicated collecting trail use data is of high importance, and that the collection of this data would be crucial to future management success for trail planning and other related projects (Lynch, J. *et al*, 2002). Visitor monitoring is a key component to effectively managing recreation on a regional scale. This process, which is often limited by resources (i.e. money, staff, etc), centers around two main procedures: 1) obtaining the number of visitors to an area, and 2) administering visitor questionnaires (Cope *et al.*, 1999). The necessity for collecting visitor counts is slowly emerging within recreation and land use agencies. This data helps in justifying budget requests, and it can provide a direction for appropriate resource distribution (Loomis, 2000). The most common method for collecting visitor counts has been through the use of mechanical counters. However, records on visitor counts are also kept through visitor sign in sheets, registration cards, and personal observations. In addition to obtaining information on the number of visitors to an area, gathering specific information on visitors themselves such as visitor motivations, visitor preferences, visitor knowledge of the area, and visitor socio-demographics can help managers and planners create a balance between the conservation of the surrounding habitat and providing quality recreation experiences.

Baseline monitoring efforts along the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) were undertaken by the U.S. Forest Service with the help of the University of Florida, School of Forest Resources and Conservation from June 1, 2003-May 31, 2007, in order to gather baseline information on current trail visitation and current visitor characteristics. Beginning in June 2007, data collection as re-started at previously monitored sites, allowing an initial investigation of visitor use trends along re-sampled sections of the Florida Trail. As these monitoring efforts continue over the next several years, management will be provided with scientifically collected information to assist in monitoring if and how FNST visitation is changing as well as if and how the characteristics of Trail visitors is changing. As a result, programmers, managers, and volunteers will be provided with information to assist them in creating and enhancing recreation opportunities along the FNST, as well as assisting the Forest Service in justifying the need to acquire appropriate funding for FNST management (Loomis, 2000).

Study Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Florida National Scenic Trail Visitor Assessment study is to generate reliable use estimates of annual visits to the FNST. A visit is defined as an individual entering and exiting the FNST. Specifically, study objectives aim to:

1. generate reliable use estimates of each survey site, which can be inferred to all FNST survey sections of similar categorized use which then can be combined to create a trail-wide visitation estimate, and
2. to describe pedestrians in terms of their socio-demographic and trip characteristics, as well their level of satisfaction.

This report presents the visitor estimates for June 1, 2007 through May 31, 2008 at nine identified survey sites through which the Florida National Scenic Trail traverses. In addition, visitor characteristic information was collected through the completion of on-site questionnaires at four of the nine study sites. The results from these on-site questionnaires are also reported.

Methodology

Survey Sections

The Florida National Scenic Trail is composed of 42 sections. Using these 42 sections as a foundation for survey efforts, UF researchers identified 27 survey sites within each section that would likely serve as exit and/or entrance points for hikers. These areas tended to correspond closely to public lands with established trailheads, which attract more hikers and serve as efficient survey sites. Preliminary research then categorized these sites as receiving high, medium, or low use (Table 1). Third, survey sites were geographically divided into groups, and each group was scheduled to be sampled for one year during the five year visitor assessment (Appendix I). Fourth, each survey site was further divided into potential FNST access points (Table 2). Although survey or counter data might not be collected at every access point within a site, every access point is classified by use type. This classification allows data collected at similar access points to be inferred to access points without data thereby making the annual visitation estimate more reflective of actual use (Appendix II).

Table 1. Site use classification

Site Use Type	Annual Number of Visits
High	1000 or more
Medium	366-999
Low	0-365

Table 2. Access point classification

Access Point Type	Monthly Number of Visits
A	500 or more
B	100-499
C	50-99
D	15-49
E	15 or less

Counting Visitors on the FNST

When

Study years are divided into two seasons:

1. Summer season, June 1st to September 31st
2. Fall/Spring Season, October 1st to May 31st

Beginning the study year during the summer, allows researchers ample time to contact recreation and land managers at new study sites, install trail counters and work out any kinks that may arise with equipment or the sampling framework over the summer months without sacrificing the loss of visitor use data. In addition the advantages of starting in the summer, the use of two survey seasons allows researchers to account for seasonal differences in Trail visitation.

Where

From June 1, 2007 – May 31, 2008, researchers collected visitor use data from nine study sites (Figure 2):

1. Apalachicola National Forest
2. Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center St. Park
3. Osceola National Forest
4. Goldhead Branch State Park
5. Etoniah St. Forest
6. Cross Florida Greenway
7. Ocala National Forest
8. Little Big Econ State Forest
9. Big Cypress National Preserve

Information on individual sites where visitor surveys were gathered can be viewed in Appendix IX. These nine study sites contained a total of 18 access points (Appendix III) that where monitored throughout the study year.

How

To obtain reliable use estimates of pedestrians on the FNST, researchers combined four different methods; (1) personal observations, (2) mechanical counters, (3) supplemental materials, and (4) visitor questionnaires.

The following sections describe each technique.

Personal Observations

Personal observations are performed at sites were the FNST allows multiple use. This allows researcher to differentiate between foot use (the predominate focus of the FNST) and other uses. A stratified random sampling approach was used to assign personal observation times in conjunction with survey periods. The sampling framework consists of two strata:

1. Day type
    a. Weekdays (Monday - Thursday)
    b. Weekends (Friday - Sunday)
2. Time of day
    a. Morning
    b. Afternoon

For the fall/spring season, every survey day contained four possible survey periods: (2) 3-hour survey shifts in the morning and (2) 3-hour shifts in the afternoon. There are 244 days in the fall/spring season, 139 weekdays and 105 weekend days.

During these personal observation times, surveyors kept a tally of individuals entering and exiting the FNST, as well as group size, the number of males, the number of females, activity, and direction of travel (Appendix IV). These observation logs were used to generate an estimate of trail use at sites where multiple use occurred using the methods outlined within the following section.

For the 2007-2008 study year, Baseline & 64th Street trailhead at the Cross Florida Greenway and the Black Hammock Trailhead at Little Big Econ State Forest were the only sites in which user estimates where estimated using the personal observation method.

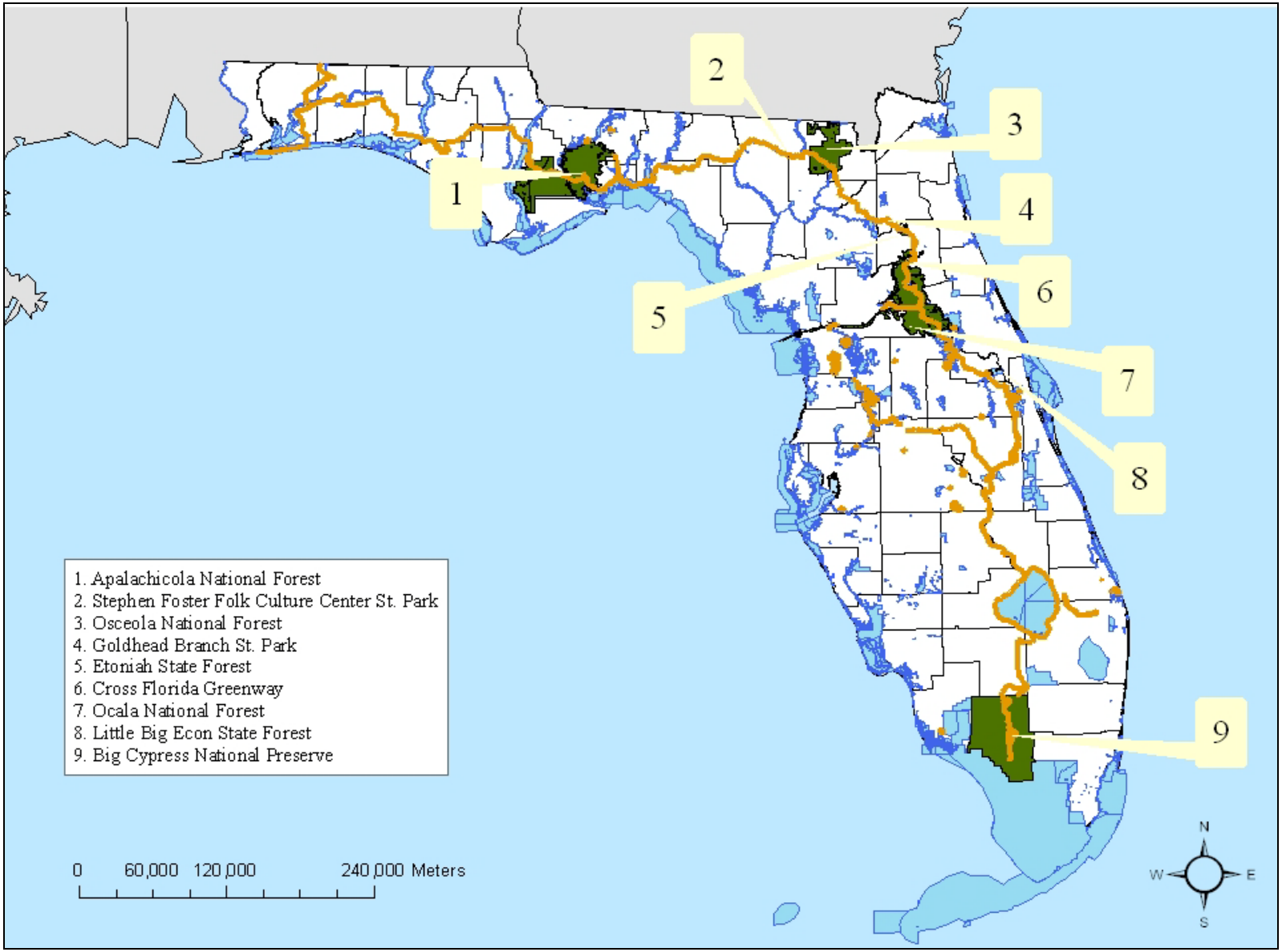

Figure 2. Florida National Scenic Trail 2008 Study Sites

Mechanical Pedestrian Counters

UF researchers used two types of infrared counters to generate visitor use estimates. While the installation of the two pieces of equipment differs, the data collection methods are the similar. A total of 18 counters where installed for the 2007-2008 survey season (Appendix V). Each of these counters are discussed below.

Active Infrared Eyes

The Diamond Traffics TCC-4420 infrared eye trail counter was originally designed by the U.S. Forest Service equipment center to aid in trail monitoring in remote areas. The counter is cased within water-proof aluminum, and operates on 4-D batteries that usually last 12-15 months. The counter is installed on a tree or wooden post and is aligned with a reflector 20-75 feet across the trail creating an invisible beam. When this beam is broken a hiker, wildlife, or other user is recorded with no differentiation between user types. The counter has an ability to provide researchers with hourly counts for up to 420 days equating to approximately 25,000 counts.

The TrailMaster 1550 active infrared eye was also installed at several research sites over the course of the study year. This counter gathers data in the same fashion as the Diamond Traffics eye, however the way in which is stores data is slightly different. The counter is cased with water proof hard plastic, and operates on 4-C batteries that usually last 8-10 months. The counter is installed on a tree or wooden post and is aligned with a transmitter 20 to 145 feet across. Unlike the diamond traffics counter that indicates the exact percentage of alignment between the eye and the reflector, this counter only indicates to the field technician if the counter is aligned or not, and does not indicate the strength of the alignment. However, the TrailMaster does allow the field technician to adjust the sensitivity of a counter, unlike the Diamond Traffics Eyes. Although the sensitivity of the TrailMaster can be adjusted, the TrailMaster still cannot differentiate between user types. Information gathered from the counter allows researchers to evaluate trail use visits in one minute intervals, and the counter can store a maximum of 4,000 counts.

Both types of trail counters were calibrated on a monthly basis. Calibration of counters was essential in obtaining and maintaining counters accuracy. Researchers walked on or across the counter ten times and compared this number to the number of registered counts on the counter. The number of actual counts was then divided by the number of registered counts to develop a monthly correction factor (Appendix VI). At the end of the survey season these monthly correction factors were averaged together, omitting outliers, to develop one correction factor for an entire season. This correction factor was then applied to each month of data for that survey site to compensate for a counter over or under counting.

Supplemental Materials

For some areas, additional information regarding visitor numbers is available. This type of information ranges from formal registration cards to informal visitor logs kept in a mailbox on a nearby kiosk. The information found in these materials helps supplement the counters and observational counts. Registration cards can be used to obtain supplemental counts of visitors to the FNST. Visitor compliance is often an issue when depending on registration cards for visitor counts. There is currently no standardized system for registration cards on the FNST, so the reliability of this data is site dependent.

For the 2003-2004 study season, researchers only used registration cards from Eglin Air Force Base for supplemental data. Registration is mandatory at this site, and there is consistency in the card's dispersal and collection. Numbers obtained from this site was also used in proceeding study years to help calculates estimates for similar use areas. There were no additional survey sites in 2007-2008 that contained supplemental materials. However, trail registers left at kiosks were often consulted in order to compare to known counts to visitor recorded counts as an anecdotal means of justifying counter data. This most useful when counts were counts could be perceived as unusually high.

Defining Visitor Characteristics

In order to meet the studies second objective, to describe visitors in terms of their socio-demographic and trip characteristics, researchers conducted on-site exit interviews during personal observation periods conducted from January 2008 – April 2008 (highest use season).

Visitor Questionnaires

In order to aid researchers in gathering the most information available on current FNST visitors in the most efficient way possible, on-site interviews were conducted at previously established high-use study sites only. A total of 236 visitors were approached to complete the survey of which 17 declined and 20 were incomplete resulting in199 completed surveys for an 84% response rate.

The on-site exit survey (Appendix VII) differed from previous study years, in that the on-site survey was extended from 1 page to 4 pages in order to gather more information from visitors on-site, thereby allowing researchers to discontinue the distribution on the mail back questionnaire used in previous years. This had several benefits; 1) more useable information was gathered, making the results more representative of FNST visitors and 2) was less costly in regards to both time and materials.

Similar to previous years, the survey was given to one consenting participant 18 years of age or older within every group exiting the FNST. For groups that were larger then seven people, one person for every seventh person in the group was asked to complete a survey. The questionnaire took approximately 8-10 minutes of the participant's time to complete, and contained 25 questions pertaining to frequency of trail use, primary activities, group size, trip length, trip satisfaction, trip motivation, setting preferences, and socio demographic information.

Data Analysis

Personal Observations

The observation logs completed by researchers during sampling blocks were used to develop seasonal estimates of visitors to the FNST for areas where mechanical counters could not be installed. For each access point within every survey site, the following counts were recorded:

1. TFC = Total Foot Count. Total number of visitors that are considered foot traffic (hikers, walkers, backpackers, runners) who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.
2. TOC = Total Other Count. Total number of bikers, horseback riders, roller-bladers, who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.
3. TVC = Total Visitor Count. Total number of visitors, including all activities, who were observed entering or exiting the FNST.

