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Division of State Parks
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1998 Weston Bend State Park Visitor Survey

Project Completion Report

Submitted to

**Missouri Department of Natural Resources
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe visitors' socio-demographic characteristics, patterns of use, and satisfaction with park facilities, programs and services at Weston Bend State Park (WBSP).

An on-site survey of adult visitors to WBSP was conducted from June 1, to September 30, 1998. Two hundred sixty four surveys were collected, with an overall response rate of 66%. Results of the survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 6.2%. The following information summarizes the results of the study.

Socio-demographic Characteristics

- WBSP visitors were comprised of nearly equal numbers of males and females, and the average age of the adult visitors to WBSP was 45.
- The highest percentage had completed a four-year college degree or a post-graduate degree and had an annual household income of \$25,000-\$50,000.
- The majority of visitors (93%) were Caucasian, 2% were Native American, 1% were African American, and 0.8% were Asian.
- Only 5% of the visitors reported having a disability.
- The majority of visitors were from Missouri (58.3%), Kansas (23.9%), and Iowa (1.9%).

Use-Patterns

- Almost two-thirds of WBSP visitors had visited the park before.
- WBSP visitors had visited the park an average of 21 times in the past year.
- Four-fifths of the visitors to WBSP were day-users.
- Less than 20% of visitors stayed overnight, 94% of whom stayed at the campground in WBSP. Overnight visitors stayed an average of 3 nights.
- The majority of WBSP visitors visited the park with family and/or friends. Over one-fourth visited the park alone, and less than 1% visited with a club or organized group.
- Average group size of visitors to WBSP was 2.1 people per group.
- The most frequent recreation activities in which visitors participated were hiking, viewing wildlife, viewing barns and exhibits, studying nature, and picnicking.

Satisfaction and Other Measures

- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the visitors were either very or somewhat satisfied overall.
- Visitors were most satisfied with the picnic areas and least satisfied with the trails.

- Weekend visitors were more satisfied than weekday visitors.
- The majority of visitors gave high ratings on being free of litter and trash, care of natural resources, having clean restrooms, being safe, and upkeep of park facilities.
- There were no areas identified as needing more attention.
- One-fifth of visitors with safety concerns felt that there was a lack of park personnel patrolling the park.
- Only 15% of visitors to WBSP felt crowded during their visit. Two-thirds felt crowded in the campgrounds and/or campsites.
- Campers' perceptions of crowding were significantly higher than non-campers', as were weekend visitors' compared to weekday visitors' perceptions of crowding.
- One-third of the respondents provided additional comments or suggestions, over half of which were positive comments.

Acknowledgements

Conducting and successfully completing a study of this magnitude and complexity could not have been accomplished without the cooperation of many individuals. About 3,900 visitors to Missouri State Parks participated in the 1998 Missouri State Parks Visitor Survey. Over 260 visitors to Weston Bend State Park voluntarily agreed to provide the information upon which this report is based. It is clear from their input that these visitors care very much for the recreation resources in the Missouri State Park System. Their efforts will provide invaluable input into the planning process and providing for more effective and responsive management of these resources.

Many thanks also go to the numerous research assistants and students at the University of Missouri who collected the survey data and assisted in the coding and computer data entry of the questionnaires. They are: Li-cheng Lin, Tucker Fredrickson, Carrie Robinett, Chris Thoele, and Casey Thornton.

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

In 1939, 15 years after Missouri obtained its first state park, 70,000 visitors were recorded visiting Missouri's state parks (Masek, 1974). Today, more than 16 million people visit the 80 state parks and historic sites Missouri offers (Holst & Simms, 1996). The increase in visits to Missouri state parks and historic sites may be due in part to the diversity of sites, resources, and recreational opportunities provided by the state park system. Visitors to state parks have different characteristics and preferences (Donnelly, Vaske, De Ruiter, & King, 1996), and may be attracted to Missouri's state parks and historic sites because of the diversity of resources and recreational opportunities (Holst, 1991).

The DSP recognizes the importance of this diversity, as is evidenced by the mission of the state park system: "To preserve and interpret the finest examples of Missouri's natural landscapes; to preserve and interpret Missouri's cultural landmarks; and to provide healthy and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities for all Missourians and visitors to the state" (Holst, 1990, p. 7).

In order to fulfill its mission, state park managers are challenged to determine what recreational opportunities are most sought after by visitors to state parks and to determine how satisfied those visitors are with state park facilities, services, and programs. In order to ensure continued citizen support for the Parks and Soils sales tax, a tax funding state

parks, managers are further challenged to determine whether all demographic populations are benefiting from the recreational opportunities provided at state parks and historic sites.

To aid in meeting these challenges and to aid in the planning and management processes at recreation sites, surveys of visitors to the various state parks and historic sites should be conducted (TRRU, 1983). Specific information provided by the surveys should include use patterns of visitors to state parks, socio-demographic characteristics of those visitors, and visitor satisfaction of facilities, services, and programs (Lucas, 1985).

NEED FOR RECREATION RESEARCH

Recreation research has been identified as an important component in planning for recreational needs of visitors, particularly research that examines preferences and behaviors of visitors (Manning, 1986; Yoesting, 1981). In the past, it has been assumed that administrators of recreation sites were omniscient, knowing intuitively what the public wanted and should have in the way of recreational opportunities (Manning, 1986; Reid, 1963; Yoesting, 1981). Managers regarded visitors to recreation sites as static, and did not take into consideration that visitor preferences and desires can change. Because site administrators are not omniscient and visitor preferences do change (Cordell & Hartmann, 1983; Ditton, Fedler, Holland, & Graefe, 1982; Donnelly et al., 1996), studies examining the use patterns, socio-demographic

characteristics, and satisfaction of visitors are necessary for planning, implementing, and improving recreational opportunities.

Little site-specific information is available for state parks and historic sites in Missouri. Much of the survey work done for state parks and historic sites has focused on the state park system as a whole. A need exists for site-specific data to compare visitor information between parks, or to measure changing trends in these parks. Also, a need exists for consistent methodology in visitor surveys, in order that such comparisons and measurements can be made.

Manning (1986) reported that many surveys, even when conducted by the same agency, were methodologically inconsistent in recreational activity definitions, data collection techniques, sample sizes and response rates, age of respondents, and question wording and sequence. Any comparison of data would be difficult because of the inconsistent methodologies.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to gain information about visitor use patterns, socio-demographic characteristics, and satisfaction with park programs, facilities, and services.

This report examines the results of the visitor survey conducted at Weston Bend State Park (WBSP), one of the eight parks and sites included in the study. Objectives specific to this report include:

1. Describing the use patterns of visitors to WBSP during the period between June 1, and September 30, 1998.
2. Describing the socio-demographic characteristics of visitors to WBSP.
3. Determining if there are differences in select groups' ratings of park attributes, satisfaction with park features, overall satisfaction, and perceptions of crowding.
4. Determining any differences in select characteristics of visitors who rated highly park safety and those who did not.

