

# **National Park System Advisory Board Questionnaire on "Overcrowding" in the Parks**

Questionnaires were sent to all parks. Ninety-four percent of the parks responded.

Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they have no overcrowding problem. Twenty-two percent see crowds as a problem only in summer months. Twenty-four percent are crowded occasionally during the summer, especially on weekends and at special events.

The majority indicated that they would welcome additional visitation at certain times of the year.

The following methods are used most frequently to determine whether conditions of overcrowding have occurred (listed in order of most frequently mentioned):

- ✧ personal observation/judgement
- ✧ conditions of parking lot(s)
- ✧ visitor/vehicle counts
- ✧ length of waiting lines at various facilities
- ✧ scientific studies of human impacts on resources;  
    carrying capacity studies
- ✧ impacts on sewer systems; human waste accumulations
- ✧ visitor comments
- ✧ numbers of permits issued
- ✧ attendance at programs
- ✧ campground use levels
- ✧ survey of visitor experiences
- ✧ use reports from commercial operators/concessioners

With few exceptions, the problem occurs only in the developed areas of the parks.

Parks use the following techniques to control the flow of visitors where overcrowding has occurred:

- ✧ Traffic control: staff supervision of traffic in and near parking lots to enforce parking limitations.
- ✧ Limits are set on numbers of visitors permitted to enter specific areas/structures.
- ✧ Shuttle bus systems are used to limit access to some sites.
- ✧ Visitors are provided with information on alternative sites/programs.
- ✧ Grass is left long in certain areas to discourage use.
- ✧ Site bulletins are posted.
- ✧ School (and other) groups must make reservations.
- ✧ New interpretive programs are developed in less-used areas, if available.
- ✧ Additional staff are assigned in crowded areas, if available.
- ✧ Entry is controlled in some parks.

- ✧ Some parking lots and campsites have been redesigned.
- ✧ Illegally parked vehicles are ticketed.

Several parks indicated that they would never have overcrowding problems if they had adequate staff and/or if certain facilities (i.e., campgrounds, parking lots, restrooms, auditoriums) were re-designed. One park, for example, has a theatre that can accommodate more people than the parking facilities can handle. Most parks would rather redesign or add facilities than turn visitors away.

Some parks feel that increases in entrance and user fees may affect attendance.

Some Superintendents indicated that they "...believe that effective marketing of under-visited parks is in the interest of the public and our resources."

### **The 306 Survey Respondents are Listed Below According to the General Characteristics of their Visitation Patterns**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NO. OF PARKS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS</b>
No Crowding Problem	128	42%
Summer Crowding Problem	67	22%
Occasional Summer Crowding	21	7%
Summer Weekends/Special Events	52	17%
Some Holidays Only	11	3%
Spring and/or Fall Season Crowding	18	6%
Winter Crowding	6	2%
Year Round Crowding	3	1%

### **Summer Crowding in National Park System Areas**

Acadia NP	Home of FDR NHS
Antietam NB	Ice Age NSR
Assateague NS	Indiana Dunes NL
Arlington House	J. D. Rockefeller Mem. Pkw.
Bandelier NM	Jewel Cave NM
Big South Fork NP	Katmai NP & Preserve
Bryce Canyon NP	Lake Meredith NRA
Cabrillo NM	Lincoln Home NHS
Canyon de Chelly NM	Lower St. Croix NSR
Cape Cod NS	Lyndon B. Johnson Mem. Grove
Cape Hatteras NS	Mount Ranier NP
Custer Battlefield NP	Mount Rushmore NM
Denali NP	Muir Woods NM
Eleanor Roosevelt NHS	NCP—East
Fort McHenry NM	National Mall
Frederick Douglas Home NHS	Oregon Caves NM
Fire Island NS	President's Park
Fort Clatsop NM	Rock Creek Parkway
Fredericksburg/Spots NMP	Rocky Mountain NP

George Washington Mem Parkway  
 Gettysburg NMP  
 Glacier Bay NP and Reserve  
 Glacier NP  
 Golden Gate NRA  
 Grand Canyon NP  
 Grand Teton NP  
 Great Falls Park  
 Great Sand Dunes NM  
 Great Smoky Mountains NP  
 Gulf Islands NS  
 Haleakala NP  
 Harpers Ferry NHP

St. Croix NSR  
 Salem Maritime NHS  
 Sequoia/Kings Canyon NPs  
 Shenandoah NP  
 USS Arizona Memorial  
 Vanderbilt NHS  
 Whiskeytown-Shasta NRA  
 Wind Cave NP  
 Wolf Trap Farm Park  
 Wright Brothers NM  
 Yellowstone NP  
 Yosemite NP