Average seasonal counts of TFC, TOC, and TVC were calculated for each survey site using a four-step process.

Step 1: Calculate average sampling period

For each variable (i.e. TFC, TOC, and TVC), researchers calculated the **average sampling period count** (am and pm) for each day type (weekend or weekday) for each access point of each survey site.

$$X_{ijkl} = 1/N_{ijk} \sum_{l=1}^{Nijk} X_{ijkl}$$

Where:

i = access point

j = survey site (1,…,8)\

k = weekday (1) and weekend (2)

l = the sampling periods for each day (am or pm)

m = number of counts for sampling period on day type k at access point i of site j

$N_{ijk\,l}$ = number of times counted during shift l on day type k at access point i of site

X_{ijklm} = the count on mth repetition for sampling period l on day type k at access point i of site j

X_{ijkl}= average count during sampling period l on day type k at access point i of site j

Step 2: Calculate average daily count

Second, researchers calculated the **average daily count** for each access point of each site by summing the two sampling periods (calculated above) for both weekend days and weekdays.

$$X_{ijk} = \sum_{k=1}^{3} X_{ijkl}$$

Where

i = access point

j = survey site (1,…,8)

k = weekday (1) and weekend (2)

l = the sampling periods for each day (am or pm)

X_{ijk} = average daily count on day type *k* at access point *i* of site *j*

Step 3: Summation of averages

Next, the average daily counts of all access points within a site were summed to calculate the average daily count for a site for both weekdays and weekends.

$$X_{jk} = \sum_{k=1}^{3} X_{ijk}$$

Where:

i=access point

j=survey site (1,…,8)

k=weekday (1) and weekend (2)

X_{jk}=average daily count on day type *k* at site

Step 4: calculate average seasonal count

Researchers calculated the **average seasonal count** for each site, for variables TFC, TOC, TVC. Researchers multiplied the average daily count for weekends by the number of weekend days in that season. Then, they multiplied the average daily count for weekdays by the number of weekday days in that season. Researchers then added the two numbers to find the average seasonal count.

$$\text{Seasonal Average for each site} = M_1\left(\sum_{i=1}^{8} X_{i1}\right) + M_2\left(\sum_{i=1}^{8} X_{i2}\right)$$

Where:

M_1 = number of weekend days in the season

M_2 = number of weekday days in the season

X_{i1} = average daily count for site *i* for weekend days.

X_{i1} = average daily count for site *i* for weekdays

i = site (1,…, 8)

Mechanical Pedestrian Counters

Data collected from mechanical counters provide continuous counts for selected access points within each survey site. Analyzing counter data is the same regardless of the type of counter being used. A seven-step protocol was developed to transform raw counter data to final seasonal counts for each installed counter.

Step 1: Adjust Raw Data
Delete data:

1. One hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise, unless there were scheduled night hikes that researchers were made aware of. This information was obtained at the study sites website, from the study sites land/recreation manager, from the FTA website, or from the FTA publication *Footprints*.

2. Unusually high counts, with no explanation from FTA or other group, and unusual patterns of high numbers. Unusually high counts are site specific. Counts that may be considered "high counts" were not deleted until reasonable knowledge about the trail section had been obtained.

3. Any data that included researchers calibrating or working on trail.

Step 2: Adjust Data by Month & Compensating for Missing Data

Counter data was then analyzed by the month, so each month within a season had a total number of counts. This number was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. If data were data were missing within the month, data were data were estimated by:

[(Total # of hits for *x* days before missing data + Total # of hits for *x* days after missing data) / 2

If days were missing between two months (not the whole month) then researchers followed the procedure above. After dividing by 2, the answer was then divided by the number of missing days. This gave the number of hits per day. This number was multiplied by the number of missing days within the month. If data was missing for an entire month (i.e battery died, counter was stolen) an access point average was applied to that particular month for that particular site.

Step 3: Corrected Monthly Count
In order to better estimate the actual number of users, each access point with a counter had an average correction factor that was multiplied by the access point's monthly total. This was done at the end of a season when all the correction factors were averaged together. Every counter is calibrated regularly, and correction factors were produced by dividing the actual number of counts by the registered number of counts. The average correction factor accounts for every time the access point was calibrated since installation. If a counter had to be replaced, correction factors were averaged as normal unless there are known differences between the counters or conditions. Outlying correction factors were omitted if the cause of the unusually high/low factor was known.

Step 4: Final Monthly Data
To account for the same entry and exit by pedestrians at a site, an access point's corrected monthly count was divided by two.

Step 5: Apply Access Point Averages
Once final monthly counts were formed, access points within the same classification were grouped together from all study years regardless of location. Next, an average for that access point classification was formulated. This average was then applied to current access points where data was not collected.

Step 6: Final Seasonal Data
All final monthly data was summed up within the season.

Step 7: Trail-Wide Estimate

Final annual data was then added to previous annual data, omitting sites being re-sampled for the current year report, to formulate a trail-wide visitation estimate.

Visitor Questionnaires

Descriptive statics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were relied upon to answer the studies second objective, to describe visitors in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, motivations, and desired settings. In some cases a cross-tabs analysis was consulted to further provide explanation of the descriptive statistics.

For open-ended comments found in the on-site survey, two researchers independently reviewed the comments and placed them into categories thought to provide a descriptive overview of the comment. These categories and related comments were then compared. Categories similar in nature were left as defined by the independent review. In the event that a comment was assigned to a conflicting category, a third reviewer was asked to review the comments and the group came to a consensus about the comments appropriate placement. All analysis for visitor surveys was conducted with SPSS v11.5.

Results

Visitor Use Estimates

This section describes the data collected from mechanical counters and on site observations during the 2007-2008 study year. Trail visitor estimations were developed through the use of two methods, personal observations and mechanical counters. Seasonal results were derived by totaling:

- Data from previous years' research (June 2003- May 2007), and
- Results from this year's research (June 2007 – May 2008)

The 2007-2008 study year has the highest estimated visits to the Florida Trail. There were 5,646 more estimated visits to the FNST in 2007-2008 compared to the previous study year. Since all study sites have now been researched at least once, it is reasonable to say that this year's estimate is an accurate reflection of the approximate number of Florida Trail users.

Six Trail Master 1550 infrared counters and twelve Diamond Traffics infrared counters that were used in 2007-2008 research season to collect visitation data. All of these counters performed well throughout the year, with few mechanical issues arising. Of the 18 counters, only two Diamond Traffic counters (located at SR 19 (Ocala National Forest) and Oasis South (Big Cypress Preserve)) experience mechanical issues in July 2007 and December 2007 respectively, resulting in approximately one-month of data loss at each location. In addition, the Trail Master unit at Barr St. (Little Big Econ) was vandalized including both monitor and transmitter, resulting in data loss from December 1, 2007 to January 15, 2008; and the Trail Master unit's transmitter at Clearwater Recreation Area (Ocala National Forest) was stolen in December 2007 from the site resulting in 40-day data loss. In each case where the counter was vandalized, stolen, or experience mechanical issues, each unit was replaced immediately when the incidents were noticed during the monthly site visit to avoid further data loss. In both sites at Clearwater Recreation Area and Little Big Econ, where counters were vandalized or stolen, new units were reinstalled at a different location nearby to avoid potential repeat incidents.

Estimate of Summer Visits

The estimated use for all nine sites studied during the summer of 2007 was 17,545 (Table 3). The sites studied consisted of seven high-use and two medium-use sites. The highest use occurred at Little Big Econ State Forest with 9,158 visits of which 4,894 were estimated to be pedestrian traffic and 4,264 visits were estimated to be other users. The Cross Florida Greenway had the second highest estimated with 6,412 visits. Both of these recreation sites are adjacent to neighborhoods and populated communities believed to be a contributor to the

trails high visitation. The lowest visitation occurred at Etoniah State Forest with 78 total visits. Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center was the next lowest with 108 summer visits.

Table 3. Estimate of summer visitation at 2007-2008 Study Sites

Use Type	Site	Foot Traffic	Other Traffic	TOTAL
High	Little Big Econ St. Forest	4,894	4,264	9,158
	Cross Florida Greenway	5,788	624	6,412
	Ocala National Forest	702	0	702
	Big Cypress National Preserve	563	0	563
	Goldhead Branch State Park	234	0	234
	Apalachicola National Forest	174	0	174
	Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center	108	0	108
Medium	Osceola National Forest	116	0	116
	Etoniah State Forest	78	0	78
Subtotals		***12,657***	***4,888***	***17,545***
Total Estimate for Summer 2007 Study Sites				**17,545**

Total estimated summer use for the entire Florida National Scenic Trail during the summer of 2007 was 35,022 (Table 4). This number is approximately an 8% increase from the 2006 summer estimate. Similar to the 2007-2008 study site results the highest use site for all 27 segments was Little Big Econ State Forest with a total of 9,158 estimated visits. The lowest use site was estimated to be Rice Creek with 43 visits followed by Etoniah with 78 visits. Two of the national forests had fewer counts in the summer of 2007 than in 2006. Specifically, visitation to the FNST within Apalachicola National Forest decreased from 549 hikers in the summer of 2006 to 174 hikers in 2007, a 68% decrease, and visitation to the FNST within Ocala National Forest decreased 53% going from 1,494 in 2006 to 702 in 2007. However, Osceola National Forest had a 36% increase in FNST visitation, going from 85 hikers in 2006 to 116 in 2007.

Table 4. Estimates of FNST trail-wide visits, summer 2007

Use Type	Location	Foot Traffic	Other Traffic	Total Use
Highest	Lake Okeechobee	1,329	1,229	2,558
	Total highest use site estimate	***1,329***	***1,229***	***2,558***
High	**Little Big Econ St. Forest**	**4,894**	**4,264**	**9,158**
	Gulf Islands National Seashore	2,430	3,380	5,810
	Withlacoochee State Forest & Rail Trail	1,306	2,519	3,825
	St. Marks NWR & Rail Trail	290	1,229	1,519
	Cross Florida Greenway	**5,788**	**624**	**6,412**
	Suwannee (not including SFFCC)	107	0	107
	Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center	**108**	**0**	**108**
	Apalachicola National Forest	**174**	**0**	**174**
	Seminole State Forest	212	0	212
	Goldhead Branch State Park	**234**	**0**	**234**
	Twin Rivers State Forest	282	0	282
	Green Swamp WMA	366	0	366
	Three Lakes WMA	491	0	491
	Highlands (S65B to US 98)	495	0	495
	Big Cypress National Preserve	**563**	**0**	**563**
	Ocala National Forest	**702**	**0**	**702**
	Blackwater River State Forest	732	0	732
	Total high use site estimate	***19,174***	***12,016***	***31,190***
Medium	Aucilla WMA	221	0	221
	Bull Creek WMA	199	0	199
	Kissimmee River/Avon AFB	183	0	183
	Tosohatchee State Preserve	177	0	177
	Econfina WMA	131	0	131
	Osceola National Forest	**116**	**0**	**116**
	Etoniah State Forest	**78**	**0**	**78**
	Pine Log State Forest	72	0	72
	Eglin AFB	54	0	54
	Total medium use site estimate	***1,770***	***0***	***1,231***
Low	Rice Creek	43	0	43
	Total low use site estimate	***43***	***0***	***43***
Subtotals		**22,316**	**13,245**	**35,022**
TOTAL SUMMER 2007 FNST VISITATION			**35,022**	

Estimation of Fall/Spring Visits

The estimated use for all nine sites studied during the fall/spring of 2007-2008 was 57,759 (Table 5). The Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway received the highest number of visits (29,150) of which 66% (19,309) was estimated to be pedestrian traffic and 34% (9,841) was estimated to be other types of traffic. Little Big Econ State Forest had the second highest estimated number of visits during the fall/spring season with a total of 13,354 visits of which 7,238 were estimated to be foot traffic and 6,116 were estimated to tbe other types of traffic. The lowest use area during the fall/spring was Etoniah with 301 visits. Osceola National Forest (455 visits) was the next lowest use areas studied.

Table 5. Estimate of fall/spring visitation at 2007-2008 study sites

Use Type	Site	Foot Traffic	Other Traffic	TOTAL
High	Cross Florida Greenway	19,309	9,841	29,150
	Little Big Econ St. Forest	7,238	6,116	13,354
	Goldhead Branch St. Park	5,272	0	5,272
	Ocala National Forest	4,615	0	4,615
	Big Cypress National Preserve	2,488	0	2,488
	Apalachicola National Forest	1,097	0	1,097
	Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center	1,027	0	1,027
Medium	Osceola National Forest	455	0	455
	Etoniah St. Forest	301	0	301
Subtotal		***41,802***	***15,957***	***57,759***
Total Estimate for Fall/Spring 2007-2008 Study Sites				**57,759**

Total estimated fall/spring visitation for the entire Florida National Scenic Trail is 314,615, a 1.3% increase from last year's estimate of 310,566 (Table 6). Reflecting this increase, the Cross Florida Greenway had a 28% increase in FNST visitation during the current study year (29,150) compared 2006-2007 study year (22,705 visits). However, visitation to the Florida Trail in the Ocala National Forest had slightly fewer counts in the fall/spring of 2007-2008 (4,615) than in 2006-2007 (4,987); the Osceola National Forest and Big Cypress also had fewer hikers in the fall/spring of 2007-2008 (455 and 2,488 respectively) than in 2006-2007 (584 and 3,068 respectively) while; and Apalachicola National Forests had almost the same number of hikers in the fall/spring of 2007-2008 (1,097) as in 2006-2007 (1,091).

Table 6. Estimate of fall/spring trail-wide visitation, 2007-2008

Use Type	Location	Foot Traffic	Other Traffic	Total Use
Highest	Lake Okeechobee	89,930	111,482	201,412
	Total highest use site estimate	***89,930***	***111,482***	***201,412***
High	**Cross Florida Greenway**	**19,309**	**9,841**	**29,150**
	Gulf Islands National Seashore	8,220	8,643	16,863
	Withlacoochee State Forest & Rail Trail	4,581	8,997	13,578
	Little Big Econ St. Forest	**7,238**	**6,116**	**13,354**
	St. Marks NWR & Rail Trail	2,515	10,562	13,077
	Goldhead Branch State Park	**5,272**	**0**	**5,272**
	Ocala National Forest	**4,615**	**0**	**4,615**
	Big Cypress National Preserve	**2,488**	**0**	**2,488**
	Blackwater River State Forest	1,974	0	1,974
	Highlands (S65B to US 98)	1,240	0	1,240
	Three Lakes WMA	1,213	0	1,213
	Seminole State Forest	653	449	1,102
	Apalachicola National Forest	**1,097**	**0**	**1,097**
	Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center	**1,027**	**0**	**1,027**
	Green Swamp WMA	810	0	810
	Suwannee (not including SFFCC)	777	0	777
	Twin Rivers State Forest	752	0	752
	Total high use site estimate	***63,781***	***44,608***	***108,389***
Medium	Bull Creek WMA	800	0	800
	Econfina WMA	755	0	755
	Pine Log State Forest	662	0	662
	Eglin AFB	610	0	610
	Osceola National Forest	**455**	**0**	**455**
	Tosohatchee State Preserve	428	0	428
	Aucilla WMA	376	0	376
	Kissimmee River/Avon AFB	343	0	343
	Etoniah State Forest	**301**	**0**	**301**
	Total medium use site estimate	***4,730***	***0***	***4,730***
Low	Rice Creek WMA	84	0	84
	Total low use site estimate	***84***	***0***	***84***
Subtotals		***158,525***	***156,090***	***314,615***
TOTAL FALL SPRING FNST VISITATION			**314,615**	

Estimation of Annual Visits

Trail-wide estimates for the summer season and the fall/spring season were added together to form an annual estimate of FNST visits. Overall, it is estimated that the FNST hosted 349,637 total visits in 2007-2008, about 1.6% increase from 2006-2007 (Table 7). Fifty-two percent of these visits were foot traffic and forty-eight percent were other traffic.

