



2025 Socioeconomic Research of Obed Wild & Scenic River

Report on 2025 Data Collection



Lily Bluff trails and area.

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Abstract

A strong mandate and need for socioeconomic monitoring have been expressed in the National Park Service (NPS) strategic goals for science, in statements by NPS leadership, and in various official reports. Since such monitoring began in 2022, the NPS has typically conducted visitor surveys at 24 parks per year across the United States and associated territories. However, the 2025/2026 SEM Visitor Survey study period was impacted by unexpected timing constraints that reduced the total sample from 24 to 21 parks. Obed Wild & Scenic River (Obed) was selected as one of these units for 2025 implementation. This socioeconomic monitoring at Obed uses a two-step survey methodology to capture a representative sample of park visitors during the peak season of each respective park unit. This process includes (1) an on-site intercept survey conducted via tablet, and (2) a post-trip survey (completed either by mail-back or online) for more in-depth trip details. The types of data collected include visitor demographics, trip characteristics/planning, and experience evaluations. Results are organized by these two survey instruments and are aimed at assisting park managers in understanding current utilization and perception of park resources, assessing operations and potential issues, and facilitating communication and decision-making processes within the park and between the park and its local partners and stakeholders.

Introduction

Social science research has become increasingly recognized as a crucial component of park planning, amplifying its significance for the National Park Service (NPS). With the ever-changing landscape of visitation and a desire to provide transformative visitor experiences, understanding the needs and expectations of the visiting public has become more important than ever. The agency seeks to provide the highest quality visitor experience while also protecting the important natural and cultural resources that make these sites special.

A pilot visitor study was conducted in 2015/2016 across selected park units throughout the United States. Building upon the insights gleaned from the pilot study, the Socioeconomic Monitoring Program (SEM) Visitor Survey has been carried out each year starting in 2022 at 24 NPS units across the country per year. The total sample of parks surveyed in the 2025/2026 sampling period was reduced from 24 to 21 to accommodate unexpected time constraints. Obed Wild & Scenic River (Obed) was selected as one of the 21 units studied in the 2025 sampling period. The study aims to deepen understanding of visitor demographics and characteristics at Obed.

This report contains the data and findings collected from the Obed SEM Visitor Survey in summer 2025. The study gathers data at a comprehensive agency level, addressing the informational needs of park managers throughout the National Park System. The data collected during the 2025 SEM Visitor Survey sampling period are intended to provide park managers with data-supported insights into their visitors while enabling data analysis at the agency level and beyond for future applications.

This study collects information about visitor use, aids in finding effective management solutions, and offers insights into the visitors who experience NPS sites. The findings empower NPS managers to better comprehend visitor behaviors, inform park operations, and identify areas for enhancing the visitor experience. Moreover, these results are intended to facilitate communication and foster informed decision-making processes, both within the NPS unit and in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders. Unique to the 2025/2026 SEM Visitor Survey study period, 11 of NPS units were surveyed during their peak season, with another 10 NPS units surveyed during their off-peak season. Obed was surveyed during its peak season, with results representing the visitors that were surveyed at that time.

This report does not include spending data, despite it being collected as part of the study. For detailed information regarding visitor spending at Obed, please refer to the 2025 Visitor Spending Effects report.

The research was carried out by a team including Otak, Inc., RRC Associates, Inc., the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana, and GAIA Environmental Consulting.

Methods

The SEM Visitor Survey methodology is designed to capture a representative sample of visitor information, characteristics, and behavior at each sampled park unit through:

An onsite intercept survey conducted via tablet, and

A post-trip follow-up survey (mail-back or online) for full trip details.

This comprehensive approach provides the necessary information to make on-the-ground decisions in park units using the intercept survey to capture visitor responses on higher priority information, while also capturing key in-depth information on visitor spending and trip characteristics for long-term planning from the post-trip survey. Additionally, the intercept survey is designed to be brief so as not to fundamentally affect visitors' experiences. The methods also permit a larger sample to be collected on key questions of interest by asking these high priority questions during the intercept survey.

Study Area

The Obed local area map is shown in Figure 1. The local area around Obed consists of the following counties in the state of Tennessee: Morgan, Cumberland, Anderson, Roane, Scott, and Fentress. Within Obed, the study area was comprised of eight locations. Table 1 lists those sites and the number of onsite intercept surveys completed at each. The distribution of surveyor effort across sites was determined based on historical visitor volumes and spatial distribution across the park's key areas. Where available, Visitor Use Statistics estimates for monthly visitation at each site were used to assign surveyors proportionally to reflect visitor use patterns. Park staff were consulted prior to the study launch to confirm that these metrics accurately captured visitor flows, ensuring that sampling efforts were focused on the most popular and representative locations.

