

National Visitor Use Monitoring Results

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Region 1

IDAHO PANHANDLE NATIONAL FOREST

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Scope and purpose of the National Visitor Use Monitoring project	1
Definition of Terms	2
CHAPTER 1: SAMPLE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.....	3
The NVUM Process and Definition of Terms.....	3
Constraints on Uses of the Results	4
The Forest Stratification Results	5
Table 1. Population of available site days for sampling and percentage of days sampled by stratum on the Idaho Panhandle NF (2003).....	5
CHAPTER 2: VISITATION ESTIMATES	6
Visitor Use Estimates	6
Table 2. Estimate of Annual Idaho Panhandle National Forest recreation use	6
Table 3. Number of last-exiting recreation interviews obtained on Idaho Panhandle NF (2003).....	7
Description of Visitors	7
Table 4. Gender distribution of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.....	7
Table 5. Age distribution of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.....	7
Table 6. Race/ethnicity of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.....	8
Table 7. Most common zip codes of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.....	8
Average number of people per vehicle and average axle count per vehicle in survey.....	9
CHAPTER 3: WILDERNESS VISITORS	10
Table 8. Age distribution of Idaho Panhandle NF Wilderness visitors.....	10
Table 9. Race/ethnicity of Idaho Panhandle NF Wilderness visitors.....	10
Table 10. Zip codes of Idaho Panhandle NF Wilderness visitors.....	10
Table 11. Wilderness Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF visitors.....	11
CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF THE VISIT	12
Visitor Length of Stay	12
Table 12. Site visit length of stay (in hours) by site type for Idaho Panhandle NF.....	12
Activity Participation.....	12
Table 13. Idaho Panhandle NF visitor activity participation and primary activity.....	13
Use of constructed facilities and designated areas	14
Table 14. Percentage use of facilities and specially designated areas on Idaho Panhandle NF.....	14
Economic Information.....	15
This trip away from home	15

Table 15 . Substitute behavior choices of Idaho Panhandle NF visitors.	15
Average annual outdoor recreation activity	15
Table 16. Annual recreation spending for visitors to the Idaho Panhandle NF.	16
Visitor Satisfaction Information	16
Table 17. Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors at Developed Day Use Sites.	17
Table 18. Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors at Developed Overnight sites.....	18
Table 19. Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors in General Forest Areas.	19
Crowding	20
Table 20. Perception of crowding by Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors by site type (percent site visits).	20
Other comments from visitors	21
Table 21. List of Comments received from Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.	21

INTRODUCTION

Scope and purpose of the National Visitor Use Monitoring project

The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) project was implemented as a response to the need to better understand the use and importance of and satisfaction with national forest system recreation opportunities. This level of understanding is required by national forest plans, Executive Order 12862 (Setting Customer Service Standards), and implementation of the National Recreation Agenda. To improve public service, the agency's Strategic and Annual Performance Plans require measuring trends in user satisfaction and use levels. It will assist Congress, Forest Service leaders, and program managers in making sound decisions that best serve the public and protect valuable natural resources by providing science based, reliable information about the type, quantity, quality and location of recreation use on public lands. The information collected is also important to external customers including state agencies and private industry. NVUM methodology and analysis is explained in detail in the research paper entitled: Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring Process: Research Method Documentation; English, Kocis, Zarnoch, and Arnold; Southern Research Station; May 2002 (<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum>).

In conjunction with guidelines and recommendations from the Outdoor Recreation Review Commission, the USDA-Forest Service has estimated recreation use and maintained records since the 1950s. Many publications on preferred techniques for estimating recreation use at developed and dispersed recreation sites were sponsored by Forest Service Research Stations and Universities. Implementation of these recommended methodologies takes specific skills, a dedicated work force, and strict adherence to an appropriate sampling plan. The earliest estimates were designed to estimate use at developed fee recreation facilities such as campgrounds. These estimates have always been fairly reliable because they are based upon readily observable, objective counts of items such as a fee envelope.

Prior to the mid-1990s, the Forest Service used its Recreation Information Management (RIM) system to store and analyze recreation use information. Forest managers often found they lacked the resources to simultaneously manage the recreation facilities and monitor visitor use following the established protocols. In 1996, the RIM monitoring protocols were no longer required to be used.

In 1998 a group of research and forest staff were appointed to investigate and pilot a recreation sampling system that would be cost effective and provide statistical recreation use information at the forest, regional, and national level. Since that time, a permanent sampling system (NVUM) has been developed. Several Forest Service staff areas including Recreation, Wilderness, Ecosystem Management, Research and Strategic Planning and Resource Assessment are involved in implementing the program. A four-year timeframe of data collection was established for the first sampling cycle, and a five-year timeframe for succeeding cycles. The first sampling cycle was completed in September 2003. The second sampling cycle begins October 2004. This ongoing monitoring effort will provide quality recreation information needed for improving citizen centered recreation services.