STUDY AREA

Weston Bend State Park is a 1,133-acre park located in Platte County along the Missouri River, in the heart of the largest tobacco region west of the Mississippi River. This tobacco heritage is represented at the park by several old tobacco barns and a kiosk describing to visitors the history of the area. WBSP also offers a campground, picnic areas and a shelter house, hiking and bicycling trails, a river overlook, and river access for fishing. WBSP's trails attract many day-use visitors, who use the trails daily.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The population of the visitor study at WBSP consisted of all WBSP visitors who were 18 years of age or older (adults), and who visited WBSP from June 1, to September 30, 1998. These results only reflect summer visitors.

Methodology

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

A 95% confidence interval was chosen with a plus or minus 7% margin of error. Based upon 1997 visitation data for June, July, August, and September at WBSP, it was estimated that a population size of approximately

study period were the respondents for this study.

Table 1 shows the survey schedule along with the time slots used. Three time slots were chosen for surveying and two time slots were surveyed per day. The three time slots were as follows: Time Slot 1 =

Table 1. Weston Bend State Park Survey Schedule

Date	Day	Time Slot
June 20	Saturday	1. 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 3. 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
June 22	Monday	2. 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. 3. 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
July 16	Thursday	1. 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 2. 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
July 18	Saturday	1. 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 3. 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
August 20	Thursday	2. 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. 3. 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
August 22	Saturday	1. 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 2. 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
September 11	Friday	1. 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. 3. 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.
September 12	Saturday	2. 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. 3. 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

130,000 visitors would visit WBSP during the period between June 1 and September 30, 1998 (DNR, 1998). Therefore, with a 95% confidence interval and a plus or minus 7% margin of error, a sample size of 200 was required (Folz, 1996). A random sample of adult visitors (18 years of age and older) who visited WBSP during the

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Time Slot 2 = 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., and Time Slot 3 = 4:00 p.m. - 8 p.m. A time slot was randomly chosen (Time Slot 3) and assigned to the first of the scheduled survey dates. Thereafter, time slots were assigned in ranking order based on the first time slot. For example, the first survey date would be surveyed during time slots 1 and 3, the second date

during slots 2 and 3, the third during slots 1 and 2, and so on. This method was chosen to allow each of the three time slots to be surveyed at least once during the two-day block, and each time slot to be surveyed at least 5 times over the 8 days. This method was also chosen to allow visitors leaving the park at various times of the day an equal opportunity for being sampled.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire used in this study was based on the questionnaire developed by Fink (1997) for the Meramec State Park Visitor Survey. A copy of the questionnaire for this study is provided in Appendix (A).

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

The survey of visitors at WBSP was administered on-site, to eliminate the non-response bias of a mail-back survey. An exit survey of visitors leaving the park was conducted through a systematic sample of every second vehicle exiting the park.

DATA COLLECTION

The surveyor wore a state park T-shirt and was stationed at the contact station near the park entrance. During the selected time slot, the surveyor stopped every second vehicle and asked every visitor who was 18 years of age and older to voluntarily complete the questionnaire, unless he or she had previously filled one out. To increase participation rates, respondents were given the opportunity to enter their name and address into a drawing for a prize package and were assured that their responses to the survey questions were anonymous and would not be attached to

their prize entry form. Willing participants were then given a pencil and a clipboard with the questionnaire and prize entry form attached. Once respondents were finished, the surveyor collected the completed forms, clipboards, and pencils. Survey protocol is given in Appendix B and a copy of the prize entry form is provided in Appendix C.

An observation survey was also conducted to obtain additional information about: date, day, time slot, and weather conditions of the survey day; the number of adults and children in each vehicle; vehicle type and number of axles per vehicle; the number of times the visitors entered/exited the park during the visit; and the number of individuals asked to fill out the questionnaire, whether they were respondents, non-respondents, or had already participated in the survey. This number was used to calculate response rate, by dividing the number of useable surveys collected by the number of adult visitors asked to complete a questionnaire. A copy of the observation survey form is provided in Appendix D.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained for the WBSP study was analyzed with the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (SPSS, 1996).

Frequency distributions and percentages of responses to the survey questions and the observation data were determined. The responses to two open-ended questions, questions 8 and 20, were listed as well as grouped into categories for frequency and percentage calculations. The number of surveys

completed by month, by date, by day of week, by weekend versus weekday, and by time slot were also determined.

Comparisons using t-tests for each group were also made to determine any statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) in the following selected groups' satisfaction with park features (question 6), ratings of park attributes (question 7), overall satisfaction (question 10), and perceptions of crowding (question 11). The selected groups included:

1. First-time visitors versus repeat visitors (question 1).
2. Campers versus day-users (question 3). Day-users include those visitors staying overnight but not camping in the WBSP campground.
3. Weekend visitors versus weekday visitors. Weekend visitors were surveyed on Saturday and Sunday, weekday visitors were surveyed Monday through Friday.

Other comparisons were made using t-tests to determine any statistically significant differences in visitors who rated the park as excellent on being safe versus visitors who rated the park as good, fair, or poor on being safe, for the following categories:

1. First-time versus repeat visitors.
2. Campers versus day-users.
3. Weekend versus weekday visitors.

Differences between visitors who rated the park as excellent on being safe versus those who did not were also compared on the following questions: differences in socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions of crowding, measures of satisfaction with park features, ratings of park attributes, and overall satisfaction.

An additional comparison includes overall satisfaction between visitors who felt some degree of crowding and those who were not at all crowded on their visit.

Results

This section describes the results of the Weston Bend State Park Visitor Survey. For the percentages of responses to each survey question, see Appendix E. The number of individuals responding to each question is represented as "n=."

SURVEYS COLLECTED & RESPONSE RATES

A total of 264 surveys were collected at WBSP during June, July, August, and September, with 77 collected in June (29.2%), 33 collected in July (12.5%), 70 collected in August (26.5%), and 84 collected in September (31.8%). Tables 2, 3, and 4 show surveys collected by day of week, by time slot, and by date respectively. Of the 264 surveys collected, 149 (56.4%) were collected on weekends (Saturday) and 115 (43.6%) were collected on weekdays (Monday through Friday). The overall response

rate was 66.0%, with daily response rates ranging from 59.4% to 85.7%.

SAMPLING ERROR

Because a total of 264 surveys were collected, the margin of error was decreased from 7% to 6.2%. With a sample size of 264, a confidence interval of 95%, and a margin of error of plus or minus 6.2%, there is a 95% certainty that the true results of this study are within plus or minus 6.2% of the study findings. For example, from the results that 47.6% of the visitors to WBSP during the study period were female, it can be stated that between 41.4% and 53.8% of the WBSP visitors were female.

Table 2. Surveys Collected by Day of Week

Day	Frequency	Percent
Monday	48	18.2%
Thursday	34	12.9%
Friday	33	12.5%
Saturday	<u>149</u>	<u>56.8%</u>
Total	264	100.0%

Table 3. Surveys Collected by Time Slot

Time Slot	Frequency	Percent
1. 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.	63	23.9%
2. 12 p.m. -- 4 p.m.	100	37.9%
3. 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.	<u>101</u>	<u>38.3%</u>
Total	264	100.0%

Table 4. Surveys Collected by Date

Day and Date	Frequency	Percent
Saturday, June 20	29	11.0%
Monday, June 22	48	18.2%
Thursday, July 16	15	5.7%
Saturday, July 18	18	6.8%
Thursday, August 20	19	7.2%
Saturday, August 22	51	19.3%
Friday, September 11	33	12.5%
Saturday, September 12	51	19.3%
Total	264	100.0%

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Age

The average age of adult visitors to WBSP was 44.7. When grouped into four age categories, 24.7 % of the adult visitors were between the ages of 18-34, 53.3% were between the ages of 35-54, 11.2% were between the ages of 55-64, and 10.8% were 65 years of age or older.