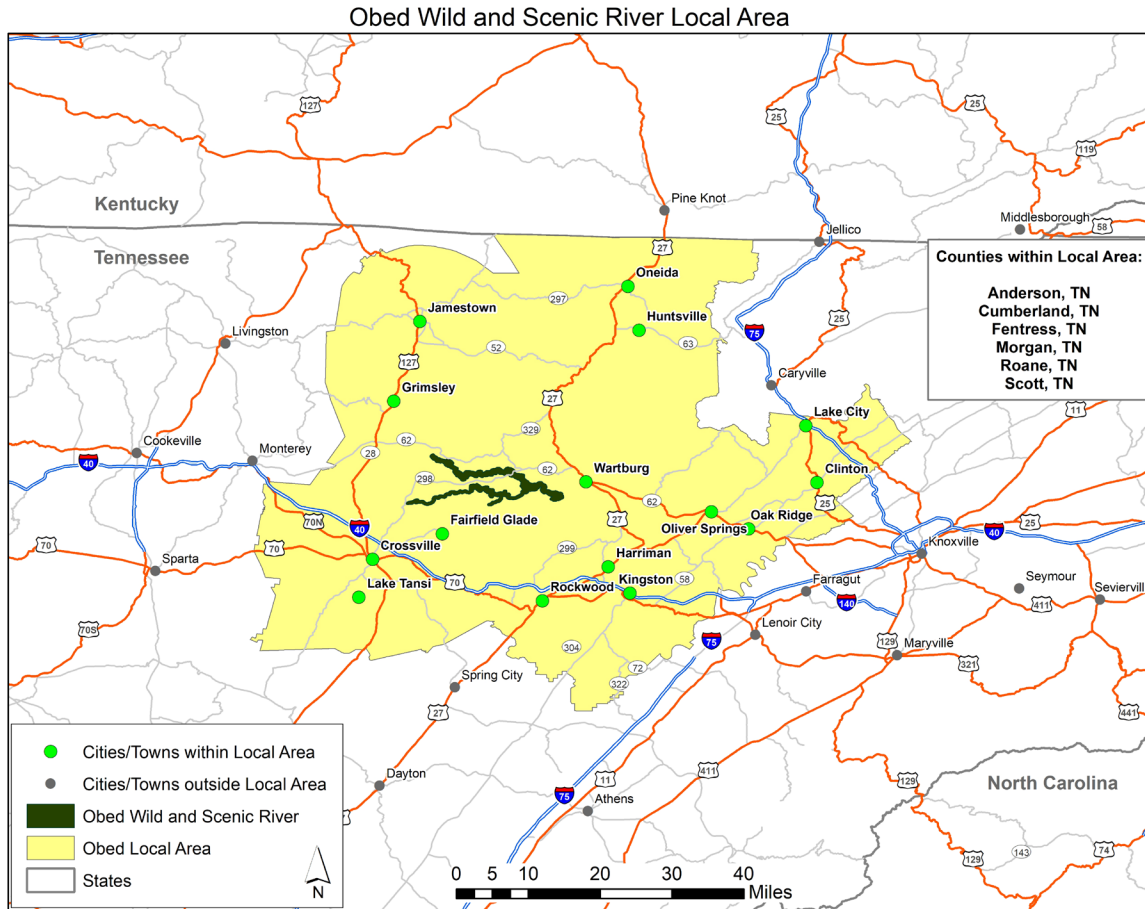


Figure 1. Obed local area map.

Table 1. Intercept surveys conducted within Obed.

Intercept Site	Number of Completed Intercept Surveys	Percent of Completed Intercept Surveys
Lilly Bridge	95	29.2%
Nemo Bridge	75	23.1%
Lilly Bluff Overlook	67	20.6%
Visitor Center (Wartburg)	47	14.5%
Doc Howard Climbing Area	21	6.5%
Barnett Bridge	7	2.2%
Jett Bridge	7	2.2%
Rock Creek Campground	6	1.8%

Sampling Period and Procedure

Intercept Survey

The on-site intercept survey is designed to rapidly collect visitor information as tablet-based responses, reaching the largest possible sample for the highest priority visitor information. The intercept sampling was conducted during the period of August 22 through September 2, 2025. A

sample of visitors were intercepted while visiting Obed across the designated locations listed in Table 1, above. The majority of respondents were visitors on foot at these locations.

Surveyors approached potential respondent groups at the site to introduce the purpose of the study and ask them to participate in a short 5–7-minute survey about their experience in Obed (NPS 2025). Within the group, the adult with the next upcoming birthday was asked to participate. If the visitor was eligible (at least 18 years of age, not an Obed employee, and had not previously taken the survey) and agreed to participate in the study, the surveyor verbally administered the survey questions and recorded the responses on a handheld tablet device. If the visitor did not agree, surveyors asked if they would be willing to answer three non-response bias questions (see the Non-Response Bias Analysis section, below). Upon complete or partial refusal, the surveyor would thank the visitor for their time, log the non-response, and approach the next visitor group.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were invited to participate in a post-trip survey by mail-back or online response. Those who agreed to participate were given an envelope containing a printed copy of the post-trip survey with a postage paid envelope for mailing it back, as well as a hyperlink and instructions for accessing it online. As part of the intercept protocol, surveyors logged a unique identifier (four-digit code) from the envelope into the tablet for future connection to the post-trip survey.

Therefore, four potential outcomes were possible when intercepting visitors (see Table 2):

1. Complete refusal, refused to answer any questions, including non-response bias questions;
2. Partial refusal, answered non-response bias questions but nothing further;
3. Completed intercept, but refused to take post-trip survey; or
4. Completed intercept and took post-trip survey.

During the sampling period, five surveyors were stationed simultaneously at different sampling sites. Start times varied day-to-day and by location to capture a diverse sample of visitors across Obed. Each surveyor worked 10 seven-hour days (approximately six hours of data collection and a one-hour lunch break) and rotated among several sites. Each surveyor had two days off during the 12-day sampling window.

Table 2. Response outcomes — Obed intercept survey.

Outcome	Total
Eligible visitors contacted	340
Complete refusals	8
Partial refusals (non-response bias questions completed)	7
Intercept surveys completed	325
Post-trip surveys distributed	322
Intercept response rate	95.6%
Post-trip acceptance rate	99.1%

Post-trip Survey

The post-trip survey was distributed to participating respondents who completed the intercept survey and then agreed to take a follow-up survey after completing their trip to the NPS unit. This method extended data collection and asked participants to complete the survey after their visit, either through a provided postage-paid envelope, or online via a provided survey link. The post-trip survey covers visitor trip spending details, travel patterns, and perceptions of their recent visit (NPS 2025). Both the intercept survey and the post-trip survey were tagged with a unique identifier (four-digit code) for each respondent so their onsite intercept responses could be paired with their post-trip responses. Numbers were assigned at random to the individual. The use of this code allows the data to be joined, while keeping all surveys confidential and removing respondents' identifying information. Joining the two datasets provides a more complete picture of in-park experiences and post-visit perceptions.

At the end of the intercept survey, respondents were asked for their physical mailing address or email address. This allowed for a reminder postcard or email to be sent to all respondents who provided contact information about a week following the end of each onsite data collection period. This postcard or email thanked respondents for their original participation and encouraged them to complete the post-trip survey if they had not already done so.

Three weeks after postcard mailing, a second contact (with the same unique IDs) was delivered to all outstanding addresses/emails, noting that the individual's completed questionnaire had yet to be received. The mailed survey packets included replacement surveys and postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes. A final contact was mailed/emailed to all remaining non-respondents two weeks after sending the second contact (i.e., first full replacement survey). Table 3 shows response rates for the post-trip survey.