Table 7. Estimated FNST trail-wide visitation for 2007-2008 study year

Use Type	Location	Foot Traffic	Other Traffic	Total Use
Highest	Lake Okeechobee	91,259	112,711	203,790
	Total highest use site estimate	***91,259***	***112,711***	***203,790***
High	**Cross Florida Greenway**	**25,097**	**10,465**	**35,562**
	Gulf Islands National Seashore	10,650	12,023	22,673
	Little Big Econ St. Forest	**12,132**	**10,380**	**22,512**
	Withlacoochee State Forest & Rail Trail	5,887	11,516	17,403
	St. Marks NWR & Rail Trail	2,805	11,791	14,596
	Goldhead Branch State Park	**5,506**	**0**	**5,506**
	Ocala National Forest	**5,317**	**0**	**5,317**
	Big Cypress National Preserve	**3,051**	**0**	**3,051**
	Blackwater River State Forest	2,706	0	2,706
	Highlands (S65B to US 98)	1,735	0	1,735
	Three Lakes WMA	1,704	0	1,704
	Seminole State Forest	865	449	1,314
	Apalachicola National Forest	**1,271**	**0**	**1,271**
	Green Swamp WMA	1,176	0	1,176
	Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center	**1,135**	**0**	**1,135**
	Twin Rivers State Forest	1,034	0	1,034
	Suwannee (not including SFFCC)	884	0	884
	Total high use site estimate	***82,955***	***56,624***	***139,579***
Medium	Bull Creek WMA	999	0	999
	Econfina WMA	886	0	886
	Pine Log State Forest	734	0	734
	Eglin AFB	664	0	664
	Tosohatchee State Preserve	605	0	605
	Aucilla WMA	597	0	597
	Osceola National Forest	**571**	**0**	**571**
	Kissimmee River/Avon AFB	526	0	526
	Etoniah State Forest	**379**	**0**	**379**
	Total mediuim use site estimate	***5,961***	***0***	***5,961***
Low	Rice Creek WMA	127	0	127
	Total low use site estimate	***127***	***0***	***127***
Subtotals		***180,302***	***169,335***	***349,637***
TOTAL FALL SPRING FNST VISITATION			**349,637**	

Comparison of Site Visitation

Examining the data collected over the past four years of research (Figure 3) , the site with the highest use on the Florida Trail is Lake Okeechobee with an estimated 203,970 users (45% were hikers). The next highest use can be found at the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway with an estimated 35,562 (73% were hikers) and Gulf Islands National Seashore with an estimated 22,673 users (47% were hikers). The lowest use sites found during the study period are Rice Creek with 127 users (100% hikers) and Etoniah with 379 users (100% hikers).

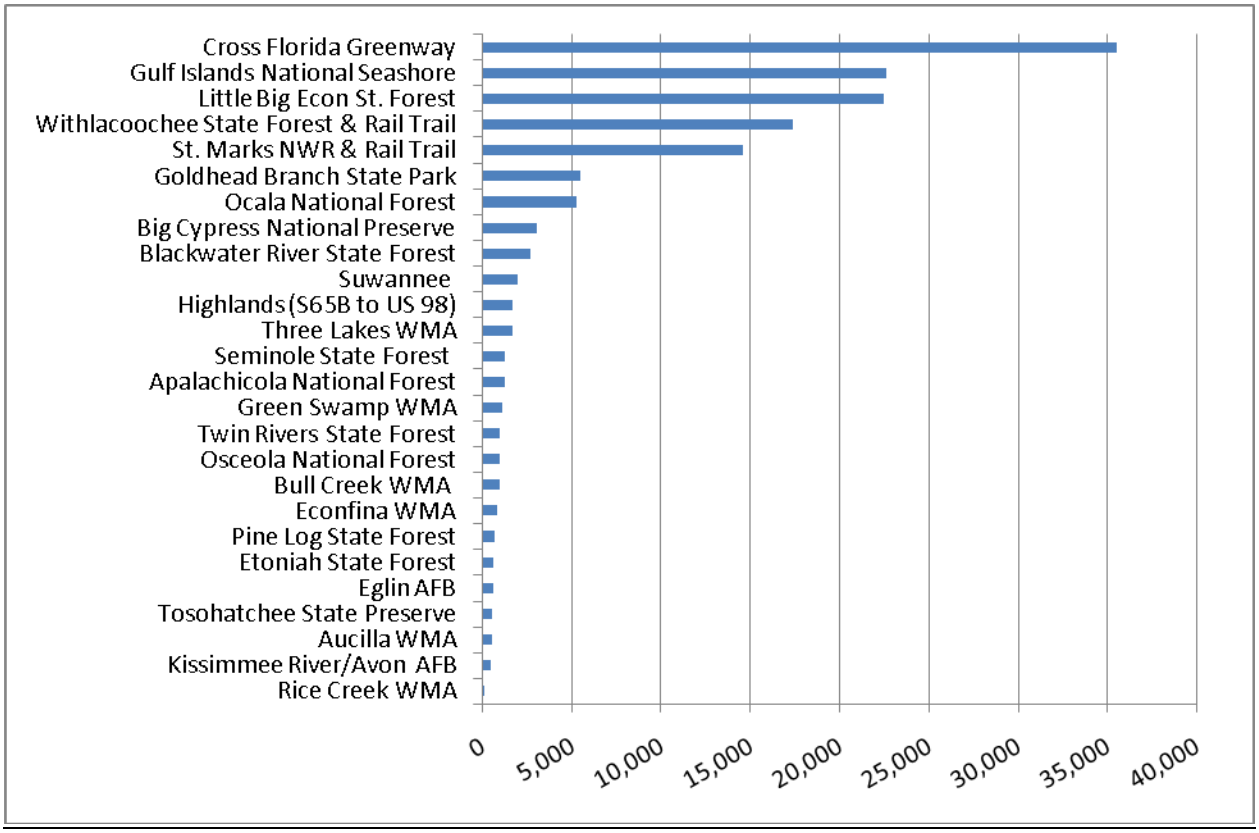

Figure 3.Estimated visitor use on the Florida National Scenic Trail 2007-2008 research sites
Note: Lake Okeechobee is not included in the figure because its very high use (203,970 annually) distorts the graph.

On-Site Survey

Exit interviews were conducted at four 2007-2008 high-use study sites; Ocala National Forest, Cross Florida Greenway, Goldhead Branch State Park, and Little Big Econ State Forest. A total of 214 number people were approached to completed the interview of which 17 declined and 20 were incomplete equaling a total of 177 completed surveys for an 82.7% response rate. The largest percentage of surveys were completed at Little Big Econ State Forest (36.9%), followed by Cross Florida Greenway (27.3%) and Goldhead Branch State Park (21.2%). The least amount of surveys were completed at Ocala National Forest (Figure 4).

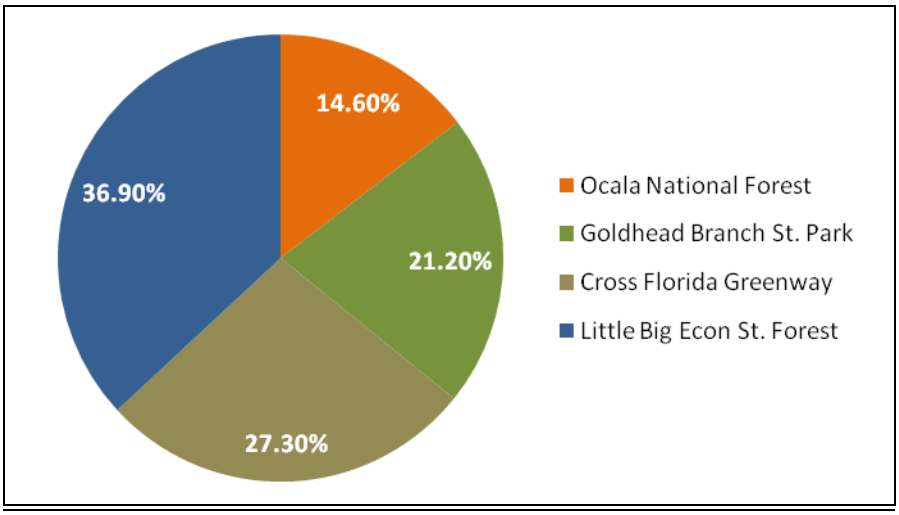

Figure 4. Distribution of Completed Surveys (n = 198)

Visitor Demographics

Respondents were most likely to be white (90.1%) and were more likely to be male (55.7%) then female (44.3%). Age was variable ranging between 18 years of age and older with the largest percentage of respondents reporting that they were 60 years or older (25.6%). Respondents were also likely to be married (75.0%), and have no children living at home (65.3%). Respondents tended to be educated, receiving a college degree or beyond (54.2%), and were mostly employed outside the home (67.4%) on a full-time basis (90.1%). Income was also variable ranging mostly between $40,000 annually and above with the largest percentage of respondents reporting an income of $100,000 or more annually (18.3%), followed closely by $50,000 - $59,999 annually (17.7%) (Table 8).

A zip code analysis was performed to calculate approximate travel time between the respondent's home and area where they were contacted. The majority of respondents lived within 30 miles of the trail (69.8%). Distance traveled by visitors also varied by site. Participants at the Cross Florida Greenway and Little Big Econ State Forest were more likely to live within 30 miles of the trail while respondents visiting Goldhead Branch State Park and Ocala National Forest had a larger percentage of visitors traveling approximately 60 miles to the recreation area (Table 9).

Table 8. Socio-Demographic Information

Statement	n	Response	Valid Percent (%)
Gender	198	Male	55.7
		Female	44.3
Age	183	60 years or older	25.6
		50 – 59 years old	19.7
		40 – 49 years old	20.2
		30 – 39 years old	13.1
		18 - 29 years old	21.3
Marital Status	192	Married	75.0
		Single	19.3
		Widowed	5.2
		Widowed	0.5
Children in household	193	0	65.3
		1	13.0
		2	15.0
		3	4.7
		4 or more	2.0
Highest level of education	192	Some high school or less	1.5
		High school graduate or GED	20.3
		Some college	24.0
		College graduate	28.6
		Some graduate school	6.8
		Graduate degree or beyond	18.8
Employment	193	Employed outside the home	67.4
		Unemployed	2.1
		Full-time homemaker	4.7
		Retired	22.3
Employed outside home	131	Full-time	90.1
		Part-time	9.9
Race or ethnic group	191	White	90.1
		Hispanic/Latino	3.7
		American Indian/Alaska Native	2.6
		African American	1.6
		Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.0
		Asian American	1.0
Household income	175	$9,999 or less	2.3
		$10,000-$19,999	2.3
		$20,000-$29,999	4.0
		$30,000-$39,999	6.3
		$40,000-$49,999	11.4
		$50,000-$59,999	17.7
		$60,000-$69,999	9.7
		$70,000-$79,999	14.9
		$80,000 -$89,999	5.7
		$90,000-$99,999	7.4
		$100,000 or more	18.3
Distance Traveled to Site	189	0 – 30 miles	69.8
		31 – 60 miles	12.7
		61 – 90 miles	4.8
		91 – 120 miles	4.2
		121 miles or more	2.7
		Out of state	5.8

Table 9. Comparison of distance traveled by site

Site	Distance Traveled (Valid Percent %)					
	0-30 miles	31-60 miles	61-90 miles	9-120 miles	121 miles or more	out of state
Ocala	17.9	35.7	25.0	10.7	7.1	3.6
CFG	88.5	0	0	0	0	11.5
LBE	89.9	2.9	0	4.3	0	2.9
Goldhead	47.5	30	5.0	5.0	7.5	5.0

$X^{2} =$ 101.78 p < .00 (n = 198)

The majority of those surveyed were repeat visitors to the Trail (74.1%). Past visits to the trail were split with almost 41% (40.6%) visiting 2-6 times in the past year and just over 41% (41.3%) visiting 12 or more times is the past year (Table 10). In order to investigate if these past visits varied by site a Chi-square analysis was consulted, and results showed that visitors to the Cross Florida Greenway were more likely to visit the respective areas 12 or more times in the past year while visitors to Ocala National Forest and Goldhead Branch State Park were more likely to have visited their respective sites 2-6 times in the past year (Table 11). Overall, Respondents tended to spend an hour or less on the trail (50.0%), and walk between 1-5 miles (68.5%) (Table 11).

Many of the participants learned about the trail due to its proximity to their home (38.6%), while nearly 18% (17.8%) learned about the trail from friends or family. Brochures were the reported to be the least likely source of obtaining knowledge about the trail (Table 10).

Table 10. Trip Characteristics & Knowledge

Statement	n	Label	Valid Percent (%)
First time on trail	197	Yes	25.9
		No	74.1
Past visits	143	None - 1	7.0
		2 – 6	40.6
		7 – 11	11.2
		12 or more	41.3
Time spent on trail	196	1 hour or less	50.0
		A few hours	33.2
		Half a day	8.7
		Whole day	3.1
		More than a day	5.1
Number of miles walked on trail	197	Less than a mile	9.6
		1 – 2 miles	34.5
		3 – 5 miles	34.0
		6 – 10 miles	16.2
		11 miles or more	5.6
Lean about trail	197	I live nearby and saw the trail	38.6
		Friends or Family	17.8
		Other	12.7
		Road Signs	8.6
		Website	7.1
		Newspaper article	5.6
		Guidebook	4.1
		Don't Remember	4.1
		Brochure	1.5

Table 11. Comparison of past visits by site

Site	Past Visits (Valid Percent %)			
	None – 1	2 – 6 times	7 – 11 times	12 or more
Ocala	4.8	66.7	28.6	0.0
CFG	0.0	12.5	10.4	77.1
LBE	5.5	49.1	7.3	38.2
Goldhead	31.6	57.9	5.3	5.3

$X^2 = 72.09$ p <.000 (n = 198)

Respondents were asked to rank their top three reasons for visiting the trail that day. Just over 63% (63.3%) of participants primary reason was to hike or walk the trail. Viewing Scenery (41.9%) and Nature Study were also stated as possible reasons for visiting the trail (Table 12).