This data can be very useful for forest planning and decision making. The information provided can be used in economic efficiency analysis that requires providing a value per National Forest Visit. This can then be compared to other resource values. The description of visitor characteristics (age, race, zip code, activity participation) can help the forest identify the type of recreation niche they fill. The satisfaction information can help management decide where best to place limited resources that would result in improved visitor satisfaction. The economic expenditure information can help forests show local communities the employment and income effects of tourism from forest visitors. In addition, the credible use statistics can be helpful in considering visitor capacity issues.

Definition of Terms

NVUM has standardized definitions of visitor use measurement to ensure that all national forest visitor measurements are comparable. These definitions are basically the same as established by the Forest Service since the 1970s; however the application of the definition is stricter. Visitors must pursue a recreation activity physically located “on” Forest Service managed land in order to be counted. They cannot be passing through; viewing from non-Forest Service managed roads, or just using restroom facilities. The NVUM basic use measurements are *national forest visits* and *site visits*. Along with these use measurements basic statistics, which indicate the precision of the estimate, are given. These statistics include the error rate and associated confidence intervals at the 80 percent confidence level. The definitions of these terms follow.

National forest visit - the entry of one person upon a national forest to participate in recreation activities for an unspecified period of time. A national forest visit can be composed of multiple site visits.

Site visit - the entry of one person onto a national forest site or area to participate in recreation activities for an unspecified period of time.

Recreation trip – the duration of time beginning when the visitor left their home and ending when they got back to their home.

Confidence level -- defines the degree of certainty that a range of values contains the true value of what is being estimated. For example, an 80% confidence level refers to the range of values within which the true value will fall 80% of the time. Higher confidence levels necessarily cover a larger range of values.

Confidence interval width (also called error rate) - these terms define the reliability of the visit estimates. The confidence level defines the desired level of certainty. The size of the interval that is needed to reach that level of certainty is the confidence interval width. The confidence interval width is expressed as a percent of the estimate and defines the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval. The smaller the confidence interval, the more precise is the estimate. An 80 percent confidence level is very acceptable for social science applications at a broad national or forest scale. For example: There are 205 million national forest visits plus or minus 3 percent at the 80 percent confidence level. In other words we are 80 percent certain that the true number of national forest visits lies between 198.85 million and 211.15 million.

CHAPTER 1: SAMPLE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The NVUM Process and Definition of Terms

To participate in the NVUM process, forests first categorized all recreation sites and areas into five basic categories called “site types”: Day Use Developed Sites (DUDS), Overnight Use Developed Sites (OUDS), Wilderness, General Forest Areas (GFA), and View Corridors (VC). Only the first four categories are considered “true” national forest visits and were included in the estimate provided. Within these broad categories (called site types) every open day of the year for each site/area was rated as high, medium or low last exiting recreation use. Sites/areas that are scheduled to be closed or would have “0” use were also identified. Each day on which a site or area is open is called a site day and is the basic sampling unit for the survey. Results of this forest categorization are shown in Table 1.

A map showing all General Forest Exit locations and View Corridors was prepared and archived with the NVUM data for use in future sample years. NVUM also provided training materials, equipment, survey forms, funding, and the protocol necessary for the forest to gather visitor use information.

NVUM terms used in the site categorization framework are defined below:

Site day - a day that a recreation site or area is open to the public for recreation purposes.

Site types -- stratification of a forest recreation site or area into one of five broad categories as defined in the paper: Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring Process: Research Method Documentation, May 2002, English et al. The categories are Day Use Developed sites (DUDS), Overnight Use Developed Sites (OUDS), General Forest Areas (GFA), Wilderness (WILD), and View Corridors (VC). Another category called Off-Forest Recreation Activities (OFRA) was categorized but not sampled.

Proxy – information collected at a recreation site or area that is related to the amount of recreation visitation received. The proxy information must pertain to all users of the site, it must be an exact tally of use and it must be one of the proxy types allowed in the NVUM pre-work directions (fee receipts, fee envelopes, mandatory permits, permanent traffic counters, ticket sales, and daily use records).

Nonproxy – a recreation site or area that does not have proxy information. At these sites a 24-hour traffic count is taken to measure total use for one site day at the sample site.