Table 3. Response outcomes — Obed post-trip survey.

Outcome	Total
Post-trip surveys distributed	322
Valid post-trip surveys completed	100
Response rate	31.1%

Non-Response Bias Analysis

To account for potential biases between respondents and non-respondents, three questions were asked of eligible visitors contacted who did not wish to participate in the survey. The responses to these three questions can then be compared to both the larger group of respondents who completed the intercept survey, and the smaller group who completed both the intercept and post-trip surveys.

The Office of Management and Budget recommends testing for non-response bias when a response rate is less than 80%. With an intercept survey response rate of 95.6%, concern over intercept non-response is muted. However, because the post-trip survey response rate (31.1%) did not meet the minimum threshold, bias testing was conducted to evaluate differences between those respondents

who completed the full survey (both intercept and post-trip), and those who only completed the intercept portion.

A chi-square test for homogeneity was performed for each of the three questions to evaluate differences between the groups. The chi-square test for homogeneity is a statistical test used to determine whether there is a significant association between categorical variables. It compares observed data with expected frequencies to assess if any deviations are due to chance. A p-value of 0.05 is used as the indicated threshold of this significance; p-values of 0.05 or lower indicate significant difference between groups.

The p-values for two questions are above the threshold of 0.05, indicating no significant differences between those who completed the intercept survey only, and those who completed both the intercept and follow-up surveys on these measures. One question did not have a chi-square test conducted because one response category contained zero observations across groups. Based on the variables measured, this section of the study does not have a bias due to non-response.

Results of the bias testing for the post-trip survey are shown in Table 4 through Table 6.

Table 4. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Obed?”. Note: p-value = 0.270.

Response	Full Survey Respondent Frequency	Full Survey Respondent Percent	Intercept-Only Respondent Frequency	Intercept-Only Respondent Percent
Yes	34	34.0%	91	40.4%
No	66	66.0%	134	59.6%

Table 5. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “Do you currently live in the United States?”. Note: p-value = A chi-square test was not conducted because one response category contained zero observations across groups.

Response	Full Survey Respondent Frequency	Full Survey Respondent Percent	Intercept-Only Respondent Frequency	Intercept-Only Respondent Percent
Yes	100	100.0%	225	100.0%
No	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Table 6. Post-trip survey non-response bias question: “On this trip away from home, will you [and your personal group] stay overnight away from your permanent residence either in Obed and/or within the local area?”. Note: p-value = 0.208.

Response	Full Survey Respondent Frequency	Full Survey Respondent Percent	Intercept-Only Respondent Frequency	Intercept-Only Respondent Percent
Yes	34	34.0%	61	27.1%
No	66	66.0%	164	72.9%

Results

Results are presented separately for both the intercept and post-trip surveys throughout the following section. To preserve the data for additional analyses, outliers for open-ended numeric questions (e.g., nights spent, days in local area, etc.) have not been removed. Given these outliers, medians are shown instead of means throughout the report, in order to better represent the central tendency. Some questions were omitted because they were not applicable to this report.

Intercept Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 325 visitor intercept surveys conducted in Obed from August 22 through September 2, 2025. All results are presented in this report, regardless of sample size, which varies by question. Caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than n=30. Categories on some questions may not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Question 1: Previous Visits to Obed

First, respondents were asked if they were first time visitors to Obed. Repeat visitors were then asked how many visits they have made to Obed in the last 12 months and the last five years (Figure 2).

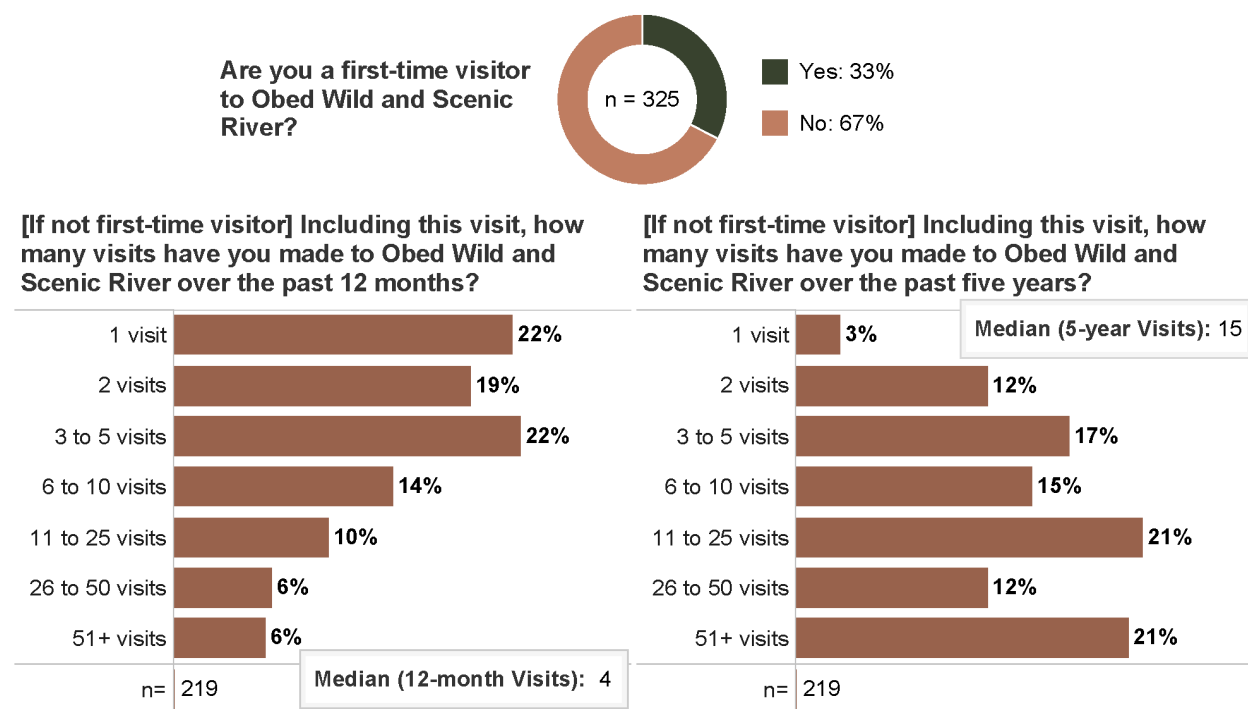


Figure 2. Previous visits to Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 8.