Gender

Visitors to WBSP were almost equally male and female. Male visitors comprised 52.4% of all visitors, and female visitors comprised 47.6% of all visitors.

Education

The majority (42.3%) of visitors to WBSP indicated they had a four-year college degree or a post-graduate degree. Those who indicated they had some college or vocational school were 36.9%, and 20.8% indicated they had a high school education or less.

Income

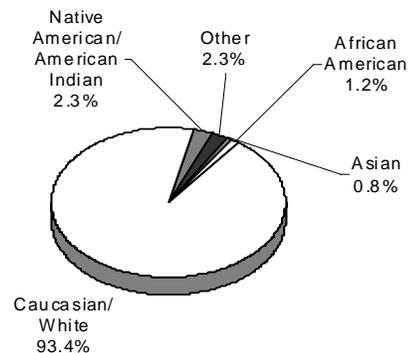
The largest percentage (43.6%) of visitors to WBSP reported they had an

annual income of between \$25,000 and \$50,000. The second largest percentage (22.6%) of visitors had an income of between \$50,001 and \$75,000. Visitors falling into the "less than \$25,000" category and into the "more than \$75,000" category were 15.0% and 18.8% respectively.

Ethnic Origin

Figure 1 indicates the ethnic origin of WBSP visitors. The vast majority (93.4%) of visitors was Caucasian. Only 1.2% were African American and 2.3% were Native American. Less than 1% (0.8%) were Asian and none were Hispanic.

Figure 1. Ethnic origin of WBSP visitors.



Visitors with Disabilities

Only 4.8% of the visitors to WBSP reported having some type of disability that substantially limited one or more life activities or that required special accommodations. For a list of responses to disabilities, see Appendix E, question 17.

Residence

The majority of visitors were from Missouri (58.3%), Kansas (23.9%), and Iowa (1.9%). Visitors mostly were from Kansas City, Leavenworth, Weston and St. Joe (Figure 2).

USE PATTERNS

Visit Characteristics

The majority (64.8%) of visitors to WBSP were repeat visitors, with 35.2% being first time visitors. The average number of times all visitors reported visiting WBSP within the past year was 21 times.

The majority (81.5%) of visitors were day-users, with only 18.5% of visitors indicating they were staying overnight during their visit to WBSP. Of those visitors staying overnight, 93.9% stayed in the campground at WBSP, 4.1% stayed with friends and/or relatives, and 2.0% stayed in nearby lodging facilities. The average number of nights visitors stayed was 2.9 nights.

A little less than half (44.3%) of visitors visited WBSP with family. Less than 10% (9.5%) visited with family and friends, while 17.6% visited with friends, and 27.1% visited the park alone. Less than one percent (0.9%) indicated visiting the park with a club or organized group, and only 0.5% visited the park with "other" during their visit to WBSP.

Group size

Average group size of visitors to WBSP was 2.09 people per group.

Figure 2. Residence of WBSP Visitors by Zip Code.

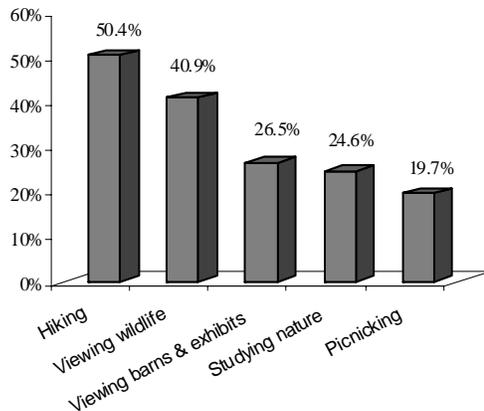


Approximately 728 adults and 109 children visited WBSP during the study period.

RECREATION ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

Respondents to the survey were asked what activities they participated in during their visit to WBSP. Figure 3 shows the percentage of visitor participation in the five highest activities. Hiking was the highest reported activity (50.4%) and viewing

Figure 3. Participation in recreation activities at WBSP.



wildlife was the second highest reported activity (40.9%). Viewing the barns and exhibits, studying nature, and picnicking were next at 26.5%, 26.4%, and 19.7% respectively.

WBSP visitors reported engaging in other activities, including camping (15.9%), biking (12.9%), attending a special event (3.4%), going on a guided nature hike (3.0%), and fishing (1.1%). Almost 16% (15.9%) of visitors reported engaging in an "other" activity, and

these included: just driving through to check out the park; running, jogging, or walking on the trails; visiting the scenic overlook; relaxing; visiting the playground; photography; bird watching; motorcycling; and hunting mushrooms or wild berries.

SATISFACTION MEASURES

Overall Satisfaction

When asked about their overall satisfaction with their visit, there were no respondents who reported being very dissatisfied with their visit and less than one percent (0.4%) reported being somewhat dissatisfied, whereas 99.6% of visitors were either somewhat or very satisfied. Visitors' mean score for overall satisfaction was 3.90, based on a 4.0 scale with 4 being very satisfied and 1 being very dissatisfied.

No significant differences ($p < .05$) were found in overall satisfaction between first time visitors and repeat visitors, and between campers and non-campers. A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between weekend and weekday users, with weekend visitors having a surprisingly higher mean satisfaction rating (3.94) than weekday visitors (3.85).

Satisfaction with Park Features

Respondents were also asked to express how satisfied they were with four park features. Figure 4 shows the mean scores for the four features and also for visitors' overall satisfaction. The satisfaction score for the picnic areas (3.86) was the highest, with the other scores ranging from 3.83 (campgrounds and park signs) to 3.82 (trails).

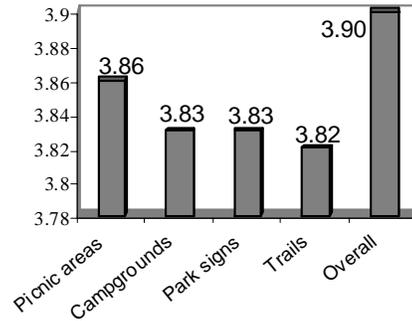
No significant differences ($p < .05$) were found in mean satisfaction ratings of the park attributes between first time visitors and repeat visitors, between campers and non-campers, and between weekend and weekday visitors.

PERFORMANCE RATING

Visitors were asked to rate the park’s performance of seven select park attributes (question 7): being free of litter and trash, having clean restrooms, upkeep of park facilities, having a helpful and friendly staff, access for persons with disabilities, care of natural resources, and being safe. Performance scores were based on a 4.0 scale, with 4 being excellent and 1 being poor.