Use level strata - for proxy or nonproxy sites, each day that a recreation site or area was open for recreation, the site day was categorized as high, medium or low last exiting recreation traffic, or closed. Closed was defined as either administratively closed or “0” use. For example Sabino Picnic Area (a DUDS nonproxy site) is closed for 120 days, has high last exiting recreation use on open weekends (70 days) and medium last exiting recreation use on open midweek days (175 days). This accounts for all 365 days of the year at Sabino Picnic area. This process was repeated for every developed site and area on the forest.

Constraints on Uses of the Results

The information presented here is valid and applicable at the forest level. It is not designed to be accurate at the district or site level. The quality of the visitation estimate is dependent on the preliminary sample design development, sampling unit selection, sample size and variability, and survey implementation. First, preliminary work conducted by forests to classify sites consistently according to the type and amount of visitation influences the quality of the estimate. Second, visitors sampled must be representative of the population of all visitors. Third, the number of visitors sampled must be large enough to adequately control variability. Finally, the success of the forest in accomplishing its assigned sample days, correctly filling out the interview forms, and following the sample protocol influence the error rate. The error rate will reflect all these factors. The smaller the error rate, the better the estimate. Interviewer error in asking the questions is not necessarily reflected in this error rate.

Large error rates (i.e. high variability) in the national forest visit (NFV), site visit (SV) and Wilderness visit estimates is primarily caused by a small sample size in a given stratum (for example General Forest Area low use days) where the use observed was beyond that stratum's normal range. For example, on the Clearwater National Forest in the General Forest Area low stratum, there were 14 sample days. Of these 14 sample days, 13 days had visitation estimates between 0-20. One observation had a visitation estimate of 440. Therefore, the stratum mean was about 37 with a standard error of 116. The 80% confidence interval width is then 400% of the mean, a very high error rate (variability). Whether these types of odd observations are due to unusual weather, malfunctioning traffic counters, or a misclassification of the day (a sampled low use day that should have been categorized as a high use day) is unknown. Eliminating the unusual observation from data analysis could reduce the error rate. However, the NVUM team had no reason to suspect the data was incorrect and did not eliminate these unusual cases.

The descriptive information about national forest visitors is based upon only those visitors that were interviewed. If a forest has distinct seasonal use patterns and activities that vary greatly by season, these patterns may or may not be adequately captured in this study. This study was designed to estimate total number of people during a year. Sample days were distributed based upon high, medium, and low exiting use days, not seasons. When applying these results in forest analysis, items such as activity participation should be carefully scrutinized. For example, although the Routt National Forest had over 1 million skier visits, no sample days occurred during the main ski season; they occurred at the ski area but during their high use summer season. Therefore, activity participation based upon interviews did not adequately capture downhill skiers. This particular issue was adjusted. However, the same issue- seasonal use patterns- may still occur to a lesser degree on other forests. Future sample design will attempt to incorporate seasonal variation in use.

Some forest visitors were counted and included in the total forest use estimate but were not surveyed. This included visitors to recreation special events and organization camps.

The Forest Stratification Results

The results of the recreation site/area stratification and sample days accomplished by this forest are displayed in Table 1. This table describes the population of available site days open for sampling based on forest pre-work completed prior to the actual surveys. Every site and area on the forest was categorized as high, medium, low, or closed last exiting recreation use. This stratification was then used to randomly select sampling days for this forest. The project methods paper listed on page one describes the sampling process and sample allocation formulas in detail. Basically, at least eight sample days per stratum are randomly selected for sampling and more days are added if the stratum is very large. Also displayed on the table is the percentage of sample days per stratum accomplished by the forest.

Table 1. Population of available site days for sampling and percentage of days sampled by stratum on the Idaho Panhandle NF (2003)

Site type	TYPE	SAMPLING STRATUM	# DAYS SAMPLED	# DAYS IN POPULATION	SAMPLING RATE
DUDS	NONPROXY	HIGH	15	444	3.38
DUDS	NONPROXY	MEDIUM	11	365	3.01
DUDS	NONPROXY	LOW	10	1,131	0.88
DUDS	PROXY	FE3	3	165	1.82
DUDS	PROXY	FR1	4	185	2.16
DUDS	PROXY	SV1	4	137	2.92
GFA	NONPROXY	HIGH	13	270	4.81
GFA	NONPROXY	MEDIUM	59	5,077	1.16
GFA	NONPROXY	LOW	20	11,568	0.17
OU DS	NONPROXY	HIGH	3	38	7.89
OU DS	NONPROXY	MEDIUM	10	293	3.41
OU DS	NONPROXY	LOW	9	2,448	0.37
OU DS	PROXY	DUR4	6	769	0.78
OU DS	PROXY	DUR5	4	95	4.21
OU DS	PROXY	FE4	6	272	2.21
OU DS	PROXY	SUP4	8	849	0.94
WILDERN ESS	NONPROXY	HIGH	8	14	57.14
WILDERN ESS	NONPROXY	MEDIUM	2	3	66.67
WILDERN ESS	NONPROXY	LOW	10	673	1.49

CHAPTER 2: VISITATION ESTIMATES

Visitor Use Estimates

Visitor use estimates are available at the national, regional, and forest level. Only forest level data is provided here. For national and regional reports visit the following web site:

(<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum>).