- One-third of respondents (33%) were on their first ever trip to Obed.
- Among the 67% of respondents who were repeat visitors, roughly one-fifth (22%) were on their first visit in the past 12 months (i.e., had last visited more than a year ago).

- However, nearly all of repeat visitors (97%) had visited more than once in the past five years.
- The median number of visits made in the past five years was 15, including the current trip; 54% of repeat visitors had made more than 10 visits in the past five years.

Question 2: Previous Visits to Other NPS Units

Respondents were then asked how many visits they made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months (Figure 3).

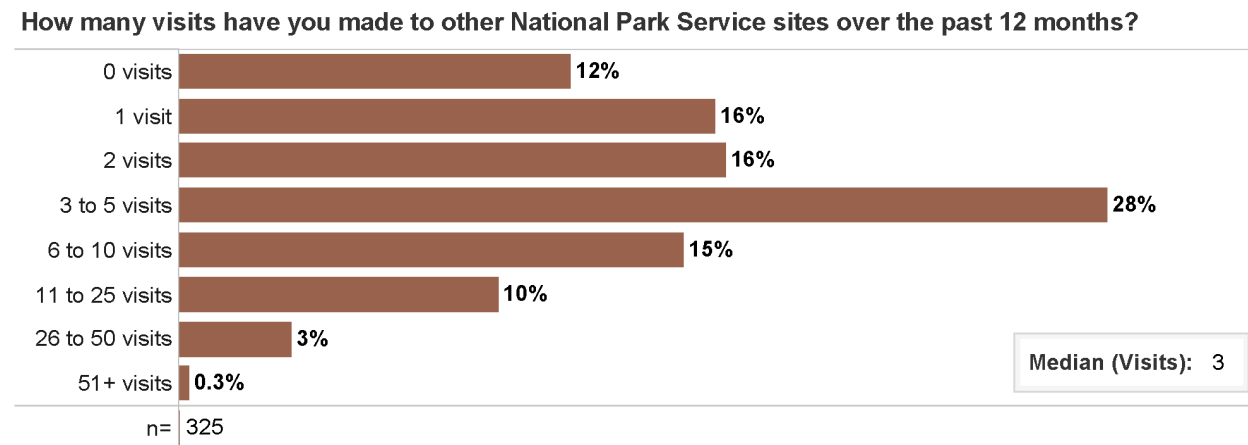


Figure 3. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 9.

- Most respondents (88%) had made at least one visit to other NPS site(s) in the past year.
- The median number of visits made to other NPS site(s) in the past 12 months was three, though a combined 56.3% had made three or more visits in the past year.

Questions 3-4: Visitor Residency

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Obed. Permanent and seasonal residents were then asked for their ZIP code within the local area. Respondents who do not reside permanently or seasonally in the local area were asked if they currently live in the U.S., and if so, for their ZIP code. Figure 4 depicts responses to this group of questions.

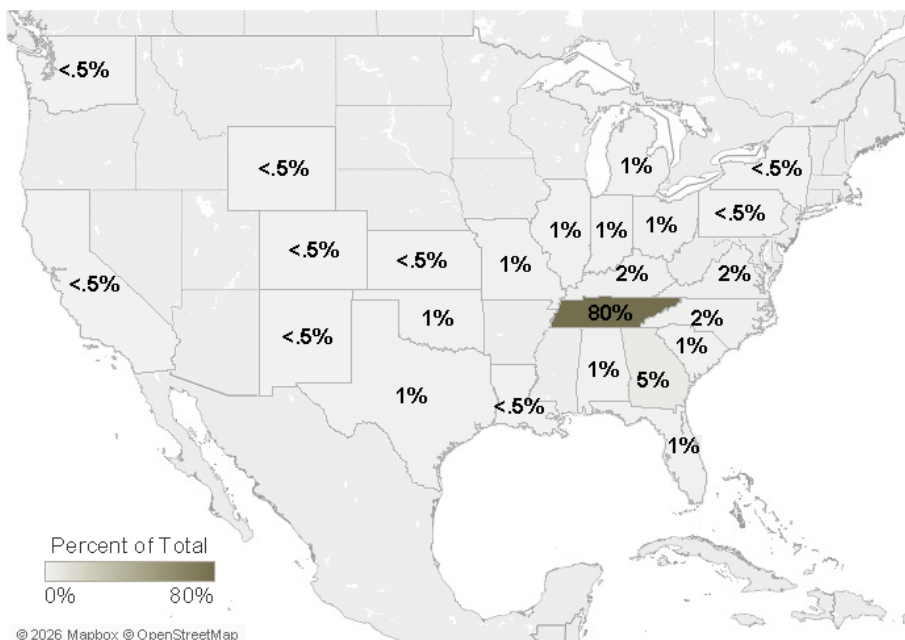
Are you a permanent or seasonal/second home resident of the local area around Obed Wild and Scenic River?



Do you currently live in the United States?



Respondent States (Percentage of U.S. respondents only)



Top 10 States

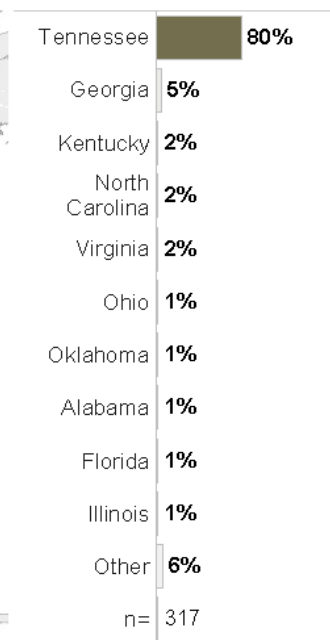


Figure 4. Respondent residency status and geographic origin of domestic visitors surveyed at Obed.