There were no significant differences ($p < .05$) between first time and repeat visitors’ performance ratings of WBSP. A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between campers and non-campers regarding WBSP being free of litter and trash. Campers had a higher mean performance rating (3.98) than non-campers (3.85) regarding the park

Figure 4. Satisfaction with WBSP features



being free of litter and trash. Another significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between weekend and weekday visitors regarding upkeep of park facilities at WBSP. Weekend visitors had a surprisingly higher mean performance rating (3.87) of upkeep than had weekday visitors (3.75).

IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Importance-Performance (I-P) Analysis approach was used to analyze

Table 5. Mean Performance and Importance Scores for Park Attributes

Attribute	Mean Performance Score*	Mean Importance Score*
A. Being free of litter/trash	3.87	3.95
B. Having clean restrooms	3.82	3.92
C. Upkeep of park facilities	3.82	3.91
D. Having a helpful & friendly staff	3.77	3.76
E ₁ . Access for persons with disabilities	3.74	3.47
E ₂ . Access for persons with disabilities	3.56	3.80
F. Care of natural resources	3.78	3.90
G. Being safe	3.79	3.93

E₁ = All visitors

E₂ = Disabled visitors only

* 1 = Poor performance or low importance rating, 4 = excellent performance or high importance rating

questions 7 and 9. Mean scores were calculated for the responses of the two questions regarding visitors' ratings of the performance and importance of seven select park attributes. Table 5 lists the scores of these attributes, which were based on a 4.0 scale of 4 being excellent and 1 being poor for the performance ratings, and 4 being very important and 1 being very unimportant for the importance ratings.

performance" and indicates the attributes in which visitors feel the park is doing a good job. The upper left quadrant indicates that management may need to focus on these attributes, because they are important to visitors but were given a lower performance rating. The lower left and right quadrants are less of a concern for management, because they exhibit attributes that are not as important to visitors.

Figure 5. Importance-Performance Matrix of Park Attributes

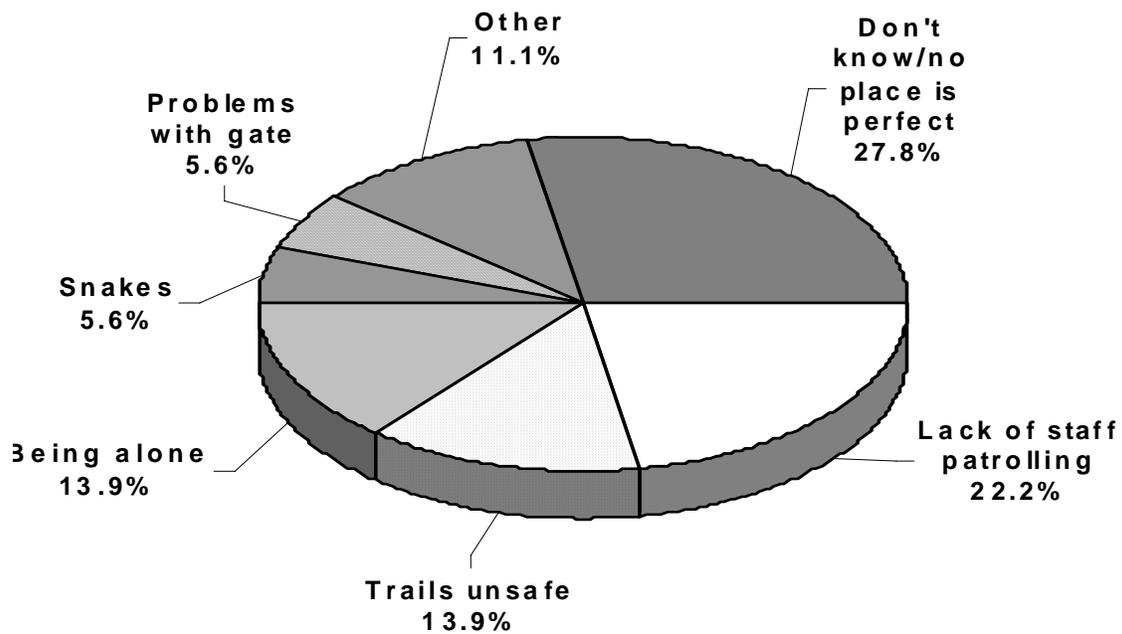


Figure 5 shows the Importance-Performance (I-P) Matrix. The mean scores were plotted on the I-P Matrix to illustrate the relative performance and importance rating of the attributes by park visitors.

The I-P Matrix is divided into four quadrants to provide a guide to aid in possible management decisions. For example, the upper right quadrant is labeled "high importance, high

WBSP is rated high on both performance and importance of being free of litter and trash, care of natural resources, having clean restrooms, being safe, and upkeep of park facilities. WBSP has no characteristics that visitors rated high on importance but low on performance.

CROWDING

Visitors to WBSP were asked how crowded they felt during their visit. The following nine-point scale was used to determine visitors' perceptions of crowding:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all		Slightly			Moderately			Extremely
Crowded		Crowded			Crowded			Crowded

Visitors' overall mean response to this question was 1.24. The majority (85.4%) of visitors to WBSP did not feel at all crowded (selected 1 on the scale) during their visit. The rest (14.6%) felt some degree of crowding (selected 2-9 on the scale) during their visit.

Visitors who indicated they felt crowded during their visit were also asked to specify where they felt crowded (question 12). Only 15.8% of the visitors who indicated some degree of crowding answered this open-ended question. Table 6 lists the locations where visitors felt crowded at WBSP.

Of those who reported feeling crowded, the majority (66.7%) felt crowded in the campground or at the campsites.

There was no significant difference ($p < .05$) in visitors' perception of crowding between first time and repeat visitors. A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between campers and non-campers. Campers had a higher mean crowded score (1.73) than non-campers (1.14). A significant difference ($p < .05$) was also found between weekend and weekday visitors regarding crowding. Weekend visitors had a higher mean crowded score (1.34) than weekday visitors (1.11).

Crowding and satisfaction

There was no significant difference ($p < .05$) in overall satisfaction between visitors who reported feeling crowded and visitors who were not at all crowded. Overall satisfaction for visitors who felt crowded was 3.89, compared to an overall satisfaction score of 3.90 for visitors who were not at all crowded.

Table 6. Locations Where WBSP Visitors Felt Crowded During Their Visit

Location	Frequency	Percent
Campground/campsites	4	66.7%
Trails	1	16.7%
Crowded because of park ranger	1	16.7%
Total	6	100.0%

SAFETY CONCERNS OF VISITORS

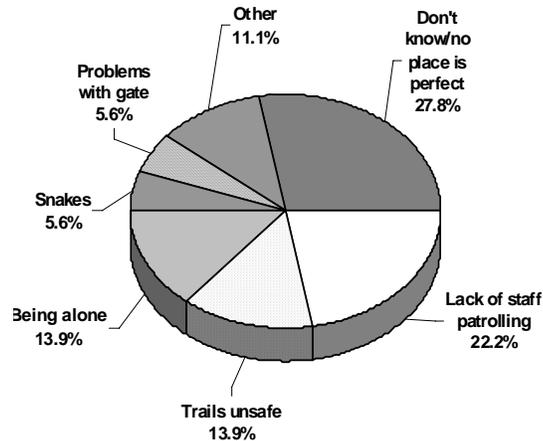
Less than 20% (17.3%) of visitors did not rate WBSP excellent on being safe, 14.0% of whom rated the park good, 2.9% rated the park fair, and 0.4% rated the park poor on being safe. Of these, 85.7% noted what influenced their rating. Their comments were grouped into categories and are shown in Figure 6. Appendix F provides a list of the comments.