Table 2. Estimate of Annual Idaho Panhandle National Forest recreation use

VISIT TYPE	VISITS	80 % CONFIDENCE INTERVAL
SITE VISITS	1,016,653	13.5
NATL FOREST VISITS	855,246	15.1
WILDERNESS VISITS	552	64.6

The Idaho Panhandle National Forest participated in the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) project from October 2002 through September 2003. The forest coordinator was Jane Houghton. The forest coordinator reported that during the sample year several factors may have contributed to lower than normal recreation use. There was a lack of snow most of the winter season at lower elevations. Normally, the forest may have over 100 people per day on weekends snowmobiling. The summer season had low water levels at a popular boating area and in parts of the forest concessionaires closed their developed sites 2 weeks early due to extreme fire danger. The late season ban on campfires may also have deterred visitors.

Recreation use on the forest for fiscal year 2003 was 855,246 national forest visits. The 80 percent confidence interval width was +/- 15.1 percent. There were 1,016,653 site visits, an average of 1.17 site visits per national forest visit. Included in the site visit estimate are 552 Wilderness visits.

A total of 1496 visitors were contacted on the forest during the sample year. Of these, 5.5 percent refused to be interviewed. Of the 1414 people who agreed to be interviewed, about 29.5 percent were not recreating, including 6.5 percent who just stopped to use the bathroom, 6.4 percent were working, 7 percent were just passing through, and 9.5 percent had some other reason to be there. About 70.5 percent of those interviewed said their primary purpose on the forest was recreation and 93.5 percent of them were exiting for the last time. Of the visitors leaving the forest agreeing to be interviewed, about 86 percent were last exiting recreation visitors (the target interview population). Table 3 displays the number of last-exiting recreation visitors interviewed at each site type and the type of interview form they answered.

Table 3. Number of last-exiting recreation interviews obtained on Idaho Panhandle NF (2003)

FORM TYPE	DEVELOPED DAY USE	DEVELOPED OVERNIGHT	GENERAL FOREST AREA	WILDERNESS
BASIC	101	30	182	0
ECON	95	26	186	0
SATIS	97	25	188	2

1/ Form type means the type of interview form administered to the visitor. The basic form did not ask either economic or satisfaction questions. The Satisfaction form did not ask economic questions and the economic form did not ask satisfaction questions.

Description of Visitors

Descriptions of forest visitors were developed based upon the characteristics of interviewed visitors and expanding to the national forest visitor population. Tables 4 and 5 display the gender and age distributions for national forest visits.

Table 4. Gender distribution of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.

MALE	FEMALE
72.2	27.8

Table 5. Age distribution of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.

AGECLASS	PERCENT
UNDER 16	19.40
16 TO 19	1.33
20 TO 29	8.17
30 TO 39	18.26
40 TO 49	21.14
50 TO 59	18.74
60 TO 69	8.27
70 PLUS	4.69

Visitors categorized themselves into one of seven race/ethnicity categories. Table 6 gives a detailed breakout by category.

Table 6. Race/ethnicity of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.

WHITE	HISPANIC OR LATINO	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	OTHER
97.9	1.4	0.8	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.1

Less than one percent (0.4) of forest visitors were from another country. The survey did not collect country affiliation. The most common visitor zip codes are shown in Table 7. Additional zip code information was collected and is available upon request. This information can help determine the forest's primary market area.

Table 7. Most common zip codes of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.

ZIP CODE	COUNT	PERCENT
83814	64	7.69231
83854	51	6.12981
83815	50	6.00962
83835	45	5.40865
83864	31	3.72596
83805	20	2.40385
99223	17	2.04327
83873	16	1.92308
99206	16	1.92308
99208	16	1.92308
83858	15	1.80288
83843	14	1.68269
83861	13	1.56250
99203	13	1.56250
83801	11	1.32212
83837	11	1.32212
83856	11	1.32212
99205	11	1.32212
83860	10	1.20192
99016	9	1.08173
83501	8	0.96154

Average number of people per vehicle and average axle count per vehicle in survey

There was an average of 2.21 people per vehicle with an average of 2.07 axles per vehicle. This information in conjunction with traffic counts was used to expand observations from individual interviews to the full forest population of recreation visitors. This information may be useful to forest engineers and others who use vehicle counters to conduct traffic studies.