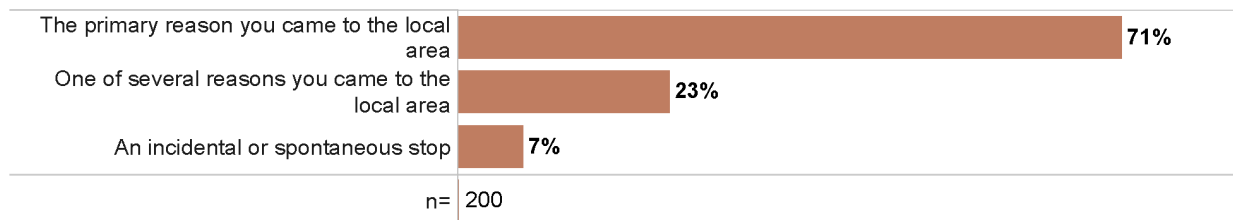
- Over one-third of respondents (a combined 39%) stated that they were either permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Obed.
- There was a large geographic concentration of respondents from Tennessee (where Obed is located).
- All respondents (100%) stated they currently residing in the U.S., with 80% residing in Tennessee, followed by Georgia (5%), Kentucky (2%), North Carolina (2%), and Virginia (2%).

Question 5: Trip Purpose

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area were asked about the purpose for their overall trip away from home, while permanent or seasonal residents of the local

area were asked about the purpose of their trip away from home “today,” the day they were intercepted in the park. Figure 5 depicts responses to this group of questions.

[If not local/seasonal resident] Was visiting Obed Wild and Scenic River...?



[If local/seasonal resident] Was visiting Obed Wild and Scenic River...?

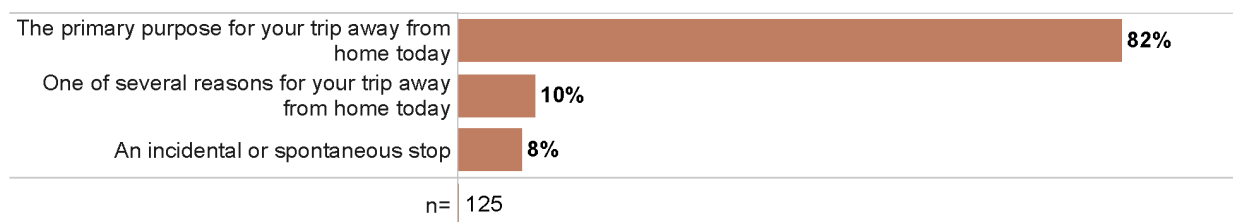


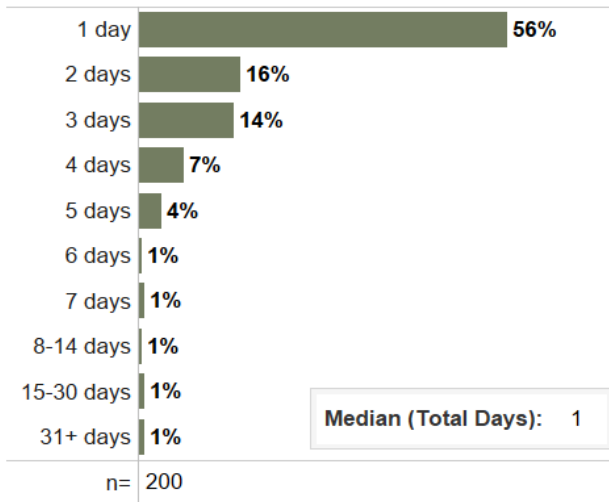
Figure 5. Role of Obed in overall trip purpose.

- The majority (71%) of respondents who resided outside the local area (i.e., Obed Wild and Scenic River area, as depicted in Figure 1) stated that their visit to Obed was the primary reason they came to the local area.
- For nearly one-quarter (23%) of non-local respondents, visiting Obed was one of several reasons they came to the local area.
- The remaining 7% of non-local respondents indicated their visit to Obed was an incidental or spontaneous stop while they were already in the area.
- Among permanent or seasonal local resident respondents, the majority (82%) reported that visiting Obed was the primary purpose for their trip away from home on the day they were surveyed.

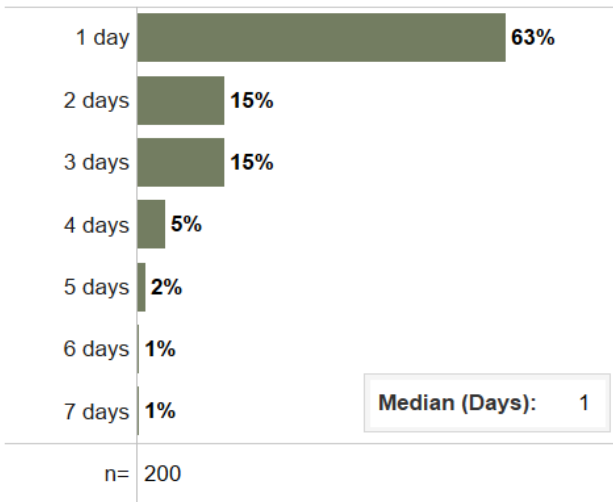
Question 6-8: Length of Stay

Respondents who are not permanent or seasonal residents of the local area around Obed were also asked how many total days they would be spending away from their home on this trip, and then how many days they planned to spend within that local area, including days spent in the park. All respondents, regardless of residency, were asked whether they would be staying overnight away from their permanent residence within the local area. Responses to both of these questions are depicted in Figure 6.

[If not local/seasonal resident] How many total days will you spend away from home on your overall trip that includes your visit to Obed Wild and Scenic River?



[If not local/seasonal resident] How many days will you spend in the local area (including the days you spend in Obed Wild and Scenic River) on this trip away from home?



On your trip, will you stay overnight away from your permanent residence in Obed Wild and Scenic River and/or within the local area?