The majority (27.8%) of the responses reflected visitors who either did not have a reason for not rating the park excellent or for those visitors who felt that no place could be perfect and there was always room for improvement. Over one-fifth (22.2%) of the comments remarked about the lack of park personnel/park rangers patrolling the park. Other safety concerns included the trails being unsafe (13.9%), being alone on the trails or in the park (13.9%), problems with the entrance gate being locked at 10 p.m. (5.6%), snakes (5.6%), and an “other” category (11.1%).

There were no significant differences ($p < .05$) in the rating of safety by first-time visitors versus repeat visitors, by campers versus non-campers, and by weekend versus weekday users. There were also no significant differences in the rating of safety by socio-demographic characteristics of the visitors to WBSP.

To determine if there were differences in perceptions of crowding, satisfaction with park features, rating of park attributes, and overall satisfaction, responses were divided into two groups based on how they rated WBSP on being

Figure 6. Comments from Visitors Not Rating WBSP Excellent on Safety



safe. Group 1 included those who rated the park excellent, and Group 2 included those who rated the park as good, fair, or poor.

There was no significant difference ($p < .05$) between Group 1 and Group 2 regarding their perceptions of crowding. However, Group 1 had a significantly ($p < .001$) higher satisfaction of all four park features, had a significantly higher ($p < .001$) rating of park attributes, and also had a significantly ($p < .001$) higher overall satisfaction rating.

ADDITIONAL VISITOR COMMENTS

Respondents to the survey were also given the opportunity to write any additional comments or suggestions on how DNR could make their experience at WBSP a better one (question 20). Thirty percent (30.3%) of the total survey participants responded to this question, with 86 responses given by 80 respondents. The comments and suggestions were listed and grouped by

similarities into 10 categories for frequency and percentage calculations. The list of comments and suggestions is found in Appendix G. Table 7 lists the frequencies and percentages of the comments and suggestions by category. Over half (59.3%) of the comments were positive comments, including such comments as: “I’ll be back,” “It’s a great park,” and “Really enjoy this state park.” The rest (40.7%) of the comments were

categorized based on similar suggestions or complaints, such as suggestions and complaints about needing newer or additional facilities and programs, complaints or suggestions about the restrooms, and an “other” category for suggestions and complaints not fitting into any other category.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage of Comments and Suggestions from WBSP Visitors

Category	Frequency	Percent
1. General positive comments	51	59.3%
2. Need newer/additional facilities/programs	10	11.6%
3. More flowers/shade trees	5	5.8%
4. Better maintenance of trails/park	4	4.7%
5. Problems/suggestions regarding restrooms	3	3.5%
6. Expand trails	3	3.5%
7. Problems/suggestions regarding entrance gate	2	2.3%
8. Additional signage	2	2.3%
9. Problems with park staff	1	1.2%
10. Other	5	5.8%
Total	86	100.0%

Discussion

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study provide relevant information concerning WBSP visitors. However, the results should be interpreted with caution. The surveys were collected only during the summer months of June, July, August, and September; therefore, visitors who visit during other seasons of the year are not represented in the study's sample.

Over 90% of WBSP visitors reported that they were very satisfied with their visit to the park. Williams (1989) states that visitor satisfaction with previous visits is a key component of repeat visitation. The high percentage of repeat visitation (65%) combined with their positive comments provide evidence that WBSP visitors are indeed satisfied with their park experience. Over half (59%) of the visitors who gave comments or suggestions provided positive comments concerning WBSP and its staff.

Interestingly, weekend visitors had a higher overall satisfaction rating than weekday visitors. However, there were no differences in how satisfied either were regarding the four park attributes (campground, park signs, picnic areas, and trails).

Although the majority (88%) of visitors rated WBSP as excellent on being safe, managers should not disregard the management concerns of those who did not rate the park excellent. And although the majority (28%) of visitors with safety concerns either had no reason for not giving the park an excellent rating or felt that no place was

perfect, one-fifth (22%) of visitors did comment about what they perceived as a lack of personnel patrolling the park. To address the safety concerns of WBSP visitors, one solution would be a greater park personnel presence, which could be accomplished by increasing ranger patrols.

To put the issue of park safety into perspective, 97% rated the park as good or excellent, while less than 3% of visitors felt the park rated fair and less than 1% gave it a poor rating (Figure 7). Visitor comments indicate that safety is largely a perceptual issue. Those with safety concerns also felt less satisfied than those who rated safety as excellent (Figure 8). Additional research could focus on the effectiveness of approaches that address visitor safety perceptions (e.g., personnel uniform policies and regularly scheduled patrols).

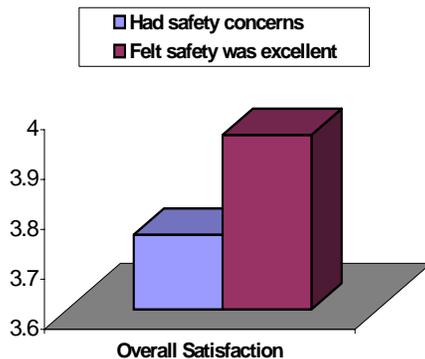
Figure 7. Safety ratings of WBSP.



Crowding was not an issue identified by visitors at WBSP, nor did it influence overall satisfaction of visitors. And although campers and weekend visitors expressed higher perceptions of

crowding, their crowding scores of 1.73 and 1.34 respectively were still relatively low, closer to being not at all crowded. The issue of crowding may be more prevalent during other times of the year at WBSP, particularly during peak spring and fall visitation.

Figure 8. Levels of Satisfaction Ratings by Safety Concerns



Visitors were overwhelmingly pleased with the performance at WBSP, in that the only park feature given a low performance rating was access for disabled visitors. It is important to note that although disabled accessibility was given a low performance rating, it was also an attribute not given a high importance rating by visitors. Visitors with disabilities accounted for less than 5% of the sample, but could increase in future surveys however, which suggests that a review of disabled accessibility at WBSP be conducted to determine if accessibility is adequate.

The results of the present study suggest some important management and planning considerations for WBSP. Even though WBSP visitors rated their visits and the park features relatively

high, attention to safety and disabled accessibility can positively effect these ratings.

Just as important, on-going monitoring of the effects of management changes will provide immediate feedback into the effectiveness of these changes. On-site surveys provide a cost effective and timely vehicle with which to measure management effectiveness and uncover potential problems.

RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the present study serve as baseline visitor information of WBSP. The frequency and percentage calculations of survey responses provide useful information concerning socio-demographic characteristics, use patterns, and satisfaction of WBSP visitors. In addition, the “sub-analysis” of data is important in identifying implications for management of WBSP. (The sub-analysis in the present study included comparisons using Chi-square and ANOVA between selected groups and the Importance-Performance analysis.) Additional relevant information may be determined from further sub-analysis of existing data. Therefore, it is recommended additional sub-analysis be conducted to provide even greater insight to management of the park.