CHAPTER 3: WILDERNESS VISITORS

Several questions on the NVUM survey form dealt directly with use of designated Wilderness. Wilderness was sampled 20 days on the forest, and 2 interviews were obtained. Because of the small number of individuals contacted, most information for Wilderness visitors is not statistically valid and is suppressed. Tables 8-11 are empty and no conclusions drawn.

Table 8. Age distribution of Idaho Panhandle NF Wilderness visitors.

AGECLASS	PERCENT
UNDER 16	.
16 TO 19	.
20 TO 29	.
30 TO 39	.
40 TO 49	.
50 TO 59	.
60 TO 69	.
70 PLUS	.

Table 9. Race/ethnicity of Idaho Panhandle NF Wilderness visitors.

WHITE	HISPANIC OR LATINO	NATIVE AMERICAN	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	OTHER
.

The reported zip codes of Wilderness visitors are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Zip codes of Idaho Panhandle NF Wilderness visitors.

WLDZIP	COUNT	PERCENT
83848	2	100

Table 11. Wilderness Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF visitors.

ITEM	P	F	A	G	V G	Average Rating *	Mean Importance **	N obs
Restroom cleanliness	0
Developed facility condition	0
Condition of environment	2
Employee helpfulness	0
Interpretive display	2
Parking availability	2
Parking lot condition	2
Rec. info. available	2
Road condition	2
Feeling of safety	2
Scenery	2
Signage adequacy	2
Trail condition	2
Value for fee paid	0

*Scale is: P = poor F = fair A = average G = good VG = very good

** Scale is: 1= not important 2= somewhat important 3=moderately important 4= important 5 = very important

. Note: For items with less than 10 responses the data was not reported

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION OF THE VISIT

Visitor Length of Stay

A description of visitor activity during their national forest visit was developed. This basic information includes participation in various recreation activities, length of stay on the national forest and at recreation sites, visitor satisfaction with national forest facilities and services, and economic expenditures.

The average length of stay on this forest for a national forest visit was 20.1 hours. Over 17 percent (17.65%) of visitors stayed overnight on the forest.

In addition, visitors reported how much time they spent on the specific recreation site at which they were interviewed. Average time spent varied considerably by site and is displayed in Table 12.

Table 12. Site visit length of stay (in hours) by site type for Idaho Panhandle NF.

Site Visit Average	Developed Day Use	Developed Overnight Use	General Forest Area	Wilderness	National Forest Visit
16.7	2.5	51.5	14.9	7.1	20.1

Activity Participation

The average recreation visitor went to 1.17 sites during their national forest visit. Forest visitors sometimes go to just one national forest site or area during their visit. For example, downhill skiers may just go the ski area and nowhere else. 89.6 percent of visitors went only to the site at which they were interviewed.

During their visit to the forest, the top five recreation activities of the visitors were viewing natural features, relaxing, viewing wildlife, hiking/walking, and driving for pleasure (see Table 13). Each visitor also picked one of these activities as their primary activity for their current recreation visit to the forest. The top primary activities were hunting, relaxing, hiking/walking, gathering forest products, and fishing (see Table 13). Please note that the results of the NVUM activity analysis DO NOT identify the types of activities visitors would like to have offered on the national forests. It also does not tell us about displaced forest visitors, those who no longer visit the forest because the activities they desire are not offered.

Table 13. Idaho Panhandle NF visitor activity participation and primary activity.

Activity	*% Participating	% as Main Activity
Developed Camping	10.89	2.98
Primitive Camping	7.42	1.34
Backpacking	3.20	0.59
Resort Use	4.08	1.55
Picnicking	13.98	2.51
Viewing Natural Features	58.04	6.87
Visiting Historic Sites	8.42	0.67
Nature Center Activities	4.21	0.12
Nature Study	5.38	0.00
Relaxing	58.60	11.55
Fishing	15.53	7.84
Hunting	18.70	18.07
OHV Use	17.24	6.42
Driving for Pleasure	40.87	7.30
Snowmobiling	1.10	1.07
Motorized Water Activities	2.37	0.57
Other Motorized Activity	0.80	0.67
Hiking / Walking	44.10	11.87
Horesback Riding	1.34	0.96
Bicycling	6.71	4.70
Non-motorized Water	2.94	0.92
Downhill Skiing	2.88	2.81
Cross-country Skiing	0.47	0.33
Other Non-motorized	10.58	2.28
Gathering Forest Products	17.09	8.60
Viewing Wildlife	56.24	7.02

*Note: this column may total more than 100% because some visitors chose more than one primary activity.