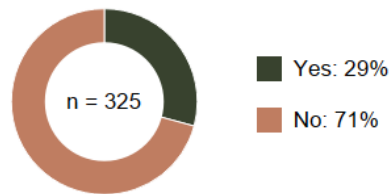


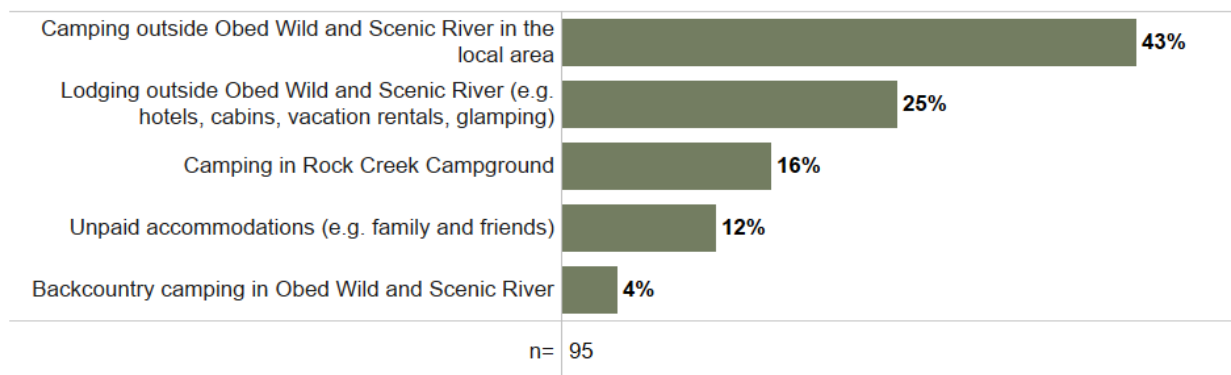
Figure 6. Time spent in the local area around Obed.

- The majority of non-local respondents (56%) spent one day overall on their trip away from home, while 16% spent two days, and 14% spent three days. The median days spent away from home was one day.
- Nearly two-thirds of non-local respondents (63%) spent one day in the local area, while 15% spent two days, and 15% spent three days. The median length of stay in the local area was one day.
- Additionally, just over one-quarter of all respondents (29%; including permanent/seasonal residents) had stayed or planned to stay overnight away from their permanent residence in the park and/or in the local area.

Question 9: Overnight Visitors

If respondents indicated that they stayed overnight in the local area, they were asked about the type(s) of accommodation they used or planned to use while there (Figure 7).

[If staying overnight in local area] On this trip, what type of accommodations will you use while in the local area? Please mark all that apply



[If camping in or outside Obed Wild and Scenic River] Did you stay in a tent or RV?



Figure 7. Accommodation types used by overnight visitors within Obed and in the local area surrounding it.

- The plurality of overnight respondents (43%) camped outside Obed in the local area.
- This was followed in prevalence by those who used lodging outside Obed (25%), and those that camped at the Rock Creek Campground (16%).
- For those who used some form of camping accommodation (either in the park or the local area), the vast majority (90%) reported staying in tents, while the remaining 10% stayed in an RV.

Respondents were then asked to indicate the number of nights they spent or would spend in each accommodation type (Figure 8).

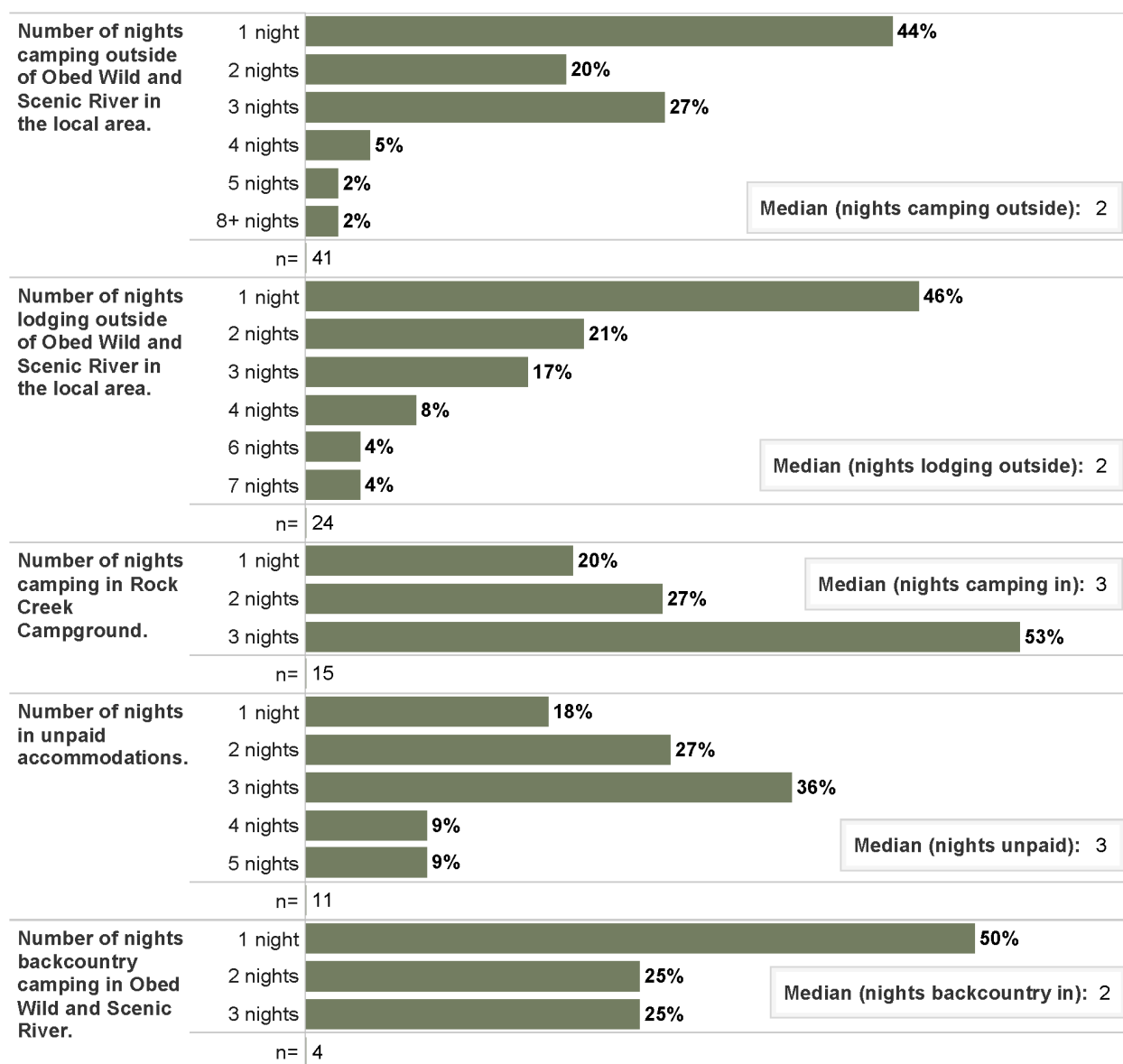


Figure 8. Number of nights spent within Obed and in the local area surrounding it, by accommodation type. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 10.