Table 12. Activities participated in

Statement	n	Activity	Valid Percent %
Primary Activity	196	Hiking/Walking	63.3
		Biking	11.2
		Camping	6.1
		View Scenery	3.6
		Backpacking	3.1
Secondary Activity	160	View Scenery	41.9
		Hiking/Walking	17.5
		Camping	8.1
		Bird Watching	6.9
		Photography	5.6
Tertiary Activity	116	View Scenery	22.4
		Nature Study	12.1
		Photography	11.2
		Bird Watching	10.3
		View Cultural Resources	6.9

Trail visitors were most likely to travel in pairs (52.8%), being composed a male (53.3%) and a female (50.3%). Pairs were most likely to be family (43.6%) or friends (20.0%). Individuals who traveled alone accounted for 23% of respondents (Table 13).

Table 13. Group characteristics

Statement	n	Label	Valid Percent %
Group Size	178	1	23.6
		2	52.8
		3	9.0
		4	10.7
		5 or more	3.9
Number of Males	195	0	15.9
		1	53.3
		2	13.8
		3	7.2
		4 or more	9.8
Number of Females	195	0	23.6
		1	50.3
		2	16.9
		3	5.6
		4 or more	3.6
Group Type	196	Alone	21.4
		Family	43.6
		Friends	20.0
		Family and Friends	1.5
		Organized Group	5.6
		Significant Other	8.2

Respondents were asked to rate their trail experience on a scale of one to ten with ten being a perfect experience. Just over 39% (39.2%) reported that their experience was perfect, and another 46.8% reported having a nearly perfect experience by rating their trip an 8 or 9. Of the 95 respondents who did not rate their experience a ten, researchers asked if there was any particular reason why they had a less than perfect experience. The majority of reasons cited were a result of personal or environmental conditions, which are uncontrolled by management or trail volunteers. Specifically, just over 39% (39.2%) stated that there was no particular reason why their experience was not a ten. Also, environmental or weather conditions such it was too hot, to cold, lots of bugs, it started to rain etc. was the second most popular statement for an imperfect experience (21.1%). Approximately one-quarter of the comments received were related directly to trail conditions. Inadequate facilities and/or maintenance (5.26%) was the most often cited reason for not a perfect experience. These comments were related to a lack of bathrooms, water fountains or benches found at the trailhead or along the trail itself. The presence of litter (4.21%) and inadequate trail maps (4.21%) were also possible reasons why the respondent did not have a perfect experience. Crowding along the trail (2.11%) was likely to be the least common reason why a visitor's experience was not a ten (Table 14).

Next, all visitors were asked if there were any improvements they would like to see to the trail. Almost half (49.2%) stated that no improvements were needed, and that the trail was fine the way it was. Improved or additional facilities desired were the second most commonly suggested improvements (16.06%). These comments were mostly relating to the desire for restrooms at trailheads where restrooms were not currently present, more or better restrooms, installation of water fountains, or more benches along the trail. Improved trail blazing and or trail signage was the second most often suggestion (8.81%). Suggestions related to trail maintenance (3.63%) and improved area or facility maintenance (2.07%) were the least common suggestions for trail improvement (Table 14).

Table 14. Trail Experience

Statement	n	Label	Valid Percentage (%)
Experience/Satisfaction	194	10	39.2
		9	21.1
		8	25.7
		7	10.8
		6	2.1
		5	1.0
Reasons not a Ten	95	No particular reason	34.74
		Environment/Weather	28.42
		Not preferred trail/scenery	12.63
		Inadequate facilities/Maintenance	5.26
		Litter	4.21
		Non-useful maps	4.21
		Insufficient Signage	3.16
		Crowding	2.11
		Other	5.26
Suggested Improvements	193	No improvements	49.22
		Improved or additional facilities desired	16.06
		Improved trail blazing and/or trail signage	8.81
		Improved maps and information handouts	5.20
		Trail modifications desired	5.18
		Provide education of trail etiquette	4.66
		Improved trail maintenance	3.63
		Improve area and/or facility maintenance	2.07
		Improve aesthetics	2.07
		Other	3.10

Motivations and Destination Attractors

Motivations differ from destination attractors in that they can be conceptualized as the needs or wants that the visitor wishes to fulfill. Participants were presented with a list of 16 possible motivations and were asked to rate the importance of each motivation on a scale of one to five. This five point scale was then collapsed into a three point scale with one indicating not at all important and three indicating important. A chance to enjoy nature (mean = 2.95) was reported to be the most important motivation for visiting the trail followed closely by a chance to escape noise and crowds (mean = 2.92), and reduce stress and tension from everyday life (mean = 2.88). Learning about the history and culture of the area was reported as the least important motivation for visiting the trail (mean = 1.87) along with a chance to take risks (mean = 1.94) and a chance to meet new people (mean = 1.98) (Table 15).

Table 15. Motivations

Motivation	n	Not Important (%)	Neutral (%)	Important (%)	Mean[1]	Standard Deviation
Enjoy nature	176	0.6	4.0	95.5	2.95	0.25
Escape noise/crowds	178	1.1	6.2	92.7	2.92	0.32
Reduce Tensions and Stress from everyday life	178	1.1	9.6	89.3	2.88	0.36
Explore the area and the natural environment	177	2.3	14.1	83.6	2.81	0.44
Promote physical fitness	178	5.6	8.4	86.0	2.80	0.52
Be with friends and family	178	7.1	9.6	73.2	2.74	0.59
Be in an area where I feel safe and secure	176	6.8	18.2	75.0	2.68	0.59
Learn about the natural environment of the area	176	5.7	24.4	69.9	2.64	0.58
Challenge myself and achieve personal goals	178	10.7	20.8	68.5	2.58	0.68
Strengthen family kinship	177	12.4	16.9	70.6	2.58	0.70
Feel a sense of independence	178	8.1	25.3	56.6	2.54	0.66
Depend on my skills and abilities	177	14.1	26.6	59.3	2.45	0.73
Engage in personal/spiritual reflection	177	16.4	27.7	55.9	2.39	0.75
Meet new people	177	31.6	37.6	30.5	1.98	0.79
Take risks	177	36.2	33.3	30.5	1.94	0.82
Learn about the history and culture of the area	177	40.7	31.6	27.7	1.87	0.82

[1] 1 = not important 2 = neutral 3 = most important

People are attracted to certain recreation areas based on certain features, attributes, or attractions (Klenosky, 2002). In order to gain a better understanding of why visitors choose the specific recreation destination in which they were contacted, they were presented with twelve possible attractors of a recreation area and were asked to rate how important each of attractors were in choosing their destination the day they were contacted. Importance was measured on a scale of one to five with five representing the most important and one representing the least important. This five point scale was reduced to a three point scale within the analysis in order to simplify the interpretation of results. Destination characteristics that represented areas that were more pristine and natural were reported to be the most important. Specifically, a chance to visit an area that represented wilderness and undisturbed nature (mean = 2.88) was viewed as the most important, and "a chance to see wildlife or birds

(mean = 2.87) and to be where there was good environmental quality of air, water, and soil (mean = 2.87) were also viewed as highly favorable. Visiting areas where hunting was good (mean = 1.35), where there was a chance to see local crafts and handiwork (mean = 1.43) and where fishing was good (mean = 1.52) were viewed as the least important characteristics for choosing a recreation area to visit (Table 16).

Table 16. Destination attractors

Reasons for Visit	n	Not important (%)	Neutral (%)	Important (%)	Mean[1]	Standard Deviation
Wilderness and undisturbed nature	178	1.7	7.9	90.4	2.88	0.36
Chance to see wildlife/birds	178	1.7	10.1	88.2	2.87	0.38
Good environmental quality of air, water, and soil	177	1.7	9.0	89.3	2.87	0.38
To see the natural water features	178	11.8	16.3	71.9	2.60	0.69
The park/trail is close to where I live	178	14.0	12.9	73.0	2.59	0.73
Manageable size to see everything	177	15.3	26.0	58.8	2.44	0.74
Availability of campgrounds	178	34.8	33.7	31.5	1.96	0.82
History, military or archeological sites	178	50.6	32.6	16.9	1.66	0.75
Interesting small towns	177	52.0	33.9	14.1	1.62	0.72
Good fishing	177	58.2	31.1	10.7	1.52	0.68
Local crafts or handiwork	178	62.4	32.0	5.6	1.43	0.59
Good hunting	176	68.8	27.3	4.0	1.35	0.56

[1] 1 = not important 2 = neutral 3 = most important

Lastly, the respondents were asked about specific site characteristics that reflected the physical, social, and trail design characteristics that they may find along the FNST. Respondents were presented with twelve characteristics and were asked to rate the extent to which they preferred each setting characteristics while participating in their primary chosen activity for the day. Preferences were rated on a scale of one to five, and then collapsed to a three point scale with one represented disagreement and three representing agreement with the preferred setting.

Overall, respondents reported a similar desire for trail characteristics as they did for destination attractors. Respondents were most likely to factor settings that were untouched by humans (mean = 2.56) or in areas that were modified but still appeared natural (mean = 2.56). They also preferred little contact outside their own group, encounter six groups or less per day (mean = 2.42), and the preferred to travel on natural, unpaved (mean = 2.60) loop trails (mean = 2.50) (Table 17).

Table 17. Preferred trail settings

Trail Setting	n	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree	Mean[1]	Standard Deviation
Travel on dirt or grass	178	11.2	18.0	70.8	2.60	0.68
Traveling in an area untouched by humans	177	10.7	22.0	67.2	2.56	0.68
Traveling in an area that has been modified but appears natural	179	8.4	26.3	65.4	2.56	0.65
Prefer loop trails	179	10.1	30.2	59.8	2.50	0.67
Desire to have little contact: 6 or less	178	11.8	33.7	54.5	2.42	0.70
Desire to have moderate contact: 6-15 groups	173	17.9	41.6	40.5	2.23	0.73
Traveling in an area that is both human-made and natural	176	26.7	29.5	43.8	2.17	0.82
Travel on paved	178	37.6	24.2	38.2	2.01	0.87
Prefer linear trails	174	35.6	45.4	19.0	1.83	0.72
Desire to have a lot of contact: 30 plus groups	171	36.3	47.4	16.4	1.80	0.69
Desire to have constant contact	174	54.6	33.3	12.1	1.57	0.69
Traveling in an area that is dominated by roads and power lines	178	77.5	14.6	7.9	1.30	0.61

[1] 1 = Disagree 2 = neutral 3 = Agree

Conclusion and Trail Management Implications

The results presented in this report are meant to help the USFS, the FTA, and all the FNST's land and recreation managers better understand the number of visitors recreating on the FNST and to better understand who these visitors are and what benefits they are seeking. This information can be used to continue to provide quality recreation experiences in a variety of natural settings along the Trail.

Visitor Counts

The 2007-2008 study year has the highest estimated visits to the Florida Trail. There were 5,646 more estimated visits to the FNST in 2007-2008 compared to the previous study year. Since all study sites have now been researched at least once, it is reasonable to say that this year's estimate is an accurate reflection of the approximate number of Florida Trail users. The increase in visitation from 2006-2008 suggests an increasing trend in the of FNST visitation. In addition, the equipment used during the 2007-2008 study year had fewer failures, so there was much more consistent data collected than the previous seasons.

Researchers collected visitor counts on the FNST using observations and infrared eyes. The continued success, accuracy, ease of use, and limited repair requirements of the infrared eyes make them the preferred method for collecting data on FNST visitors when observers cannot be present. The Diamond Traffics infrared eyes have been relatively reliable and consistent over the past three study years. However, the counters start to show some instability of its functions in turn adds the difficulty to analyze data. Three new Trail Master 1550 units purchased in 2007 have been a helpful supplement through the 2007-2008 study year because of loss due to vandalism and robbery. The software that accompanies the Trail Master 1550 allows for easy interpretation and analysis of data. Research conducted in 2007-2008 utilized both types of infrared eyes to collect data. Observations are a reliable, yet inefficient, method to find out who is using the FNST.

Visitor Surveys

The continued collection of visitor surveys has aided researchers in better defining who is using the FNST and why. Results from each study year have been similar, indicating that the typical FNST visitor is white, married, with no children living at home. Visitors also tend to be employed full-time, and the population as a whole shows a wide range of household incomes with the largest percentage of participants making $50-$59 thousand annually.

This year's results also indicate that the majority of trail visitors live in close proximity to the trail (within 30 miles), and most visitors learned about the FNST due to this close proximity. Although many people live within these close lying communities, the lack of a larger percentage of trail visitors from the greater regional area suggests a need to market the trails presence on more regional level. In order to make this regional marketing effort successful, research efforts focusing on barriers to trail visitation within a population of non-trail visitors (i.e. those who have not visited any hiking trails or natural areas) is needed in order to understand what barriers exist to visiting natural areas and hiking trails, and identify motivations and destination preferences to help draw these non-visitors to the Florida National Scenic Trail.

Past research of FNST visitors indicates that quality visits to the Trail often lead to word of mouth recommendations about the Trail. Understanding that word of mouth can be a powerful marketing tool, increasing awareness of the trails presence and location on a local, regional, and statewide level may assist in increasing Trail visitation. For example, if someone in Ocala visits the FNST along the Cross Florida Greenway and has a great experience, they may tell a friend or family member in Tallahassee. That friend or family member can visit the Florida Trail Association website to see where the closest place to their home is where they can visit the trail. Over time this has the potential to have a domino effect across communities and the region.

Adding to the capability of word-of mouth as a potential marketing tool, marketing the trails opportunities within various types of settings and types of destination may also increase trail awareness and appeal to potential visitors. Current and past research has indicated an overall preference for a natural experience when visiting the FNST. This includes motivations focused on nature enjoyment and exploration, a desire to visit natural trails with little contact outside one's own group, and to visit wilderness type areas. Many current marketing efforts for the FNST capture the essence of this naturalness. In addition to these wild and scenic places are many developed and urbanized portions of the Trail. These more urbanized areas tend to be higher in visitation and these sections of Trail are also often utilized to fulfill certain motivations such a promote physical fitness or reduce stress. However the settings in which these opportunities are pursued may not always be the most preferred, rather the location of the trail (being close to home) provides the major the major draw. When planning and marketing recreation opportunities for these more developed portions of the trail (i.e. Black Hammock, CGF) these efforts could focus on these desired benefits (improve physical fitness, reduce stress).