Use of constructed facilities and designated areas

One-third of the last exiting recreation visitors interviewed were asked about the types of constructed facilities and special designated areas they used during their visit. The five most used facilities/areas were: forest roads, forest trails, scenic byways, picnic areas, and developed campgrounds. Table 14 provides a summary of reported facility and special area use.

Table 14. Percentage use of facilities and specially designated areas on Idaho Panhandle NF.

FACILITY	PERCENT
Developed Campground	5.96
Developed Swimming Site	5.44
Forest Trails	38.78
Scenic Byway	12.31
Wilderness	0.65
Museum	1.00
Picnic Area	7.75
Boat Launch	1.91
Designated OHV Area	0.36
Forest Roads	51.97
Interpretive Displays	2.46
Information Sites	1.96
Organization Camps	0.36
Developed Fishing Site	1.03
Snowmobile Area/Trails	1.13
Downhill Ski Area	2.69
Nordic Trails	0.48
FS Lodge	1.41
FS Fire Lookout	2.38
Snowplay Area	0.19
Motorized Trails	2.18
Recreation Residence	0.50

Economic Information

About one-third of visitors interviewed were asked a series of questions that enabled economic analyses. Several questions focused on the trip away from home that included their visit to the national forest, and others about their annual visits to the forest and annual spending on all outdoor recreation.

This trip away from home

While away from home, some people just go to the forest, while others incorporate a national forest visit as part of a larger trip away from home. On this forest, 92.18 percent said that recreating on this forest was their primary trip destination. Visitors were asked to select one of several substitute choices, if for some reason they were unable to visit this national forest. Their responses are shown in Table 15. About 30.5 percent of visitors indicated their trip would include at least one night away from home. The average number of nights away for those staying away overnight was 6.3. About 26.4 percent indicated they would be staying overnight within 50 miles of this forest, and for them, the average number of nights in the local area was 3.4. Visitors estimated the amount of money spent during their trip within 50 miles of the recreation site at which they were interviewed (the trip may include multiple national forest visits, as well as visits to other forests or parks). This information will be available in a separate report and data file that can be used to estimate the local jobs and income that are generated by recreation visits to this forest.

Table 15 . Substitute behavior choices of Idaho Panhandle NF visitors.

Substitute response	Percent who would have:
Come back another time	19.6
Stayed at Home	5.6
Gone elsewhere for the Same activity	55.9
Gone elsewhere for a Different activity	9.9
Gone to Work	2.6
Had some other substitute	6.5

Average annual outdoor recreation activity

In the 12 months prior to the interview the typical visitor had come to this forest 38.5 times for all activities, including 25.7 times to participate in their identified main activity. Visitors were also asked about the amount of money they spent in a typical year on all outdoor recreation activities including equipment, recreation trips, memberships, and licenses. Almost 19% said they spent less than \$500 per year, and a little more than 6% said they spent over \$10,000 per year (Table 16).

Table 16. Annual recreation spending for visitors to the Idaho Panhandle NF.

\$\$ spent each year on outdoor recreation	Percent of Total
UNDER 500	18.64
500 - 999	19.35
1000 - 1999	18.28
2000 - 2999	17.92
3000 - 3999	6.81
4000 - 4999	2.51
5000 - 9999	10.04
OVER 10000	6.45

Visitor Satisfaction Information

About one-third of visitors interviewed on the forest rated their satisfaction with the recreation facilities and services provided. Although their satisfaction ratings pertain to conditions at the specific site or area they visited, this information is not valid at the site-specific level. The survey design does not usually have enough responses for every individual site or area on the forest to draw these conclusions. Rather, the information is generalized to overall satisfaction with facilities and services on the forest as a whole.

Visitors' site-specific answers may be colored by a particular condition on a particular day at a particular site. For example, a visitor camping in a developed campground when all the forest personnel are off firefighting and the site has not been cleaned. Perhaps the garbage had not been emptied or the toilets cleaned during their stay, although the site usually receives excellent maintenance. The visitor may have been very unsatisfied with the cleanliness of restrooms.

In addition to how satisfied visitors were with facilities and services they were asked how important that particular facility or service was to the quality of their recreation experience. The importance of these elements to the visitors' recreation experience is then analyzed in relation to their satisfaction. Those elements that were extremely important to a visitor's overall recreation experience and the visitor rated as poor quality are those elements needing most attention by the forest. Those elements that were rated not important to the visitors' recreation experience need the least attention.