- Among the 43% of overnight respondents who camped outside of Obed (per Figure 7), median length of stay was two nights, though close to half (44%) stayed just one night.
- Among the 25% of overnight respondents who lodged outside of Obed in the local area (per Figure 7), median length of stay was two nights. Two-thirds (67%) lodged two nights or fewer in the local area this trip; 84% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 16% of overnight respondents who camped in Obed in the Rock Creek Campground (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights. Just under half (47%) of campers were spending two nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; while all of those who camped in the Rock Creek Campground spent three nights or fewer.

- Among the 12% of overnight respondents who stayed in unpaid accommodations in the local area (per Figure 7), median length of stay was three nights. Just under half (45%) of those who stayed in unpaid accommodations spent two nights or fewer; 81% spent three nights or fewer.
- Among the 4% of overnight respondents who camped in the backcountry in Obed (per Figure 7), median length of stay was two nights. Three-quarters (75%) of campers were spending two nights or fewer camping in the park this trip; while all of those who camped in the backcountry spent three nights or fewer.

Questions 12-14: Party Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate how many adults (18 or older) and children (under 18) were in their personal group during their visit to Obed (Figure 9). A personal group was defined as the visitor and companions with whom they visited the park, such as a spouse, family, and/or friends, but respondents were informed not to account for the larger group with whom they may have traveled, such as a school, church, scout, or tour group.

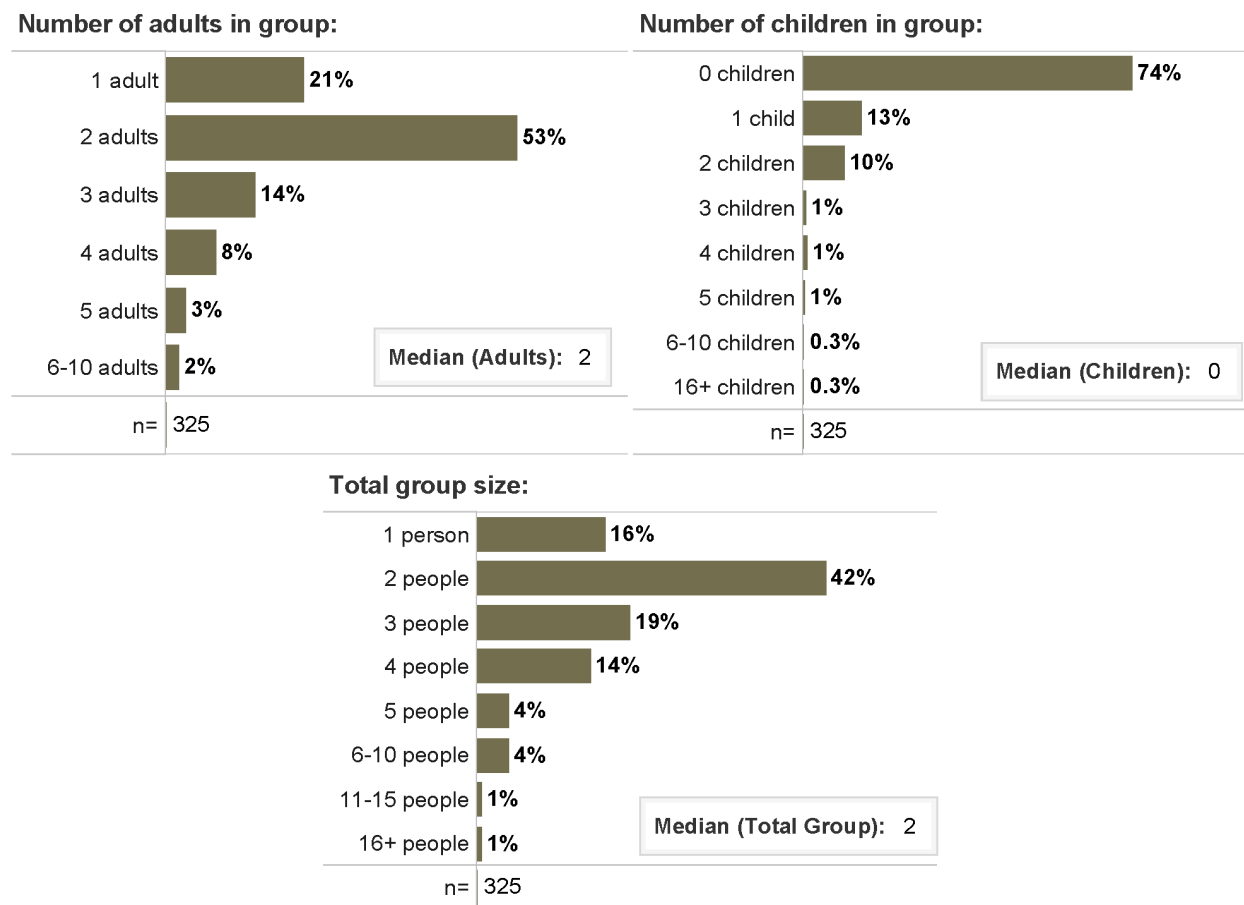


Figure 9. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 11.

- The median number of adults per group was two. Most groups (53%) included exactly two adults.
- Most groups (74%) did not include any children.
- The median total number of people (adults and children) per group was two.