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APPENDIX I: 5 Year Study Schedule

Five-Year Schedule

2003-2004

Gulf Islands National Seashore (H)
Goldhead Branch State Park (H)
Ocala National Forest (H)
Eglin Air Force Base (M)
Apalachicola National Forest (M)
Osceola National Forest (H)
Little Big Econ State Forest (H)
Includes Cross Seminole Trail (Multi-Use Trail)
Etoniah Creek State Forest (L)

2004-2005

Suwannee (H)
Lake Okeechobee (H)
Seminole State Forest (M)
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge & Rail Trail (H)
Aucilla River WMA (M)
Pine Log State Forest (M)
Rice Creek (L)

2005-2006

Tosohatchee State Preserve (H)
Withlacoochee State Forest (H)
Blackwater River State Forest (H)
Includes Withlacoochee St. Rail-Trail
Ellaville/Twin Rivers State Forest (M)
Green Swamp East (L)
Green Swamp West (L)
Ecofina Creek WMA (L)

2006-2007

Big Cypress National Preserve (H)
Highlands: S65B to US 98 (H)
Bull Creek WMA (L)
Greenway (H)
Kissimmee River WMA to Avon AFB (L)
Three Lakes WMA (L)

2007-2008

Ocala National Forest
Osceola National Forest
Apalachicola National Forest
Little Big Econ State Forest
Goldhead Branch State Park
Etoniah State Forest
Big Cypress National Preserve
Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park
Cross Florida Greenway

APPENDIX II : Protocol for Classifying Access Points

Protocol for Classifying Access Points

Throughout the study year, researchers get to know all the FNST access points within a site regardless of whether or not a counter is installed. Researchers talk to land managers as well as visitors who know the area well to get an idea of the type of use at each trailhead. They also randomly visit all access points throughout the year to take notes on the number of cars in the parking lot and the number of people in the area. Data collected from mechanical counters provide continuous counts for selected survey sites. However, there is often more access points within a site then there are mechanical counters. To compensate for these implications, access points that do have mechanical counters are analyzed via protocol and then grouped into the following categories:

- Type A – Very high use, well known access point, 500 users/month or more
- Type B – High use, between 100-499 users/month
- Type C – Medium high use, between 50-99 users/month
- Type D – Medium low use, between 15-49 users/month.
- Type E – Low use, trailhead or road crossing with really low numbers, 15 users/ month or less

An average for each type of access point is then formulated. Then based on observations and notes taken about access points without counters an access point average that seems suitable for the access point is applied.

APPENDIX III: Monitored Access Points 2007-2008

Monitored Access Points (2007-2008)

The following list of access points were not monitored by mechanical counters or personal observations. Estimations for these access points were derived from access point averages from corresponding access point classifications (Appendix II) where data was collected.

Big Cypress
1. Loop Road
2. Alligator Alley

Cross Florida Greenway
1. Ross Prairie
2. Buckman Lock
3. Marshall Swamp
4. 49th Ave.
5. Pruitt

Ocala National Forest
1. Juniper Wilderness
2. Alexander Springs
3. Grassy pond
4. Buck Lake
5. Hopkins Prairie

Osceola National Forest
1. Deep Creek

Apalachicola National Forest
1. FR 150
2. Porter Lake
3. Bradwell Bay

Etoniah State Forest
1. Longleaf/Tinsely

Little Big Econ State Forest
1. Lockwood

APPENDIX IV: Observation Log

Surveyor:_____
Date:_____ Day: _____
Time Block:_____
Site:_____
Access Point:_____

Notes (include weather and where you sat):

Time	Number in Group	Gender (#males/females)	Activity	Direction Heading	Starting Point	Ending Point	Notes

APPENDIX V: 2007-2008 Counter Locations

2007-2008 Counter Locations

Big Cypress
- Oasis South: Counter located about ¼ mile south of the Oasis Visitors Center.
- Oasis North: Counter located about 1 mile north of the Oasis Visitors Center.

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Cross Florida Greenway
- Land Bridge: Counter located about 125' west of picnic area.
- Santos: From parking lot follow blue-blazed trail to FT. Counter located about 30 yards south of where the blue-blazed spur trail intersects the FT.
- Rodman East: Where FT crosses Rodman Dam Rd., go through gate on Berm Rd. and follow Berm Rd. for about 225 paces.
- Rodman West: Turn off Rodman Dam Rd., about 1/4 mile before the spillway, onto the boat ramp road and look for a gate and FT to the left, about 150' off main road. Follow FT through the gate. Counter located 108 paces from the gate.

Etoniah State Forest
- Holloway: From the kiosk, walk about ¼ mile on the FT.

Goldhead Branch State Park
- Entrance: counter located about ¼ mile from the kiosk on the left side of park entrance on the FT.

Little Big Econ
- Barr Street: From Barr Street Trailhead, follow blue-blazed trail, for about 1/2 of a mile to where it intersects the FNST. Go on the FT on the left about 1/4 mile.

Steven Foster State Park
- Gazebo: From the parking area at Boat Launch Ramp, walk on the FT on the left about 100 paces.

Ocala National Forest
- Juniper Springs Recreation Area: Counter located about ¼ mile in on the FT section going east from the Juniper access road.
- Clearwater Recreation Area: From parking area take the blue-spur trail to the FT (about ¼ mile). Go left on the FT for about 115 paces.
- State Road 19: From parking area counter located, north, 317 paces from where trail enters the woods.
- Lake Delancy: Go north 320 paces from the FT sign on the north side of FR 75.

Osceola National Forest
- Turkey Run: Counter located along FT, 150 feet north of parking lot.
- Battlefield: From parking lot follow FT for ¼ mile past Loop A Trail. Counter installed on FT, 100 feet past Loop A Trail.

Apalachicola National Forest
- Camel Lake: Counter located ¼ mile east of where FT crosses FR 105 near the campground.
- Sopchoppy: Heading east from FR 329, counter located about 200 feet from road

APPENDIX VI : 2007-2008 Seasonal Calibration Factors

Table 18. 2007-2008 Calibration Factors

	Sites	*June*	*July*	*Aug*	*Sep*	*Oct*	*Nov*	*Dec*	*Jan*	*Feb*	*March*	*April*	*May*
Big Cypress	Oasis South	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.876	0.88	0.876	0.876
	Oasis North	0.993	0.993	1	0.993	0.993	0.993	0.993	0.993	0.993	0.99	0.993	0.993
Cross Florida Greenway	Land Bridge	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.99	0.986	0.986
	Rodman East	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.981	0.98	0.981	0.981
	Rodman West	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Santos	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.793	0.79	0.793	0.793
Etoniah State Forest	Holloway	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Goldhead Branch State Park	Entrance	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.99	0.986	0.986
Little Big Econ State Forest	Barr Street	1.021	1.021	1.021	1.021	1.021	1.021	1	1.021	1.021	1.02	1.021	1.021
Steven Foster State Park	Gazebo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ocala National Forest	Clearwater RA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Juniper RA	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.985	0.99	0.985	0.985
	Lake Delancy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	SR 19	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Osceola National Forest	Battle Field	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Turkey Run	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ANF	Camel Lake	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Sopchoppy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

1 = Months where data were missing so AP averages from previous study years were used.

APPENDIX VII: On-Site Survey

Florida Outdoor Recreation Visitor Study

To be completed by surveyor if interview given on-site:
Surveyor: _____ Date: _____
Site: _____ Time: _____
Access Point: _____

1. Was this your first time on this particular trail? ___Yes ____ No (Go to question 3)

2. Over the past year, how many times have you used this trail?

   ___None ___13-20 times
   ___1-6 times ___21-30 times
   ___ 7-12 times ___ more then 30 (#___)

3. About how long did you spend on the **trail** today?

   ____1hour or less ____Half a day ____More than 1 day (_____number of days)
   ____A few hours ____One whole day

4. If you spent more then one day in the area, where did you stay overnight?

   [] At a nearby hotel/condo
   [] At a campground off the trail
   [] In an established campground along the trail
   [] In a nearby residence of friends or family

5. On this **trip**, about how many miles did you travel on the trail today (on this trip is a multi-day trip)?

   [] Less than a mile [] 3-5 miles [] More than 10 miles (# of miles _____)
   [] 1-2 miles [] 5-10 miles

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the perfect experience, how would you rate your experience on this trail? _____

7. If you did not rate your trail experience as a 10, can you explain why not?
   _____

8. Are there any other improvements you would like to see on the trail? _____

   _____

9. ***Hand the participant the activity card. Ask:*** From this list of activities, please rank the 3 activities that best describe the reason you visited the trail today?

   1st_____ 2nd_____ 3rd_____

10. Including yourself, how many people were you with?
    _____number of people (___#males, ___#females)

11. What type of group are you traveling with?_____

12. How did you first learn about this trail? (check all that apply)

    [] Friends or Family [] Roadside Signs [] Magazine, please specify
    [] I live nearby & saw the trail [] Guidebook [] Website
    [] Brochure [] Newspaper Article [] Don't remember, not sure
    [] Other, please specify _____

13. Please indicate how important each of the following items was in choosing your leisure destination for this trip.

Reason for Visit	Not at all important	Not very Important	Neutral	Very Imp ortant	Most Important
Historical, military, or archeological sites	1	2	3	4	5
Local crafts or handiwork	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting small towns	1	2	3	4	5
Good fishing	1	2	3	4	5
Good hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Manageable size to see everything	1	2	3	4	5
Wilderness and undisturbed nature	1	2	3	4	5
Chance to see wildlife/birds	1	2	3	4	5
To see the natural water features	1	2	3	4	5
Good environmental quality of air, water, and soil	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of campgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
The park/trail is close to where I live	1	2	3	4	5

14. People go to particular areas and participate in recreation activities for any number of reasons. Listed below are some possible reasons you might have had for recreating along the trail today. Please indicate how important each experience was for you during your visit.

Reasons for Visiting Today	Not at all important	Not very important	Neither	Very Important	Most Important
Learn about history and culture of the area	1	2	3	4	5
Promote physical fitness	1	2	3	4	5
Reduce tensions and stress from everyday life	1	2	3	4	5
Escape noise/crowds	1	2	3	4	5
Learn about the natural environment of the area	1	2	3	4	5
Be with friends and family	1	2	3	4	5
Feel a sense of independence	1	2	3	4	5
Take risks	1	2	3	4	5
Engage in personal/spiritual reflection	1	2	3	4	5
Explore the area and natural environment	1	2	3	4	5
Challenge myself and achieve personal goals	1	2	3	4	5
Depend on my skills and abilities	1	2	3	4	5
Enjoy nature	1	2	3	4	5
Strengthen family kinship	1	2	3	4	5
Be in an area where I feel secure and safe	1	2	3	4	5
Meet new people	1	2	3	4	5

15. When participating in the **activity** you listed as your **primary activity** do you generally prefer….

Physical, Social & Trail Setting Preferences	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
To travel on trails that are natural; dirt or grass	1	2	3	4	5
To travel on trails that are paved	1	2	3	4	5
To travel on trails that are linear	1	2	3	4	5
To travel on loop trails	1	2	3	4	5
Very little contact outside my own group (less than 6 people)	1	2	3	4	5
Little contact outside my own group (7-15 people)	1	2	3	4	5
Moderate contact outside my own group (15-30 people)	1	2	3	4	5
Constant contact with others outside my own group	1	2	3	4	5
To travel in areas untouched by man	1	2	3	4	5
To travel in areas that have been modified but appears natural	1	2	3	4	5
To travel in areas that appear to be man-made and natural	1	2	3	4	5
To travel in more developed areas where roads & powerlines dominate	1	2	3	4	5

16. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements **about this trail**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Few people know this trail like I do	1	2	3	4	5
This trail is a special place for my family	1	2	3	4	5
Many important family memories are tied to this trail	1	2	3	4	5
This trail contributes to the character of my community	1	2	3	4	5
My community's history is strongly tied to this trail	1	2	3	4	5
This trail is important in protecting the landscape from development	1	2	3	4	5
This trail is important for providing habitat for wildlife	1	2	3	4	5
This trail is important in protecting water quality	1	2	3	4	5
I am very attached to this trail	1	2	3	4	5
No other trail can compare to this trail	1	2	3	4	5
This trail means a lot to me	1	2	3	4	5
I feel this trail is a part of me	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting this trail says a lot about who I am	1	2	3	4	5
This trail is very special to me	1	2	3	4	5
I identify strongly with this trail	1	2	3	4	5
This trail is the best for what I like to do	1	2	3	4	5
I get more satisfaction out of visiting this trail then any other	1	2	3	4	5
What I do at this trail I would enjoy just as much at a similar trail	1	2	3	4	5
What I do at this trail is more important to me than doing it in any other	1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't substitute any other trail for doing the types of things I do	1	2	3	4	5

Florida Outdoor Recreation Visitor Study

We would like to ask a few questions about you, your background, and your past experiences. This information will be used for statistical analysis only, and all information will remain strictly confidential.

17. I am
    [] Male [] Female

18. Which of the following best describes your status?
    [] Married [] Divorced
    [] Single [] Widowed

19. How many children currently reside in your household? _____

20. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (please mark one)
    [] Eighth grade or less [] College Graduate
    [] Some High School [] Some Graduate School
    [] High School Graduate or GED [] Graduate Degree or beyond
    [] Some College

21. Are you presently…
    [] Employed Full Time
    [] Employed Part Time
    [] Unemployed
    [] Full Time Homemaker
    [] Retired
    [] Full Time Student
    [] Part Time Student

22. What year were you born? _____

23. What race or ethnic group(s) would you place yourself in? Please mark all that apply.
    [] African American [] Hispanic or Latino
    [] Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander [] American Indian or Alaskan Native
    [] Asian American [] White

24. What was your approximate total household income, before taxes this past year?
    [] Less the $10,000 [] $60,000 to $69,999
    [] $10,001 to $19,999 [] $70,000 to $79,999
    [] $20,000 to $29,999 [] $80,000 to $89,999
    [] $30,000 to $39,999 [] $90,000 to $99,999
    [] $40,000 to $49,999 [] $100,000 or More
    [] $50,000 to $59,999

25. Zip Code: _____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETEING
OUR SURVEY!!!!!!

APPENDIX IX: Individual Site Information

Cross Florida Greenway
(n=54)

Survey Data Results

Surveys were conducted at the following areas:

- Baseline
- 64th Street

Socio-Demographics

54% of respondents were female
85% of respondents were married
44% of respondents had a college degree or beyond
52% of respondents were retired
52% of respondents were 60 years or older
83% of respondents were white
31% of respondents reported an annual household income of $50,000 - $59,999 annually
86% of respondents lived within 30 miles of the trail

Trip Characteristics

89% of visitors have been to the site before
63% of visitors had visited the trail 12 or more times in the past year
72% of visitors spend an hour or less on the trail
35% of visitors hike/walk 1-2 miles during their visit
49% of visitors report a 10 out of 10 for their experience that day
63% of visitors stated that hiking/walking was their primary activity
42% of visitors stated that viewing scenery was their secondary activity
39% of visitors visited the trail alone

Motivations

Enjoy Nature	mean = 2.97
Escape	mean = 2.91
Promote Fitness	mean = 2.82
Reduce Stress	mean = 2.82

Destination Attractors & Settings

The trail was close to their home	mean = 2.95
Good environmental quality of air, water and soil	mean = 2.93
Wilderness and undisturbed nature	mean = 2.82
Paved Trails	mean = 2.40
Loop Trails	mean = 2.46
Contact w/fewer than 6 groups	mean = 2.60
Travel in areas that are modified but appear natural	mean =2.71

Counter Data Results

Counter type:

- Rodman East: Diamond Traffics Eye
- Rodman West: Diamond Traffics Eye
- Santos: Diamond Traffics Eye
- Land Bridge: Diamond Traffic Eye

Counter related problems and solutions:

- Counter at Santos have been performing inconsistently. Since this counter is belonging to CFG, we only recommended CFG to replace the counter.