Additional visitor surveys at WBSP should also be conducted on a regular basis (e.g., every three, four, or five years). Future WBSP studies can identify changes and trends in socio-demographic characteristics, use patterns, and visitors’ satisfaction at WBSP.

The methodology used in this study serves as a standard survey procedure that the DSP can use in the future. Other Missouri state parks should be surveyed similarly to provide valid results for comparisons of visitor information between parks, or to measure change over time in other parks.

The present study was conducted only during the summer season. Therefore, user studies in parks and historic sites might be conducted during other seasons for comparison between summer visitors and visitors during other seasons.

METHODOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR OTHER PARKS

The on-site questionnaire and the methodology of this study were designed to be applicable to other Missouri state parks.

Survey Signage

It is recommended that adequate signage be utilized when collecting surveys on-site. A "Visitor Survey" sign and a portable stop sign were used in the present study to inform visitors exiting the park that a survey was being conducted. Having the signs for that purpose aided in the workability of the methodology, as many visitors stopped before being asked to do so. However, the "survey station" became an "information station" when visitors arriving at and exiting the park saw the surveyor with clipboards and surveys. Having an assistant to help answer

visitors' questions and to pass out surveys would be helpful.

Survey Administration

The prize package drawing and the one-page questionnaire undoubtedly helped attain the response rate in the present study. Achieving the highest possible response rate (within the financial restraints) should be a goal of any study. To achieve higher response rates, the following comments are provided.

The most frequent reasons that visitors declined to participate in the survey were because of the heat and also because they were in a hurry. The majority of non-respondents were very cooperative and many provided positive comments about the park. Some non-respondents even asked if they could take a survey and mail it back. One recommendation would be to have self-addressed stamped envelopes available in future surveys to offer to visitors only after they do not volunteer to fill out the survey on-site. This technique may provide higher response rates, with minimal additional expense.

One caution, however, is to always attempt to have visitors complete the survey on-site, and to only use the mail-back approach when it is certain visitors would otherwise be a non-respondent.

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Appendix A. Weston Bend State Park User Survey

WESTON BEND STATE PARK

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources is seeking your evaluation of Weston Bend State Park. This survey is voluntary and completely anonymous. Your cooperation is important in helping us make decisions about managing this park. Thank you for your time.

1. Is this your first visit to Weston Bend State Park? *(Check only one box.)*

- yes
 no **If no, how many times have you visited this park in the past year?** _____

2. During this visit to the park, are you staying overnight?

- yes **If yes, how many nights are you staying at or near the park during this visit?** _____
 no *(If no, skip to question 4.)*

3. If staying overnight, where are you staying? *(Check only one box.)*

- campground in Weston Bend State Park
 friends/relatives
 nearby campground
 nearby lodging facilities
 other *(Please specify.)*
- _____

4. With whom are you visiting the park? *(Check only one box.)*

- alone
 family
 family and friends
 friends
 club or organized group
 other *(Please specify.)*
- _____

5. Which recreational activities have you engaged in during this park

visit? *(Check all that apply.)*

- biking
 hiking
 camping
 fishing
 attending special event
 studying nature
 viewing wildlife
 picnicking
 viewing barns & exhibits
 going on guided nature hike
 other *(Please specify.)*
- _____

6. How satisfied are you with each of the following in Weston Bend State Park? *(Check one box for each feature.)*

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
a. campground	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. park signs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. picnic areas	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. trails	<input type="checkbox"/>				

7. How do you rate Weston Bend State Park on each of the following? *(Check one box for each feature.)*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
a. being free of litter/trash	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. having clean restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. upkeep of park facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. having a helpful & friendly staff	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. access for persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f. care of natural resources	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g. being safe	<input type="checkbox"/>				

8. If you did not rate this park as excellent on being safe, what influenced your rating?

PLEASE TURN SURVEY OVER.

WESTON BEND STATE PARK

9. When visiting any state park, how important are each of these items to you? (Check one box for each feature.)

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
a. being free of litter/trash	<input type="checkbox"/>				
b. having clean restrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>				
c. upkeep of park facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
d. having a helpful & friendly staff	<input type="checkbox"/>				
e. access for persons with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
f. care of natural resources	<input type="checkbox"/>				
g. being safe	<input type="checkbox"/>				

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with this visit to Weston Bend State Park? (Check only one box.)

Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. During this visit, how crowded did you feel? (Circle one number.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at all Crowded		Slightly Crowded			Moderately Crowded			Extremely Crowded

12. If you felt crowded on this visit, where did you feel crowded?

13. What is your age? _____ **14. Gender?** female male

15. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Check only one box.)

- grade school
 vocational school
 graduate of 4-year college
 high school
 some college
 post-graduate education

16. What is your ethnic origin? (Check only one box.)

- Asian
 African American
 Native American/American Indian
 Hispanic
 Caucasian/White
 Other (Please specify.)

17. Do you have a disability that substantially limits one or more life activities or might require special accommodations?

- yes **If yes, what disability or disabilities do you have?**
 no

18. What is your 5-digit zip code (or country of residence, if you live outside the U.S.)? _____

19. What is your annual household income?

- less than \$25,000
 \$50,001 - \$75,000
 \$25,000 - \$50,000
 over \$75,000

20. Please write any additional comments about your park visit or suggestions on how the Missouri Department of Natural Resources can make your experience in Weston Bend State Park a better one.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.
YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN MISSOURI STATE PARKS.**

Appendix B. Survey Protocol

Protocol for Weston Bend State Park User Survey

Hi, my name is _____, and I am conducting a survey of park visitors for Missouri state parks. The information that I am collecting will be useful for future management of Weston Bend State Park.

The survey is one page, front and back side, and only takes about 3-5 minutes to complete. Anyone who is 18 or older may complete the survey, and by completing the survey, you have the opportunity to enter your name in a drawing for a prize package of \$100 worth of concession coupons. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be completely anonymous.

Your input is very important to the management of Weston Bend State Park. Would you be willing to help by participating in the survey?

[If no,] Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

[If yes,]

Here is a pencil and clipboard with the survey attached (for each respondent). Please complete the survey on both sides. When finished, return the survey(s), clipboard(s), pencils, and prize entry form(s) to me.

Thank you for taking time to complete the survey. Your help is greatly appreciated. Have a nice day.

Appendix C. Prize Entry Form

**WIN A PRIZE PACKAGE OF CONCESSION COUPONS
WORTH \$100**

**Enter a drawing to win \$100 worth of gift certificates!
These certificates are good for any concessions at any
state park or historic site. Concessions include cabin
rentals, canoe rentals, boat rentals, restaurant dining,
horseback riding, etc.**

**You may enter the drawing by simply filling out the
back of this entry form and returning it to the surveyor.
Your name, address, and telephone number will be used
only for this drawing; thus, your survey responses will be
anonymous. The drawing will be held November 1, 1998.
Winners will be notified by telephone or mail.
Redemption of gift certificates is based on dates of
availability through August 31, 1999.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: () _____

Appendix D. Observation Survey

Date _____ Day of Week _____ Time Slot _____
 Weather _____ Temperature _____ Park/Site _____

	Survey #'s	# of Adults	# of Children	Type of Vehicle	Additional Axles	# of Exits
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						

Time Slot Codes:

Time Slot 1 = 8:00 - 12:00 p.m.
 Time Slot 2 = 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.
 Time Slot 3 = 4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Weather Codes (examples):

Hot & Sunny Windy
 Cold & Rainy Sunny
 Cloudy Humid

Appendix E. Responses to Survey Questions

Weston Bend State Park Visitor Survey

1. Is this your first visit to Weston Bend State Park? (n=264)

yes	35.2%
no	64.8%

If no, how many times have you visited this park in the past year? (n=149)

The responses from this open-ended question were grouped into the following 10 categories:

0	6.0%
1	12.1%
2	12.8%
3	13.4%
4-5	10.7%
6-10	19.6%
11-20	7.4%
21-30	6.8%
40-100	5.4%
101+	6.1%

The average # of times repeat visitors visited the park in the past year was 21 times.