### **No Crowding Problems in National Park System Areas**

Aniakchak NM  
 Abraham Lincoln Birthplace NHS  
 Adams NHS  
 Agate Fossil Beds NM  
 Allegheny Portage RNHS  
 Alibates Flint Quarries NM  
 Andrew Johnson NHS  
 Apostle Islands NL  
 Bering Land Bridge N Preserve  
 Big Bend NP  
 Big Cypress N Preserve  
 Booker T. Washington NM  
 Boston-African American NHS  
 Big Hole NB  
 Big Thicket NP  
 Biscayne NP  
 Black Canyon of the Gunnison NM  
 Cape Krusenstern NM  
 Canaveral NS  
 Casa Grande NM  
 Chicago Portage NHS  
 Colorado NM  
 Capulin Mountain NM  
 Casa Grande NM  
 Chiricahua NM  
 Christiansted NHS  
 Clara Barton NHS  
 Coronado NM  
 Cowpens NB  
 Crater Lake NP  
 Craters of the Moon NM  
 Cuyahoga Valley NRA  
 DeSoto NM  
 Edgar Allen Poe NHS

John Day Fossil Beds NM  
 John F. Kennedy NHS  
 Kobuk Valley NP  
 Kalaupapa NHP  
 Kanai Fjords NP  
 Klondike Gold Rush NHP  
 Knife River Indian Village NHS  
 Lake Chelan NRA  
 Lake Clark NP & Preserve  
 Lowell NHP  
 Lava Beds NM  
 Lincoln Boyhood NM  
 Maggie L. Walker NHS  
 Martin Van Buren NHS  
 Mound City Group NM  
 Nez Perce NHP  
 Ninety Six NHS  
 North Cascades NP  
 Noatak N Preserve  
 Ocmulgee NM  
 Old Post Office Tower  
 Oregon NHT  
 Pu'uhonau O' Honaunau NHP  
 Piscataway Park  
 Obed Wild & Scenic River  
 Pipe Springs NM  
 Palo Alto Battlefield NHS  
 Pecos NM  
 Petersburg NB  
 Petrified Forest NP  
 Pipestone NM  
 Prince William Forest Park  
 Puukohola Heiau NHS  
 Richmond NBP

Ebey's Landing NH Reserve  
 Edison NHS  
 Eisenhower NHS  
 El Morro NM  
 Eugene O'Neill NHS  
 Fort Scott NHS  
 Frederick Law Olmsted NHS  
 Fort Bowie NHS  
 Father Marquette NM  
 Fort Davis NHS  
 Fort Donelson NB  
 Fort Jefferson NM  
 Fort Larned NHS  
 Fort Point NHS  
 Fort Raleigh NHS  
 Fort Stanwix NM  
 Fort Union Trading Post NHS  
 Fossil Butte NM  
 George Rogers Clark NHS  
 Golden Spike NHS  
 Grand Portage NM  
 Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS  
 Guilford Courthouse NMP  
 Hamilton Grange NM  
 Herbert Hoover NHS  
 Homestead NM  
 Independence NHP  
 Jefferson Nat'l. Expan. Mem.  
 Yukon Charlie Rivers National Preserve

Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River  
 Roger Williams NM  
 Russell Cave NM  
 Sagamore Hills NHS  
 St. Gaudens NHS  
 Salinas NM  
 San Juan NHS  
 San Juan Island NHP  
 Santa Monica Mountains NRA  
 Saratoga NHP  
 Saugus Iron Works NHS  
 Stones River NB  
 Theodore Roosevelt NP  
 Theodore Roosevelt BP NHS  
 Tonto NM  
 Touro Synagogue NHS  
 Tumacacori NM  
 Tuskegee Institute NHS  
 Tuzigoot NM  
 Valley Forge NHP  
 Voyageurs NP  
 Walnut Canyon NM  
 White Sands NM  
 Whitman Missions NHS  
 William Howard Taft NHS  
 Women's Rights NHS  
 Wrangell-St. Elias NP/Preserve  
 Wupatki/Sunset Crater NM

### **NP System Areas Occasionally Crowded in the Summer**

Capitol Reef NM  
 Carl Sandburg NHS  
 Castillo de San Marcos NM  
 Cedar Breaks NM  
 Channel Islands NP  
 Devils Tower NM  
 Fort Vancouver NHS  
 General Grant NM  
 Hubbell Trading Post NHS  
 Isle Royale NP