Trail conditions throughout the year:

- Trail condition over CFG was generally very good throughout the year.
- Severe storm in July 2008 caused fallen trees along the portion trail of Santos and may cause traversing the trail difficult. The trail was cleared very quickly.

Table 19. FNST Trail visitation along the CFG 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Rodman East	90	90	1	31	32	35	48	35	19	41	69	44	535
Rodman West	5	11	3	7	6	18	18	24	36	43	7	6	184
Santos	210	168	146	279	202	353	383	268	208	469	316	484	3,486
Landbridge (475A)	184	120	142	333	177	312	331	257	386	377	323	269	3,211
Baseline/ 64th St. [a]													24,554
Ross Prairie*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Buckman Lock*	12	7	11	5	10	13	8	16	9	15	11	5	119
Marshall Swamp*	12	7	11	5	10	13	8	16	9	15	11	5	119
49th Ave.*	189	149	152	212	142	268	244	288	286	348	242	263	2,781
Pruitt*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Monthly Totals	725	564	486	880	625	1,071	1,100	979	1,036	1,389	1,037	1,118	35,562

[a] Access Point is multiple use (Foot traffic = 14,089; Other traffic =10,465)

* Estimate calculated from access point averages (Appendix II)

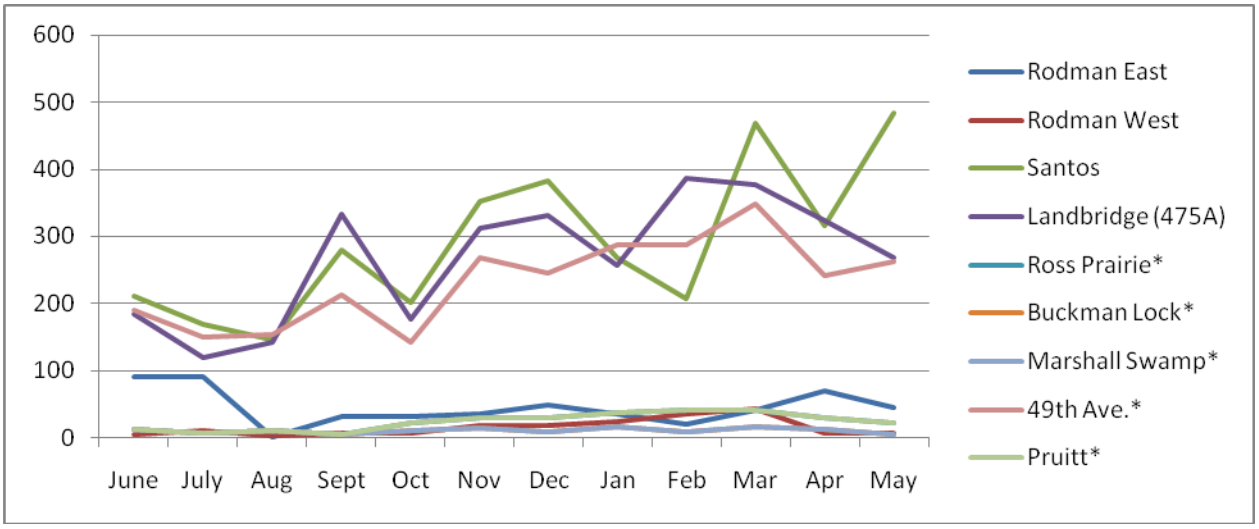

Figure 5. FNST Trail visitation along the CFG 2007-2008

*Estimate calculated from access point averages

Ocala National Forest
(n=29)

Visitor Survey Data

Surveys were conducted at the following access points:
- Juniper Wilderness (FR10)
- Clearwater Recreation Area
- Juniper Recreation Area
- SR 19

Socio-Demographics
50% of respondents were male
50% of respondents were female
82% of respondents were married
57% of respondents had a college degree or beyond
68% of respondents were employed outside of the home
43% of respondents were between the ages of 40-49 years old
93% of respondents were white
36% of respondents travel between 30-60 miles to get to the trail
25% of respondents traveled between 61-90 miles to get to the trail

Trip Characteristics
79% of visitors had been to the trail before
37% of visitors had visited the trail 2-6 times within the past year
46% of visitors spent a few hours on the trail
54% of visitors hiked/walked 3-5 miles during their trip
39% of visitors rate their experience a 9 out of 10
58% of visitors stated that hiking/walking was their primary activity
34% of visitors stated that viewing scenery was their second activity
61% of visitors were traveling with family
25% of visitors could not remember where they learned about the trail
22% of visitors said they learned about the trail from friends/family

Motivations

Promote physical fitness	mean = 3.00
Escape	mean = 3.00
Explore the environment	mean = 3.00

Destination Attractors & Settings

Wilderness and undisturbed areas	mean = 3.00
A chance to see wildlife/birds	mean = 2.96
Good environmental quality of air, water, and soil	mean = 2.86
Travel on dirt/grass trails	mean = 2.92
Travel along loop trails	mean = 2.60
Encounter 6 or fewer groups/day	mean = 2.85
Travel in areas untouched by humans	mean = 2.85

Counter Data

Counter Type:

- Juniper Recreation Area: Diamond Traffics Eye
- Clearwater Recreation Area: Trail Master Eye
- Lake Delancy: Trail Master Eye
- SR 19: Diamond Traffics Eye
- Juniper Wilderness, Alexander Springs, Hopkins Prairie, Buck Lake, and Grassy Pond were visually monitored and access point averages were applied according to protocol.

Counter Related Problems and Solutions:

- Clearwater Recreation Area: transmitter of the unit (Trail Master) was stolen in December 2007 and the unit was replaced with new immediately when the incident was noticed.
- SR19: the unit was found not functioning in August 2007, resulting in approximately one month of data loss. The counter was immediately replaced.

Trail conditions throughout the year:

- Throughout the year the trail conditions in Ocala were generally good.
- A prescribed burn occurred within the Clearwater Recreation Area in November 2007 and another prescribed burn within Lake Delancy in July 2008 which may have affected some trail use.
- A severe thunderstorm storm in July 2008 resulted in several fallen trees along the SR 19 portion of the FNST, which may cause traversing the trail difficult.

Table 20. Use of the Florida National at the Ocala National Forest 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Juniper Rec.	45	28	21	38	38	153	233	255	252	211	104	77	1,455
Clearwater	35	77	12	29	19	17	17	21	135	164	121	56	703
SR 19	72	18	38	94	73	119	101	108	149	138	75	163	1,148
Lake Delancy	4	11	8	5	42	23	23	25	47	42	21	2	253
Juniper Wilderness*	12	7	11	5	52	53	68	68	84	102	85	64	611
Alexander Springs*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Grassy Pond*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Buck Lake*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Hopkins Prairie*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
TOTAL	215	167	132	189	316	483	562	630	833	820	522	447	**5,317**

*Estimation calculated through access point averages (Appendix II)

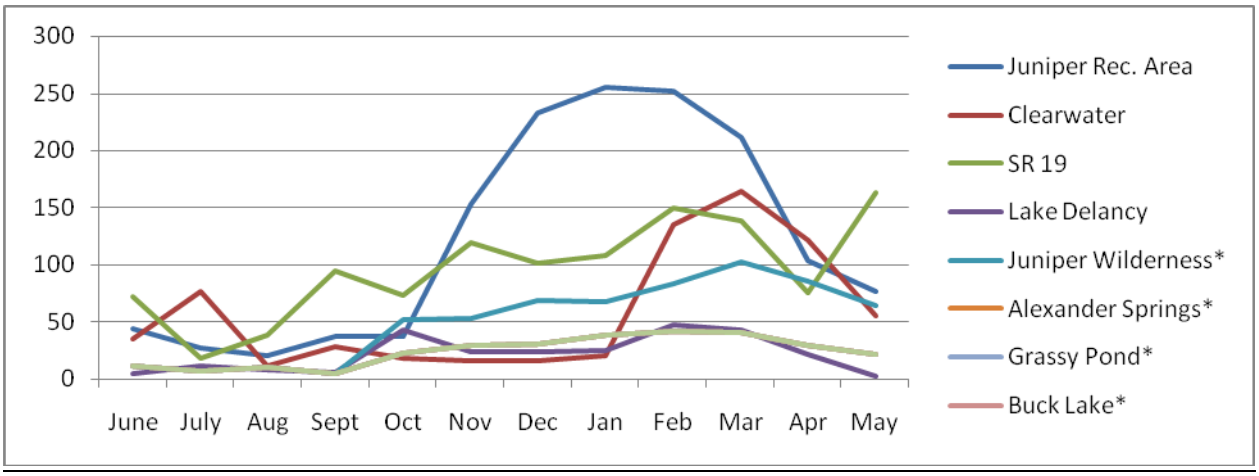

Figure 6. Use of the FNST within Ocala National Forest 2007-2008

2003-2008 Use Estimates

A comparison of data collected from 2003-2008 shows that highest use year was the 2006-2007 study season with 6,481 estimated FNST visits.

Table. Use of the Florida Trail at the Ocala National Forest June 2005- May 2008

Study Year	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	TOTAL
2003-2004	*	*	*	*	449	421	260	471	336	377	273	218	2,805
2004-2005	170	114	124	38	203	315	372	554	563	630	511	244	3,838
2005-2006	256	295	301	267	260	515	503	698	724	804	724	497	5,844
2006-2007	395	384	339	376	403	557	558	771	862	819	540	477	6,481
2007-2008	215	167	132	189	316	483	562	630	833	820	522	447	5,316

* Data collection through the use of mechanical counters did not begin until October 2003

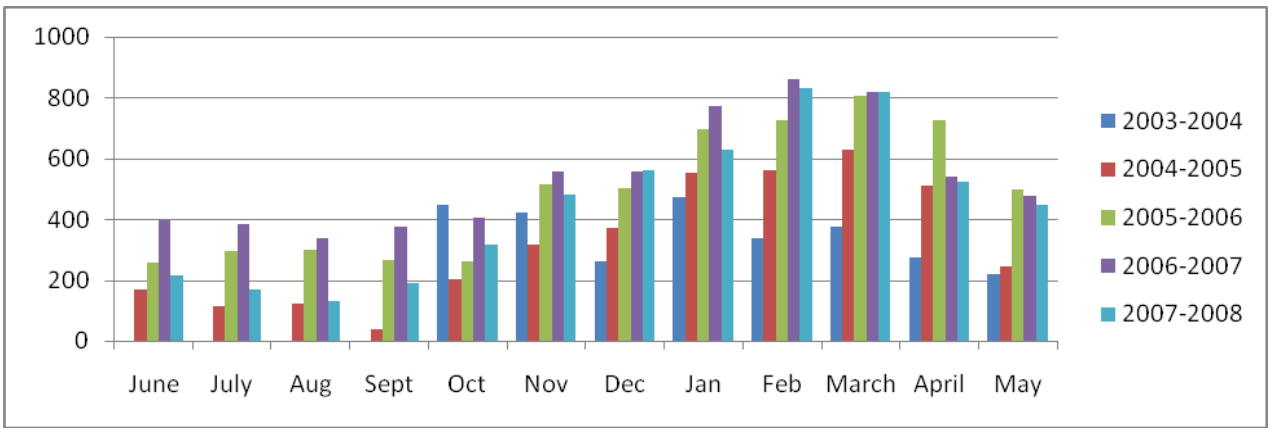

Figure 7. Comparison of FNST trail visits within the Ocala National Forest 2003-2008

Goldhead Branch State Park
(n = 42)

Visitor Survey Data

Surveys were conducted at the following access points:
Millsite trailhead

Socio-Demographics
53% of respondents were male
41% of respondents has a college degree or beyond
83% of respondents are employed outside the home
43% of respondents were between the ages of 18-29 years old
95% of respondents were white
Household income was variable. The two largest percentage represents were $100,000 or more (15.4%) and $70,000-$79,999 annually (15.4%).

Trip Characteristics
52% of visitors had never been to Goldhead Branch St. Park before
68% of visitors that had been to the park before, had visited 2-6 times in the past year
68% of visitors spent an hour or less on the trail
45% of visitors hiked/walked 1-2 miles during their visit
29% of visitors rated their experience a 10 out of 10
64% of visitors stated that hiking/walking was their primary reason for visiting the trail
31% of visitors stated that viewing scenery was the secondary reason for visiting the trail
45% of visitors were traveling with family
21% of visitors said they knew about the tail because they lived near by
48% of visitors lived within 30 miles of the park

Motivations

Enjoy nature	mean = 2.91
Reduce Stress	mean = 2.86
Escape	mean = 2.86

Destination Attractors & Settings

A chance to see wildlife/birds	mean = 2.80
A chance to see natural water features	mean = 2.88
Wilderness and undisturbed nature	mean = 2.88
Travel along dirt or grass trails	mean = 2.80
Travel along loop trails	mean = 2.52
Encounter few than 6 groups per day	mean = 2.36
Travel in areas untouched by humans	mean = 2.75

Counter Data

Counter type:

- Entrance: Diamond Traffics Eye

Counter related problems and solutions:

- The prescribed burn in August 2008 along the trail caused the distortion of reflector and further caused some irregularity of the data, which later was corrected through analysis.

Trail conditions throughout the year:

- Trail condition was excellent throughout the entire year except the prescribed burn in the last study month which may affect the use of the trail.