2. During this visit to the park, are you staying overnight? (n=260)

yes	18.5%
no	64.8%

If yes, how many nights are you staying at or near the park during this visit?

The responses from this open-ended question were grouped into the following 5 categories:

1	22.5%
2	52.5%
3-6	12.5%
7	10.0%
15	2.5%

3. If staying overnight, where are you staying? (n=49)

campground in Weston Bend State Park	93.9%	nearby lodging facilities	2.0%
friends/relatives	4.1%	other	0.0%
nearby campground	0.0%		

4. With whom are you visiting the park? (n=221)

alone	27.1%	family & friends	9.5%	club or organized group	0.9%
family	44.3%	friends	17.6%	other	0.5%

5. Which recreational activities have you engaged in during this park visit? (n=264)

biking	12.9%	attending special event	3.4%	viewing barns & exhibits	26.5%
hiking	50.4%	studying nature	24.6%	going on guided nature hike	3.0%
camping	15.9%	viewing wildlife	40.9%	other	15.9%
fishing	1.1%	picnicking	19.7%		

In addition to percentages of responses, a mean score was calculated for each feature in questions 6, 7, 9, and 10. The score is based on a 4.0 scale with 4 = very satisfied, 3 = somewhat satisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, and 1 = very dissatisfied (Q. 6 & 10); 4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 = fair, and 1 = poor (Q. 7); and 4 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 2 = somewhat unimportant, and 1 = very unimportant (Q. 9). The mean score is listed in parenthesis following each feature.

6. How satisfied are you with each of the following in Weston Bend State Park?

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
a. campground (3.83)	83.4%	15.9%	0.7%	0.0%	n=145
b. park signs (3.83)	86.6%	11.6%	1.7%	0.0%	n=232
c. picnic areas (3.86)	86.5%	12.5%	1.0%	0.0%	n=200
d. trails (3.82)	84.8%	12.9%	1.8%	0.4%	n=224

7. How do you rate Weston Bend State Park on each of the following?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	
a. being free of litter/trash (3.87)	87.9%	11.4%	0.8%	0.0%	n=264
b. having clean restrooms (3.82)	83.8%	14.1%	2.1%	0.0%	n=191
c. upkeep of park facilities (3.82)	83.8%	14.6%	1.2%	0.4%	n=253
d. having a helpful/friendly staff (3.77)	82.9%	12.9%	1.8%	2.3%	n=217
e. access for disabled persons (3.74)	77.5%	18.8%	3.6%	0.0%	n=138
f. care of natural resources (3.78)	80.0%	18.4%	1.6%	0.0%	n=245
g. being safe (3.79)	82.7%	14.0%	2.9%	0.4%	n=243

8. If you did not rate this park as excellent on being safe, what influenced your rating?

32 visitors (85.7% of those who did not rate the park as excellent on being safe) responded to this question with 32 responses. The 32 responses were divided into 7 categories. Frequencies and percentages of responses in each category are listed.

	Frequency	Percent
1. Don't know/no place is perfect	10	27.8%
2. Lack of park staff/rangers patrolling	8	22.2%
3. Trails unsafe	5	13.9%
4. Being alone on trails/in park	5	13.9%
5. Snakes	2	5.6%
6. Problems with entrance gate	2	5.6%
7. Other	4	11.1%
Total	32	100%

9. When visiting any state park, how important are each of these items to you?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	
a. being free of litter/trash (3.95)	95.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	n=261
b. having clean restrooms (3.92)	92.2%	7.4%	0.4%	0.0%	n=258
c. upkeep of park facilities (3.91)	91.1%	8.6%	0.4%	0.0%	n=257
d. having helpful/friendly staff (3.76)	77.6%	20.8%	1.6%	0.0%	n=250
e. access for disabled persons (3.47)	62.2%	26.7%	6.9%	4.1%	n=217
f. care of natural resources (3.90)	90.4%	9.6%	0.0%	0.0%	n=260
g. being safe (3.93)	93.8%	5.0%	1.2%	0.0%	n=258

10. Overall, how satisfied are you with this visit to Weston Bend State Park?

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
(Mean score = 3.90)	90.7%	8.9%	0.4%	0.0%	n=259

11. During this visit, how crowded did you feel? (n=294)

On a scale of 1-9, with 1 = Not at all crowded and 9 = Extremely crowded, the mean response was 1.24.

12. If you felt crowded on this visit, where did you feel crowded?

A total of 6 open-ended responses were given by 6 visitors. The 6 responses were divided into 3 categories. Frequencies and percentages of responses in each category are listed.

	Frequency	Percent
campground/campsite	4	66.7%
trails	1	16.7%
crowded because of ranger	1	16.7%
Total	6	100%

13. What is your age? (n=259)

Responses were divided into the following 4 categories:

18-34	24.7%
35-54	53.3%
55-65	11.2%
65+	10.8%

(Average age = 44.7)

14. Gender? (n=254)

Female	47.6%
Male	52.4%

15. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n=295)

grade school	2.3%	vocational school	3.1%	graduate of 4-year college	20.8%
high school	18.5%	some college	33.8%	post-graduate education	21.5%

16. What is your ethnic origin? (n=257)

Asian	0.8%	African American	1.2%	Native American/American Indian	2.3%
Hispanic	0.0%	Caucasian/White	93.4%	Other	2.3%

17. Do you have a disability that substantially limits one or more life activities or might require special accommodations? (n=251)

yes	4.8%
no	95.2%

If yes, what disability or disabilities do you have? (n=6)

The following is a list of all responses to this open-ended question.

Ankylosing spondylitis. Arthritis. Asthma -- back problems.
 Asthma -- hiking hills. Muscular dystrophy (walking). Old age.

18. What is your 5-digit zip code (or country of residence, if you live outside the U.S.)? (n=248)

The states with the highest percentages of respondents were:

MO	58.3%
KS	23.9%
IA	1.9%

19. What is your annual household income? (n=234)

less than \$25,000	15.0%	\$50,001 - \$75,000	22.6%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	43.6%	over \$75,000	18.8%

20. Please write any additional comments about your park visit or suggestions on how the Missouri Department of Natural Resources can make your experience in Weston Bend State Park a better one.