Jean Lafitte NHP & Preserve  
 Mesa Verde NP  
 Minute Man NHP  
 Navajo NM  
 New River Gorge NR  
 Ozark NSR  
 Petersburg NB  
 Pictured Rocks NL  
 Redwood NP  
 Sitka NHP

Upper Delaware Scenic River

### **NP System Areas Crowded on Summer Weekends and/or During Special Events**

American Memorial Park  
 Andersonville NHS  
 Appomattox NHP

Everglades NP  
 Florissant Fossil Beds NM  
 Fort Laramie NHS

Arches NP  
Aztec Ruins NM  
Badlands NP  
Benjamin Franklin NM  
Bents Old Fort NHS  
Bighorn Canyon NRA  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
Buck Island Reef NM  
Buffalo National River  
Canyonlands NP  
Colonial NHP  
Cape Lookout NS  
Carlsbad Caverns NP  
Chamizal NM  
Chattahoochee River NRA  
Coulee Dam NRA  
Cumberland Gap NHP  
Cumberland Island NS  
Currecanti NRA  
Delaware Water Gap NRA  
Dinosaur NM

Fort Pulaski NM  
Gila Cliff Dwellings NM  
Gateway NRA  
Glen Canyon NRA  
Hampton NHS  
Harry S. Truman NHS  
Hopewell Furnace NHS  
International Peace Garden  
John Muir NHS  
Lake Mead NRA  
Longfellow NHS  
Lyndon B. Johnson NHP  
Mammoth Cave NP  
Montezuma's Castle NM  
Natural Bridges NP  
Olympic NP  
Pea Ridge NMP  
Perry's Victory/Int'l Peace Mem  
Scott's Bluff NM  
Shiloh NMP  
Sleeping Bear Dunes

Timpanogos Cave NM

### **National Park System Areas Crowded on Some Holidays Only**

Amistad NRA  
Arkansas Post NM  
Fort Sumter NM  
Fort Smith NHS  
Hot Springs NP

Lehman Caves NM  
Martin Luther King NM  
Moores Creek NB  
Padre Island NS  
Saguaro NM

Zion NP

### **National Park System Areas Crowded in the Spring and/or Fall Season**

Congaree Swamp NM  
Catoclin Mountain Park  
Effigy Mounds NM  
Fort Frederica NM  
Fort Vancouver NHS  
Fort Caroline National Memorial  
Fort Necessity NB  
Friendship Hill NHS

G. Washington Birthplace NM  
George Washington Carver NM  
Guadalupe Mountains NP  
Joshua Tree NM  
Kennesaw Mountain NBP  
Kings Mountain NMP  
Manassas NBP  
San Antonio Missions NHP

Vicksburg National Military Park

### **National Park System Areas Crowded in the Winter**

Death Valley NM  
Lassen Volcanic NP  
Morristown NHP

Organ Pipe Cactus NM  
Point Reyes NS  
Virgin Islands NP

## National Park System Areas Crowded Year-Round

Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP   Hawaii Volcanoes NP  
Natchez Trace Parkway

## National Park System Areas that did not Respond to Survey

Boston NHP	Home of FDR NHS
Castle Clinton NM	Hovenweep NM
Chaco Culture NHP	James A. Garfield NHS
C & O Canal NHP	Missouri Nat'l Recreational Riv.
Devils Postpile NM	Pinelands National Reserve
Federal Hall National Memorial	Rainbow Bridge NM
Ford's Theater NHS	Sewall-Belmont House NHS
Fort Matanzas NM	Thomas Stone NHS
Gloria Dei Church NHS	Tupelo NB
Hohokam Pima NM	War in the Pacific NHP
	White House

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## New Options for Park Protection

**Robert H. Gartner and Theodore W. Sudia**

*.....it would be useful if each of the federal land-management agencies had authority, staff, and funding to provide technical assistance.....to local, regional, and state governments to strengthen land-use and resource management planning for areas near and affecting the federal units. \**

**A**fter 50 years of effectively being hidden, it is time to bring P.L. 770½ out of mothballs and examine how this 1936 piece of legislation can be employed effectively to help protect the national parks.

P.L. 770½, passed on June 23, 1936 authorizes a study of the park, parkways, and recreational area programs in the United States. It grants the National Park Service authority to aid States and local government agencies in planning public park areas.

The original bill (H.R. 10104) easily passed the House in January 1936, supported by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, but was essentially gutted in the Senate. Among the provisions deleted were: 1) the acceptance by the Secretary (Interior and Agriculture) of

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\* An issue report, *Federal Resource Lands and Their Neighbors*. Conservation Foundation, 1979, by William E. Shands, describing Federal lands being adversely affected by activities taking place around them.