Table 21. FNST visitation at Goldhead Branch St. Park 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Entrance	31	21	19	44	61	57	74	71	52	82	109	64	685
Millsite[a]	28	32	21	37	605	690	391	828	561	576	510	542	4,820
Monthly Total	59	53	40	81	666	747	465	899	613	658	619	606	**5,506**

[a]Data collected during the 2003-2004 study year

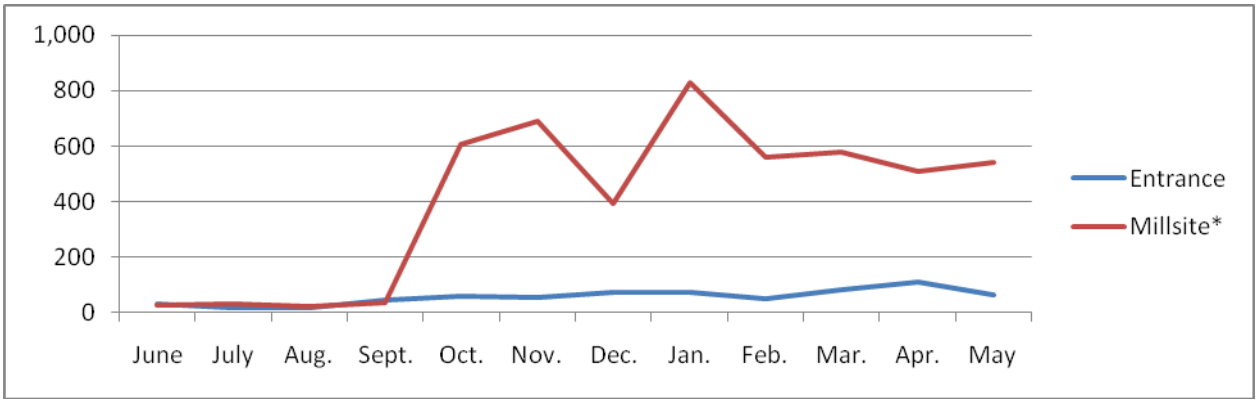

Figure 8. FNST visitation at Goldhead Branch St. Park 2007-2008

*Data collected during the 2003-2004 study season

Little Big Econ State Forest
(n=73)

Visitor Survey Data

Surveys were conducted at the following access points:

- Barr Street
- Black Hammock (Cross Seminole Trail)

Socio-Demographics

67% of the respondents were male
77% of the respondents were married
67% of respondents had a college degree or beyond
80% were employed outside of the home
23% of respondents were between 40-49 years old
22% of respondents were between 50-59 years old
91% of respondents were white
32% of respondents reported an annual household income of $100,000 or more annually

Trip Characteristics

77% of visitors had visited the trail before
49% of visitors had visited the trail 2-6 times within the past year
46% of visitors spent a few hours along the trail
37% of visitors traveled 1-2 miles along the trail
36% of visitors traveled 3-5 miles along the trail
44% of visitors rated their experience a 10 out of 10
58% of visitors stated that hiking/walking was their primary activity for the day
34% of visitors stated that viewing scenery was their secondary reason for visiting the trail
40% of visitors were with family
44% of visitors learned about the trail because they lived nearby and saw it
90% of visitors lived within 30 miles of the trail

Motivations

Enjoy Nature	mean = 2.92
Escape	mean = 2.91
Reduce Stress	mean = 2.89

Destination Attractors & Settings

Good environmental quality of air, water, and soils	mean = 2.85
Wilderness and undisturbed nature	mean = 2.82
A chance to see wildlife/birds	mean = 2.78
Travel on dirt/grass trails	mean = 2.68
Travel on loop trails	mean = 2.45
Encounter fewer than 6 groups per day	mean = 2.43
Travel in areas untouched by humans	mean = 2.63

Visitor Counter Data

Counter type:

- Barr St.: Trail Master Eye
- Black Hammock: Personal Observations

Counter related problems and solutions:

- Both monitor and transmitter of the unit were vandalized in December 2007 causing data loss from Dec. 1, 2007 to Jan. 15, 2008. New unit was reinstalled immediately at a nearby location when incident was noticed during monthly site visit.

Trail conditions throughout the year:

- The trail condition was very good throughout the year.

Table 22. FNST visitation at Little Big Econ St. Forest 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Barr St.	315	333	146	135	233	415	259	239	561	585	413	381	4,129
Lockwood*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Monthly Total	326	339	157	139	255	445	289	277	602	625	442	402	**4,298**

*Estimation calculated from access point averages (Appendix II)

Black Hammock:

Estimated Foot Traffic:	7,716
Estimated Other Traffic:	10,380
Total Estimated Traffic:	***18,096***

Total FNST Trail Estimation for all of Little Big Econ St. Forest:

Barr St:	4,129
Lockwood:	287
Black Hammock:	18,096
Total Estimated Visits:	***22,512***

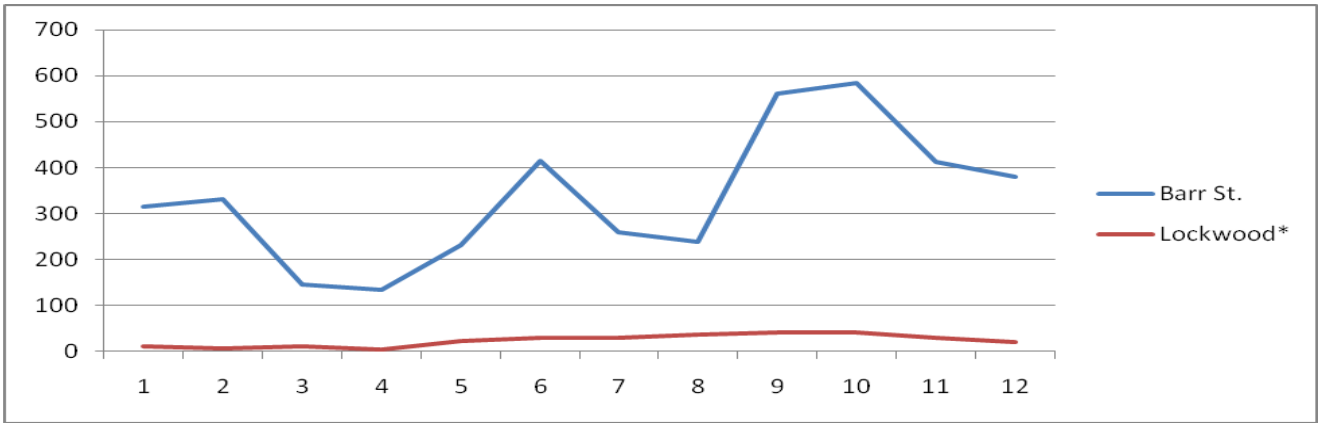

Figure 9. FNST visitation at Little Big Econ State Forest 2007-2008

*Estimate calculated from access point averages (Appendix II)

Big Cypress National Preserve

Visitor Counter Data

Counter type:
- Oasis North: Diamond Traffics Eye
- Oasis South: Diamond Traffics Eye

Counter related problems and solutions:
- Both counters performed fair throughout the study year except one time battery dead in Oasis North and one time failing function at Oasis South. Batteries were replaced and replacement counter reinstalled.

Trail conditions throughout the year:
- Oasis North had eight-month dry condition and four-month very wet condition (18" to knee-deep under water).
- Oasis South had almost all-year around very muddy or wet condition (18' to knee-deep under water).

Table 23. FNST Trail Visitation at Big Cypress National Preserve 2007-2008

Access Point	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Oasis South	9	33	6	31	8	13	57	48	48	59	23	55	390
Oasis North	105	92	28	107	59	53	109	423	266	379	184	197	2,002
Loop Road*	28	32	21	37	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	372
Alligator Alley*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Monthly Total	154	164	66	180	113	125	226	547	397	520	265	295	**3,051**

*Estimate calculated from access point averages (Appendix II)

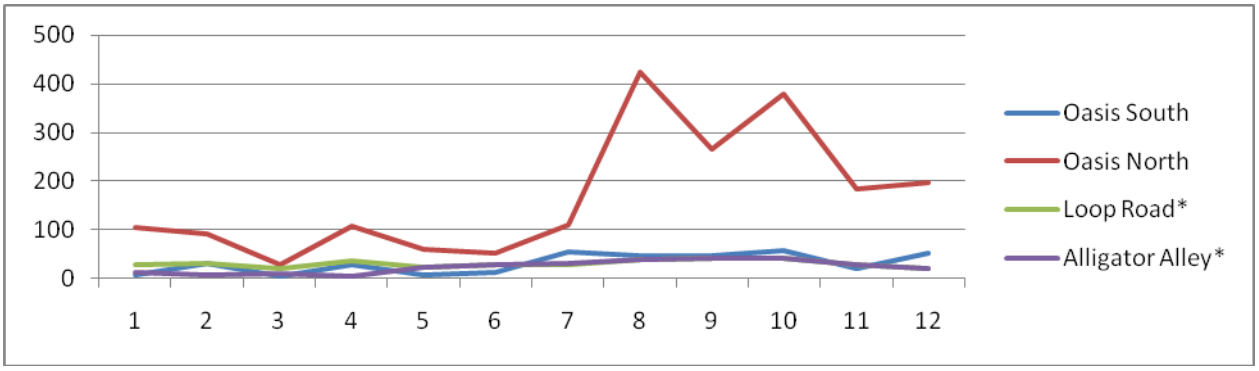

Figure 10. FNST visitation at Big Cypress National Preserve 2007-2008
*Estimate calculated from access point averages (Appendix II)

Table 24. Comparison of FNST visitation at Big Cypress 2006-2008

Study Year	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
2006-2007	88	75	68	79	152	216	362	525	529	591	504	188	3,378
2007-2008	154	164	66	180	113	125	226	547	397	520	265	295	3,051

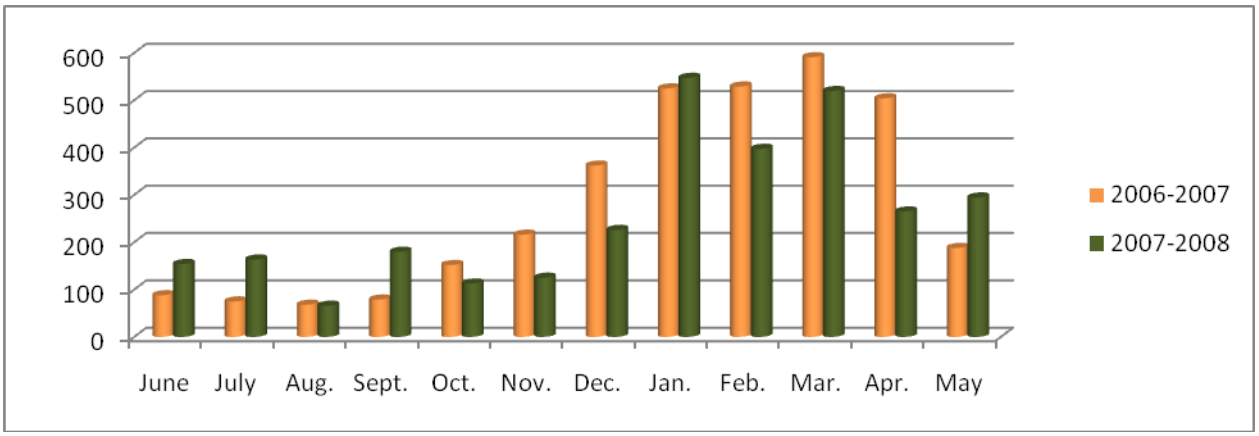

Figure 11. Comparison of FNST visitation at Big Cypress National Preserve 2006-2008

Etoniah State Forest

Visitor Counter Data

Counter type:
- Diamond Traffics Eye

Counter related problems and solutions:
- There is no single problem throughout the study year.

Trail conditions throughout the year:
- Good. One time prescribed burn in August 2008 nearby did not affect on trail use.

Table 25. FNST visitation within Etoniah St. Forest 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Holloway	8	8	17	12	13	41	17	51	21	36	27	9	260
Tinsley/Longleaf*	12	7	11	5	10	13	8	16	9	15	11	5	119
Monthly Total	20	15	28	17	23	54	25	67	30	51	38	14	379

*Estimation calculated with access point averages (Appendix II)

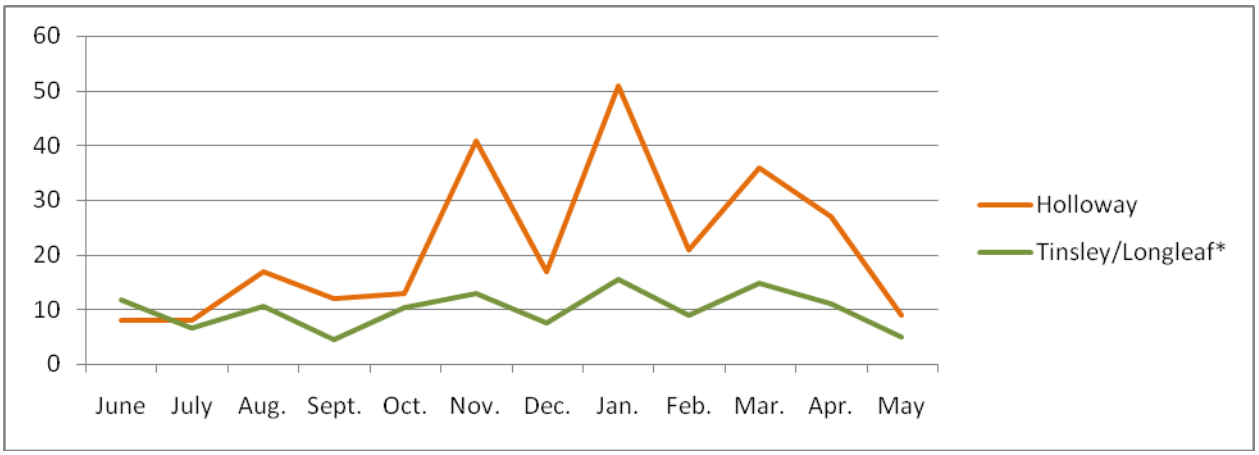

Figure 12. FNST visitation within Etoniah St. Forest 2007-2008
*Estimation calculated with access point averages (Appendix II)

Table 26. Comparison of FNST visitation at Etoniah St. Forest

Study Year	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
2003-2004	0	0	0	0	28	22	2	25	2	23	20	9	132
2007-2008	20	15	28	17	23	54	25	67	30	51	38	14	379

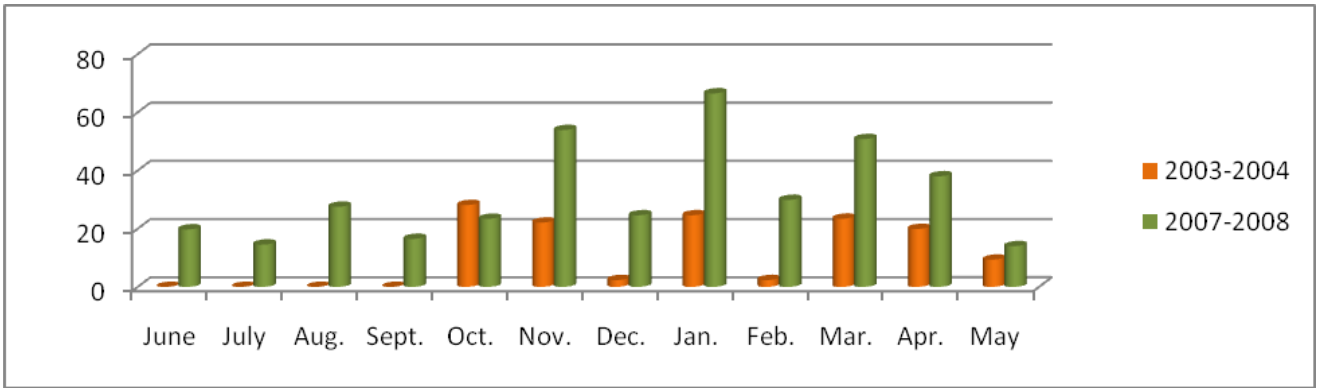

Figure 13. Comparison of FNST visitation at Etoniah St. Forest

Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center State Park

Visitor Counter Data

Counter type:
- Diamond Traffics Eye

Counter related problems and solutions:
- The counter preformed excellent throughout the study year without any problem.