80 of the 264 visitors (30.3%) responded to this question. A total of 86 responses were given, and were divided into 10 categories. Frequencies and percentages of responses in each category are listed.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. General positive comments	51	59.3%
2. Newer/additional facilities/programs	10	11.6%
3. More flowers/shade trees	5	5.8%
4. Better maintenance of trails/park	4	4.7%
5. Problems/suggestions regarding restrooms	3	3.5%
6. Expand trails	3	3.5%
7. Additional signage	2	2.3%
8. Problems/suggestions regarding entrance gate	2	2.3%
9. Problems with park staff	1	1.2%
10. Other	5	5.8%
Total	86	100%

Appendix F. List of Responses for Safety Concerns (Q 8)

Responses to Question #8

If you did not rate this park as excellent on being safe (Question 7, letter g.), what influenced your rating?

Don't know/no place is perfect

- Don't know.
- I don't really know what "being safe" means.
- I have only been here two hours, but it feels safe.
- It's open to anyone and you never know.
- Just arrived.
- Life! Not seeing park people a lot when here.
- Nothing really. Just the world we live in.
- Rarely feel anything deserves an excellent rating.
- Standard measures -- nothing attracted attention as excellent.
- Today, nowhere is 100% safe that is open to public.

Lack of park staff/rangers patrolling

- Doesn't seem to have many park rangers around.
- I like to walk alone on the bike trail and I am hesitant when there are few others walking. I doubt there is any remedy except for routinely having staff on the trails.
- I think it's probably safe, but it is surrounded by a wooden area and not that highly patrolled.
- Lack of visible staff. Women are reluctant to walk here alone. I love coming here but always feel there needs to be more of a "presence" from employees.
- Life! Not seeing park people a lot when here.
- Not enough ranger patrolling.
- Single woman -- didn't see anyone here first visit.
- Visibility of park staff.

Trails unsafe

- Debris on bike trail.
- Debris on bike trail. You can easily lose your footing on the acorns and small round twigs. See item #20.
- Hills extremely slippery at times, i.e. icy or wet with no advanced warning.
- In winter, the trails are allowed to clear on own and this takes days. Therefore, ice can get packed on trails.
- The steep dropoff along the hiking trail.

Being alone on trails/in park

- Coming alone -- sometimes at dusk
- I like to walk alone on the bike trail and I am hesitant when there are few others walking. I doubt there is any remedy except for routinely having staff on the trails.
- Lack of visible staff. Women are reluctant to walk here alone. I love coming here but always feel there needs to be more of a "presence" from employees.
- Long trail (3 miles) remote.
- Single woman -- didn't see anyone here first visit.

Snakes

- Snakes.
- The park is safe except for certain types of snakes.

Problems with entrance gate being locked at 10 p.m.

- Do not like not being able to get out after 10 p.m.
- The gate closes at 10 p.m.; if there was an emergency, how could someone get out?

Other

- Today, there are some very loud, wild acting people in one space.
- Area around barn posted but no apparent control.
- Ranger seems kind of picky.
- Warning signs needed for river hazards and dangerous plants and animals that may be present.

Appendix G. List of Responses for Additional Comments (Q 20)

Responses to Question #20

Please write any additional comments about your park visit or suggestions on how the Missouri Department of Natural Resources can make your experience in Weston Bend State Park a better one.

General positive comments

- Great!
- Great. Mowing too close to road in some areas -- blackberries.
- Growing up in Montana, I love to see people who care about our land and its beauty.
- I love this park and think Nancy does a great job!
- I thought the park was very beautiful, I was very pleased with the calm and tranquil settings!
- I thought the park was very pretty and I hope I get a chance to come back.
- I'll be back!
- It is a lovely park and very well kept-up.
- It is really a beautiful place -- we always bring our visiting friends and relatives to enjoy it.
- It's beautiful. I'd like to come back soon.
- It's great park. Longer bike trail.
- Keep up the good work and thanks!
- Keep up the good work.
- Leave Nancy here. We have been visiting this park since she started developing it and what a wonderful person she is. She has shown great attention to the environment and to the people she surveys.
- Love Missouri's parks.
- Missouri parks are great!
- More flowers. This is a very nice park. I love to stop here.
- Nancy Honerkamp is outstanding and much credit should be given to her for her leadership in making this such an outstanding park. We come here every chance we get.
- Really enjoy this state park!
- Really liked it. Beautiful overlook!
- Seemed like a clean, nice family park.
- Thanks for excellent facilities.
- Thanks.
- The ranger that checked us into the campsite was the greatest.
- This is a really wonderful park.
- Very clean and mowed well.
- Very clean, view wonderful, birds abundant, enjoyed area and will return! Thank you.
- Very nice.
- Very pleasant.
- Very pretty park.
- Was just checking it out and I will return, no doubt!
- We are acting as campground host. Have been regular visitors to park since 1990.

- We enjoyed our visit and had a good bike ride. Good workout on these hills. Nice picnic up at overlook.
- We like the park, and will be back again!
- We really enjoy coming to Weston Bend. It is very clean and "communing" with nature is enjoyable.
- We really enjoy the hiking trails and the wild animals.
- Wonderful park.

Newer/additional facilities/programs

- I think there should be a larger playground area for children to play on.
- I would like to see a few more activities for young children near picnic areas.
- I'd like to have a large lake, for fishing. Picnic tables need more shade trees around them.
- More electric and water hookups.
- Park programs, slides, movies, nature hikes.
- Some off road bike trail like the hiking trails would be nice.
- Swimming? More hiking trails.
- Water fountains functioning during summer months especially.
- We have children we camp with and I did not feel there was enough activities to keep them happy.
- We would love a bigger playground.

More flowers/shade trees

- I'd like to have a large lake, for fishing. Picnic tables need more shade trees around them.
- More flowers. This is a very nice park. I love to stop here.
- More wildflowers, more color in plants.
- Need more shade in campground.
- Our campsite needed shade. We had full sun until 6 p.m.

Better maintenance of trails/park

- Bike path needs to be brushed of debris often. A small roller brush on front of a lawn tractor is an easy fix. Additionally, at about the 1.25 mile point, there is a deadfall (tree) you must walk under. Unsafe!
- Great. Mowing too close to road in some areas -- blackberries.
- Keep the trails cleared because every once in a while tree branches will be blown into path. Have someone walk the trails once or twice a week to check for this.
- Need to spray more for insects and mosquitoes.

Problems/suggestions regarding restrooms

- Men's room lightbulb is burned out.
- Not lock the gate. Warmer water in showers, clean up/paint showers.
- Shower could use work.

Expand trails

- Expand bike trails.
- It's great park. Longer bike trail.
- Swimming? More hiking trails.

Additional signage

- Need better road signs, like on the highway.
- Need more nature signs.

Problems/suggestions regarding entrance gate

- I do not like the locked gate at 10 p.m., though I can understand a need for it. I have been in parks that issue you a card that will allow you to enter when the gate is locked, and I would like to see that here.
- Not lock the gate. Warmer water in showers, clean up/paint showers.

Problems with park staff

- Park rangers need to give a little breathing room.

Other

- I would like to bring my scout troop here. Unfortunately due to campsite rules (2 tents, 2 vehicles, 6 people), the cost is prohibitive. I will bring my family sometime.
- Needs more of these near picnic areas.
- We were looking it over as possible weekend camping in RV.
- Where is the fishing?
- Wish you could reserve spots like in Arkansas.