Tables 17 through 19 summarize visitor satisfaction with the forest facilities and services at Day Use Developed sites, Overnight Developed sites and General Forest areas. Wilderness satisfaction is reported in Table 11. To interpret this information for possible management action, one must look at both the importance and satisfaction ratings. If visitors rated an element a 1 or 2 they are telling management that particular element is not very important to the overall quality of their recreation experience. Even if the visitors rated that element as poor or fair, improving this element may not necessarily increase visitor satisfaction because the element was not that important to them. On the other hand, if visitors rated an element as a 5 or 4 they are saying this element is very important to the quality of their recreation experience. If their overall satisfaction with that element is not very good, management action here can increase visitor satisfaction.

Table 17. Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors at Developed Day Use Sites.

ITEM	P	F	A	G	VG	Average Rating *	Mean Importance **	N obs
Restroom cleanliness	4.9	0.0	8.0	44.6	42.6	4.2	4.5	80
Developed facility condition	0.0	0.0	10.5	34.6	54.9	4.4	4.1	88
Condition of environment	0.0	0.0	1.6	44.8	53.6	4.5	4.6	94
Employee helpfulness	1.1	0.7	4.6	38.1	55.5	4.5	4.1	78
Interpretive display	5.0	0.9	13.1	44.9	36.2	4.1	3.8	62
Parking availability	0.0	0.0	9.7	37.4	52.9	4.4	3.8	92
Parking lot condition	0.0	0.0	6.8	47.2	46.1	4.4	3.6	92
Rec. info. Available	0.7	1.3	12.1	53.3	32.6	4.2	3.9	82
Road condition	0.0	0.0	11.6	64.3	24.2	4.1	3.9	57
Feeling of safety	0.0	1.2	4.5	24.2	70.1	4.6	4.2	94
Scenery	0.0	0.0	1.1	18.2	80.8	4.8	4.6	95
Signage adequacy	1.1	2.8	10.0	55.7	30.4	4.1	3.9	91
Trail condition	0.0	0.0	8.5	59.3	32.1	4.2	4.1	44
Value for fee paid	2.0	0.0	4.6	29.0	64.4	4.5	4.3	59

*Scale is: Poor = 1 Fair = 2 Average = 3 Good = 4 Very good = 5

** Scale is: 1= not important 2= somewhat important 3=moderately important 4= important 5 = very important

. Note: For items with less than 10 responses the data was not reported

Table 18. Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors at Developed Overnight sites.

ITEM	P	F	A	G	VG	Average Rating *	Mean Importance **	N obs
Restroom cleanliness	0.0	1.8	15.1	36.5	46.6	4.3	4.4	21
Developed facility condition	0.0	0.0	1.4	35.7	62.9	4.6	4.5	25
Condition of environment	0.0	0.0	3.5	18.0	78.6	4.8	4.8	25
Employee helpfulness	0.0	0.0	4.9	3.7	91.4	4.9	4.3	25
Interpretive display	4.5	2.2	13.4	52.8	27.0	4.0	3.4	17
Parking availability	0.0	0.0	5.9	76.4	17.7	4.1	3.7	24
Parking lot condition	0.0	0.0	1.9	69.0	29.2	4.3	3.4	22
Rec. info. availably	0.0	20.3	10.3	32.3	37.1	3.9	4.1	24
Road condition	0.0	0.0	11.1	52.7	36.2	4.3	3.7	20
Feeling of safety	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.1	77.9	4.8	4.4	25
Scenery	0.0	0.0	3.5	3.7	92.8	4.9	4.6	25
Signage adequacy	0.0	0.0	4.3	64.2	31.5	4.3	4.0	25
Trail condition	0.0	7.7	0.0	47.4	44.9	4.3	4.1	17
Value for fee paid	0.0	0.0	9.2	32.3	58.5	4.5	4.6	22

*Scale is: Poor = 1 Fair = 2 Average = 3 Good = 4 Very good = 5

** Scale is: 1= not important 2= somewhat important 3=moderately important 4= important 5 = very important

Note: For items with less than 10 responses the data was not reported

Table 19. Satisfaction of Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors in General Forest Areas.

ITEM	P	F	A	G	VG	Average Rating *	Mean Importance **	N obs
Restroom cleanliness	0.0	3.9	6.4	31.0	58.7	4.4	4.1	53
Developed facility condition	0.0	1.9	21.6	52.9	23.7	4.0	3.4	54
Condition of environment	5.7	0.0	9.4	45.0	39.9	4.1	4.5	148
Employee helpfulness	0.0	0.0	1.4	44.3	54.3	4.5	4.0	66
Interpretive display	2.3	2.3	5.8	75.5	14.1	4.0	3.4	48
Parking availability	1.3	0.8	11.7	29.7	56.5	4.4	3.4	100
Parking lot condition	0.9	9.9	11.7	33.5	44.0	4.1	3.3	59
Rec. info. available	10.4	8.5	5.7	60.3	15.1	3.6	3.8	84
Road condition	9.8	7.5	12.9	49.3	20.5	3.6	3.9	142
Feeling of safety	2.8	0.0	5.5	42.2	49.5	4.4	4.1	145
Scenery	0.0	2.6	5.7	22.4	69.3	4.6	4.3	151
Signage adequacy	12.0	9.6	19.8	43.1	15.4	3.4	3.9	147
Trail condition	5.8	7.6	27.3	39.0	20.3	3.6	3.9	72
Value for fee paid	43.1	2.3	0.0	30.8	23.8	2.9	4.2	21