Trail conditions throughout the year:
- Very good except in October, November 2007 and July 2008 there were fallen trees on the trail making some efforts to traverse the trail.

Table 27. FNST Visitation at Stephen Foster St. Park 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Gazebo	27	23	48	10	18	141.5	70.5	52	85	392	127.5	140.5	**1,134**

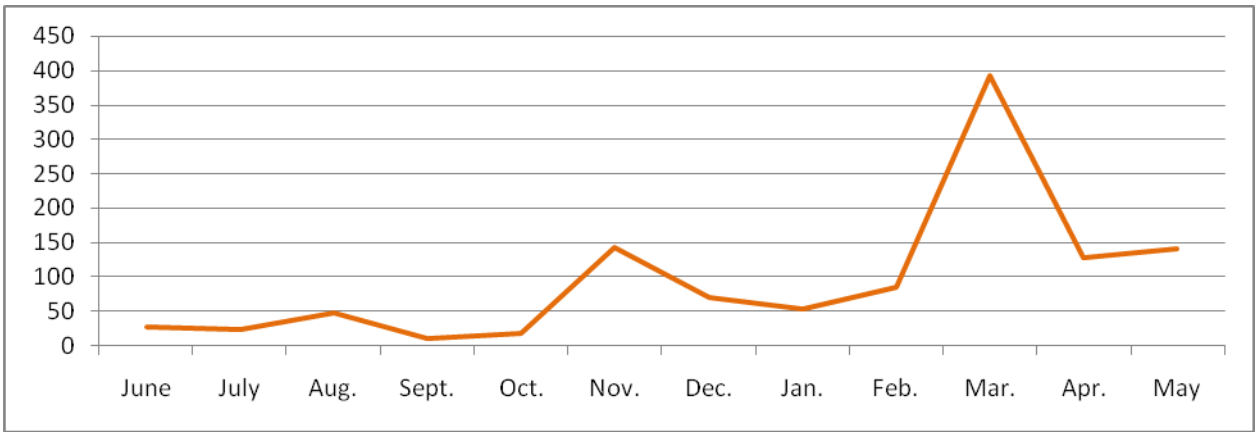

Figure 14. FNST visitation at Stephen Foster St. Park 2007-2008

Table 28. Comparison of visitation at Stephen Foster St. Park

Comparison of use	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
2004-2005	34	35	23	0	0	0	82	40	79	95	0	73	461
2007-2008	27	23	48	10	18	141.5	70.5	52	85	392	127.5	140.5	1,134

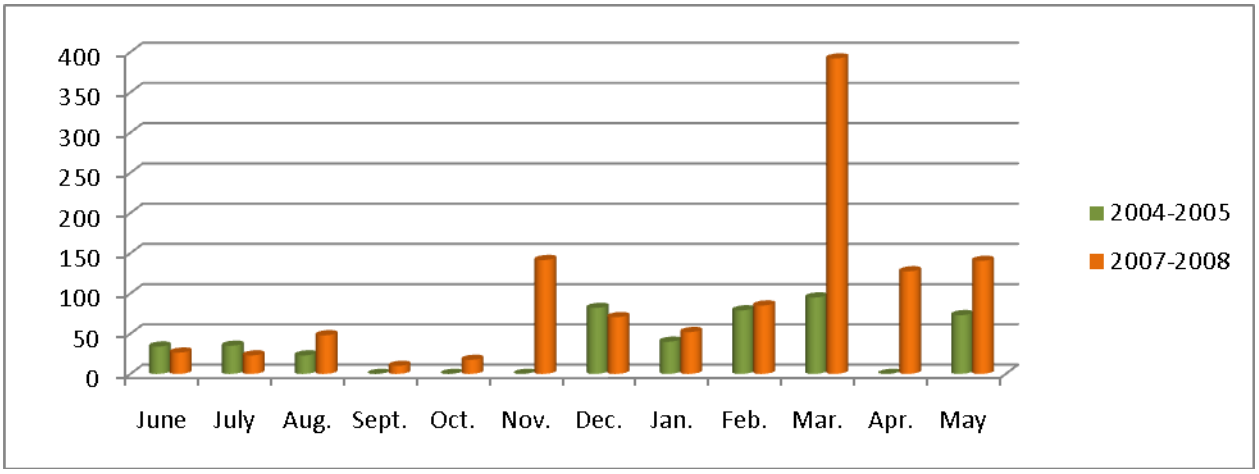

Figure 15. Comparison of visitation at Stephen Foster St. Park

Osceola National Forest

Visitor Counter Data

Counter type:

- Battlefield: Trail Master
- Turkey Run: Trail Master

Counter related problems and solutions:

- Both counters preformed very well without any problem.

Trail conditions throughout the year:

- One time prescribed burn in late March 2008 at Battlefield may have affected the trail use.

Table 29. FNST visitation at Osceola National Forest 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Battlefield	12	7	3	9	18	14	8	8	39	26	12	17	173
Turkey Run	12	12	5	23	32	36	23	29	43	35	21	8	279
Deep Creek*	12	7	11	5	10	13	8	16	9	15	11	5	119
Monthly Total	36	26	19	37	60	63	39	53	91	76	44	30	**571**

* Estimation calculated using access point averages (Appendix II)

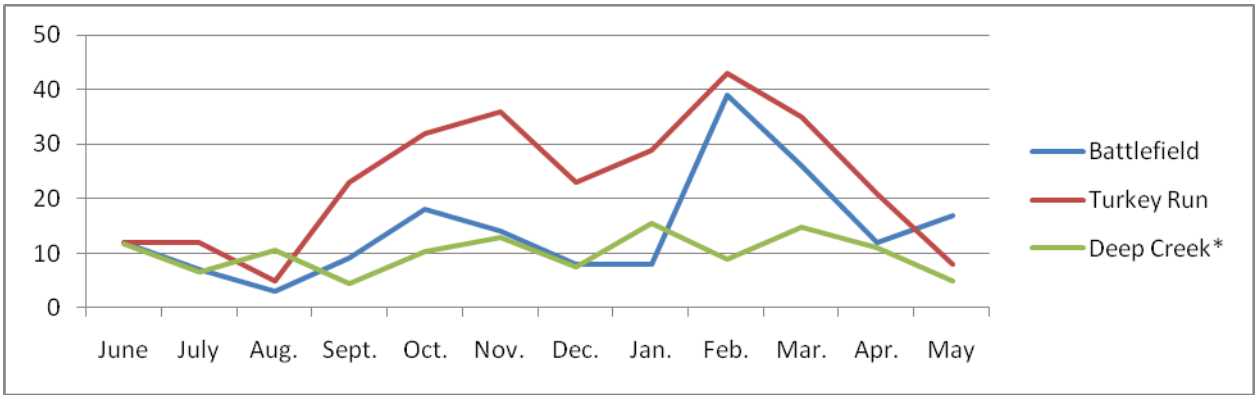

Figure 16. FNST visitation at Osceola National Forest 2007-2008

* Estimation calculated using access point averages (Appendix II)

Table 30. Comparison of visitation at Osceola National Forest 2003-2008

Study Year	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
2003-2004	*	*	*	*	48	30	18	55	116	71	41	35	414
2004-2005	45	18	24	0	21	212	282	241	277	254	147	88	1609
2005-2006	33	39	68	52	89	200	211	195	176	269	142	30	1504
2006-2007	39	25	26	26	57	26	124	87	190	79	75	24	692
2007-2008	36	26	19	37	60	63	39	53	91	76	44	30	571

*Counter were not installed until October of 2003

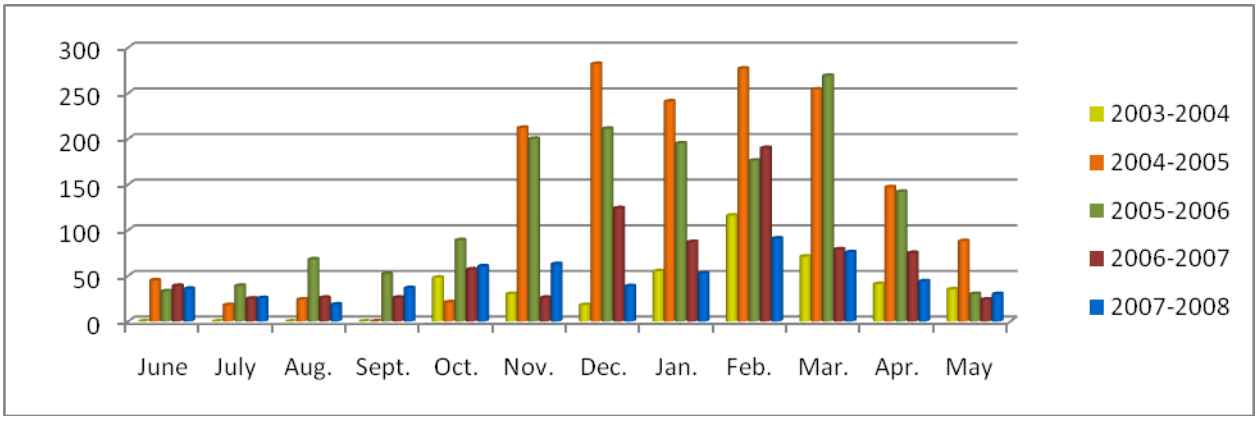

Figure 17. Comparison of visitation at Osceola National Forest 2003-2008

Apalachicola National Forest

Visitor Counter Data

Counter type:
- Sopchoppy: Diamond traffics Eye
- Camel Lake: Trail Master Eye

Counter related problems and solutions:
- Both counter preformed well except one time battery found dead at Camel Lake. Batteries were replaced.
- Alignment sometimes got off 100% at Sopchoppy. Corrections were made.

Trail conditions throughout the year:
- In both locations, the trail condition was good. A sign of trail closure due to fire was post at Sopchoppy for 9 months.

Table 31. FNST visitation at Apalachicola National Forest 2007-2008

Access Pt.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
Camel Lake	4	2	8	1	3	4	1	10	29	11	8	3	84
Sopchoppy	21	17	6	15	30	39	49	25	56	18	37	14	327
FR 150*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Bradwell Bay Wilderness*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Porter Lake*	12	7	11	5	23	30	30	38	42	41	29	21	287
Monthly Total	60	39	46	30	102	132	140	149	210	151	132	81	1,271

*Estimation calculated by access point averages (Appendix II)

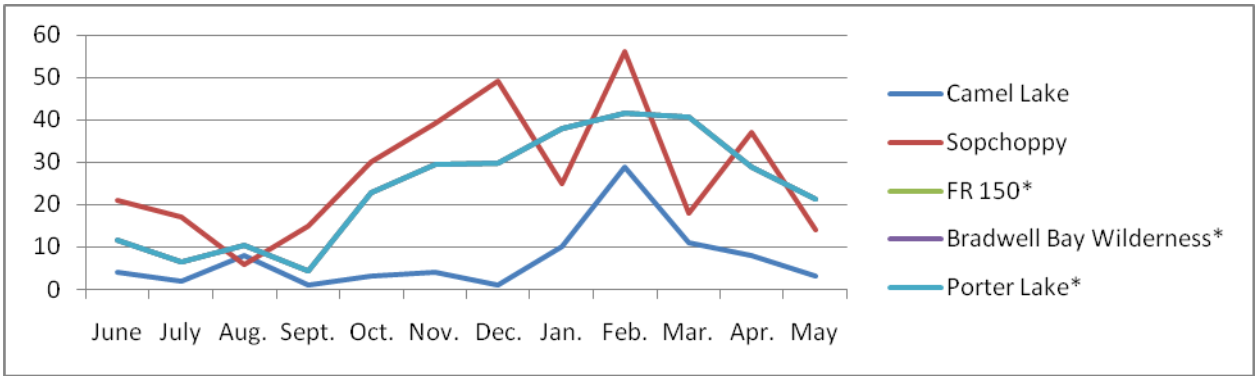

Figure 18. FNST visitation at Apalachicola National Forest 2007-2008
*Estimation calculated by access point averages (Appendix II)

Table 32. Comparison of FNST visitation at Apalachicola National Forest 2003-2008

Study Year	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	TOTAL
2003-2004	*	*	*	*	150	107	63	156	154	273	334	158	1933
2004-2005	115	61	65	33	79	106	79	118	122	171	80	72	1099
2005-2006	127	129	115	136	137	255	184	231	291	270	214	368	2457
2006-2007	149	138	123	138	88	134	94	159	188	238	106	85	1640
2007-2008	60	39	46	30	102	132	140	149	210	151	132	81	1,271

* Mechanical Counter not installed until October of 2003

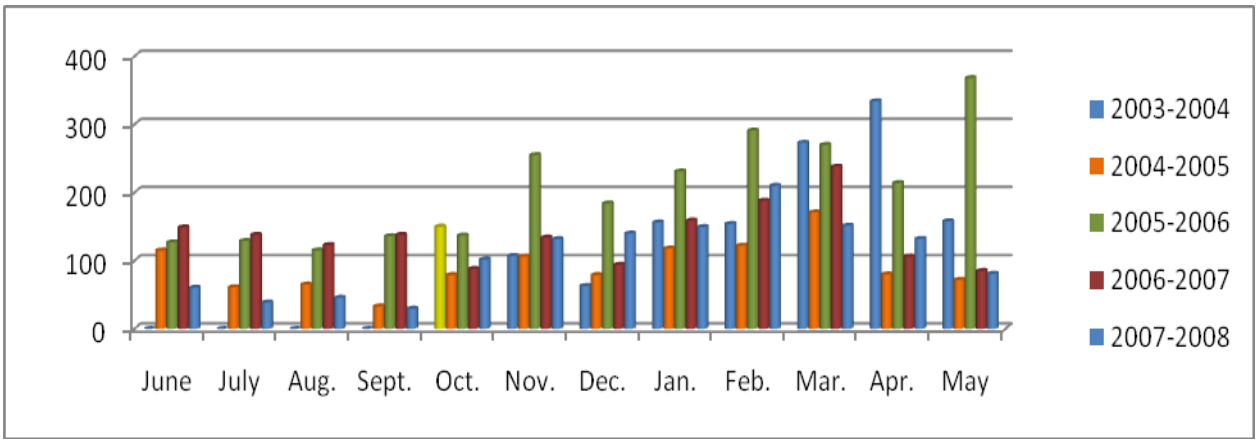

Figure 19. Comparison of FNST visitation at Apalachicola National Forest 2003-2008