*Scale is: Poor = 1 Fair = 2 Average = 3 Good = 4 Very good = 5

** Scale is: 1= not important 2= somewhat important 3=moderately important 4= important 5 = very important

Note: For items with less than 10 responses the data was not reported.

Crowding

Visitors rated their perception of how crowded the recreation site or area felt to them. This information is useful when looking at the type of site the visitor was using since someone visiting a designated Wilderness may think 5 people is too many while someone visiting a developed campground may think 200 people is about right. Table 20 summarizes mean perception of crowding by site type on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 means hardly anyone was there, and a 10 means the area was perceived as overcrowded.

Table 20. Perception of crowding by Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors by site type (percent site visits).

Crowding Rating	Developed Day Use	Overnight Use	General Forest Area	Wilderness
10 Overcrowded	1.2	0.0	3.2	0
9	1.5	0.0	0.5	0
8	1.7	4.9	1.6	0
7	4.4	20.4	2.6	0
6	6.8	5.1	4.7	0
5	16.4	18.3	7.7	0
4	14.3	12.2	6.7	0
3	10.6	14.8	16.6	0
2	15.2	13.4	19.5	0
1 Hardly anyone there	27.9	10.9	36.9	100

Other comments from visitors

Visitors were asked if there were any accommodations or assistance that the forest could offer that would be helpful to the visitor and anyone in their group to improve their recreation experience. Responses are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. List of Comments received from Idaho Panhandle NF recreation visitors.

Site Name	What Accommodation could be made
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	bike trail signs in mountain for Hiawatha Trail
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	need a better snowboard park
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	need forest information on weekends; availability of brochures
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	signage for mountain snow use trail
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	speed up environmental study; build new lodge and ski runs
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	less expensive food
107 LOOKOUT PASS SKI AREA	more information on cross country trails
110 CdA River Road 208	fee camping needs to be less expensive, double taxation
115 STEVENS LAKE TRAILHEAD	trailhead sign
117 LAKE ELSIE RD 2354	keep ATVs out of creek and on designated routes
117 LAKE ELSIE RD 2354	grade road
201 - HIAWATHA	more information on local camping
207 - CONRAD CAMPGROUND	finish trail at Canrad across river
212 - NELSON TRAILHEAD PULLOUT	better road signage
212 - NELSON TRAILHEAD PULLOUT	better roads
212 - NELSON TRAILHEAD PULLOUT	hand out free maps
212 - NELSON TRAILHEAD PULLOUT	rougher Rds so not so many people
213 - LOWER LANDING	more ATV access
214 - Hoyt/Slate	written rules of do's and don'ts
218 - GOLD SUMMIT	web rite- fishing/river conditions
309 COTTONWOOD CR. RD 614	roads should be open for use
309 COTTONWOOD CR. RD 614	open all roads and trails; thin the forest
318 FERNAN HILL RD. 612	maps at saddles
318 FERNAN HILL RD. 612	more areas to shoot
402 - MARBLE CREEK INTERP SITE	better and more road signs
601 SAM OWEN CG	some non reservable sites should be by water
609 GROUSE CREEK	more trails
609 GROUSE CREEK	fix boardwalk
612 HIGH DRIVE/BUNCO AND SNOMO	rideable mountain bike trails

Site Name	What Accommodation could be made
613 JOHNSON-LAKEVIEW@CLARK FORK	open gates; install toilet
613 JOHNSON-LAKEVIEW@CLARK FORK	wider roads; pull off ahead signs
620 TRESTLE CREEK/HUCK SNOMO	more grooming; more snow
620 TRESTLE CREEK/HUCK SNOMO	warming hut
717 Deer Crk/ Old Hwy	improve roads
721 Brush Lake	fix the dock and add another dock
804 BEAVER CREEK	stronger supervision of rowdy groups by host
808 KALISPELL ISLAND	maps with information about boat access on island
815 Roosevelt Grove	signs need to be replaced
815 Roosevelt Grove	no fees to view or park
815 Roosevelt Grove	1 extra sign for granite falls
Eagle Creek Rds 805/2349	keep roads open
Sam Owen CG	some non reservable sites should be by water