Respondents were then asked to provide the age of each member of their group (Figure 10). These data show the true age distribution of respondent groups sampled at Obed.

What are the ages of each of the adults and children in your group?

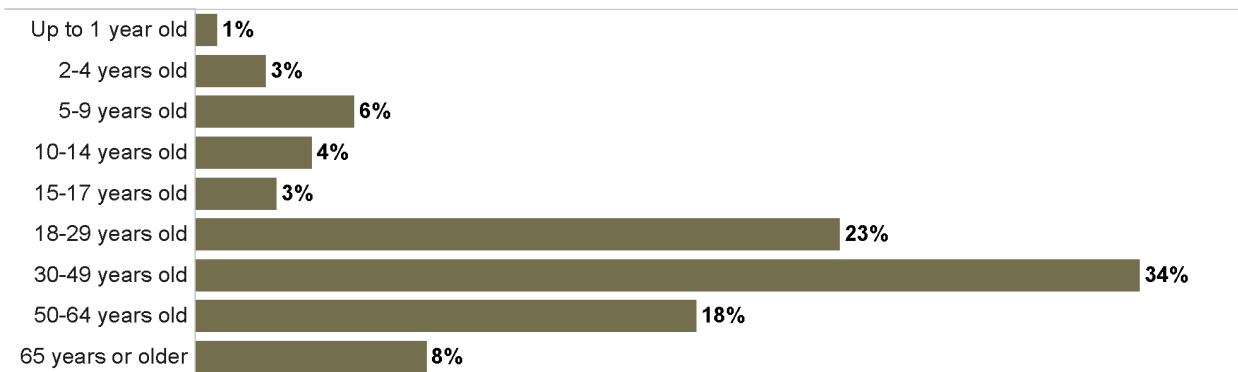


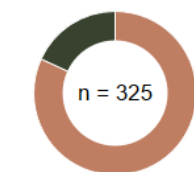
Figure 10. Age distribution of all members of respondent's personal group while visiting Obed.

- The most common age of the adults and children in a personal group was 30-49 years old (34%), followed by 18-29 years old (23%), and 50-64 years old (18%).
- Children (i.e., visitors under 18 years old) accounted for a combined total of 17% of group members.

Questions 17-21: Park Use Characteristics

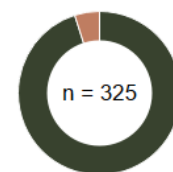
Then, respondents were asked to indicate if they planned to visit Obed for more than one day, and then a series of follow-up questions about the length of time they might spend in the park (Figure 11 and Table 7).

On this trip, will you visit Obed Wild and Scenic River for more than one day?



■ Yes: 18%
■ No: 82%

Will you spend one hour or more within Obed Wild and Scenic River today?



■ Yes: 95%
■ No: 5%

Figure 11. Length of time spent within Obed on this trip.

Table 7. Length of time spent within Obed on this trip.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not planning to spend one hour or more] How many minutes do you plan to spend within Obed today?	16	20
[If planning to spend one hour or more] How many hours do you plan to spend within Obed today?	309	4
[If planning to visit more than one day] How many days do you plan to spend within Obed on this trip?	59	2
[If planning to visit more than one day] On how many different days do you expect to enter the park?	59	2

- A majority of respondents (95%) planned to spend one hour or more within Obed on the day they were surveyed. Among these visitors, median length of time spent in the park “today” was four hours.
- Among the 5% of respondents who planned to spend less than an hour within the park on the day they were surveyed, the median length of anticipated visit was 20 minutes.
- Additionally, most respondents (82%) were planning to spend just a single day in Obed on their trip. Among the 18% of respondents who planned to visit for more than one day, the median length of visit was two days.
- Those respondents who spent more than one day in the park were also asked on how many different days they expected to enter the park; the median answer was two days.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate the most recent entrance they used to enter Obed (Figure 12).

Which was the most recent entrance you used to enter Obed Wild and Scenic River?

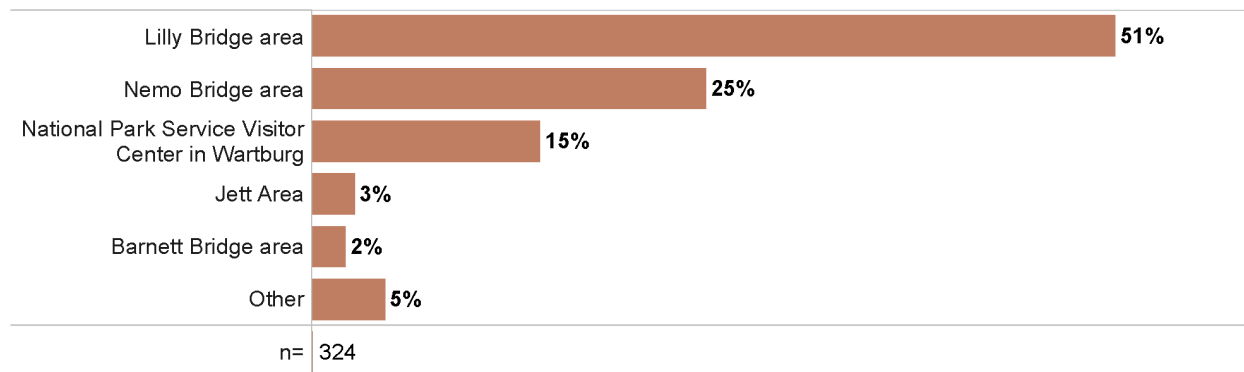


Figure 12. Most recent entrance used to enter Obed.

- Among respondents, the Lilly Bridge area was the most commonly used entrance to Obed (51%).
- The Nemo Bridge area was the second most commonly used entrance (25%), followed by the National Park Service Visitor Center in Wartburg (15%).

- Due to park geography and proximity of intercept sites to entrances, the results for most recent entrance used were impacted by the volume of visitors intercepted at various sites.

Respondents were also presented with a list of locations within Obed and asked to indicate if they had been to, or planned to visit them, that day (Figure 13).

Considering your visit today, will you visit any of the following locations within Obed Wild and Scenic River? Please mark all that apply

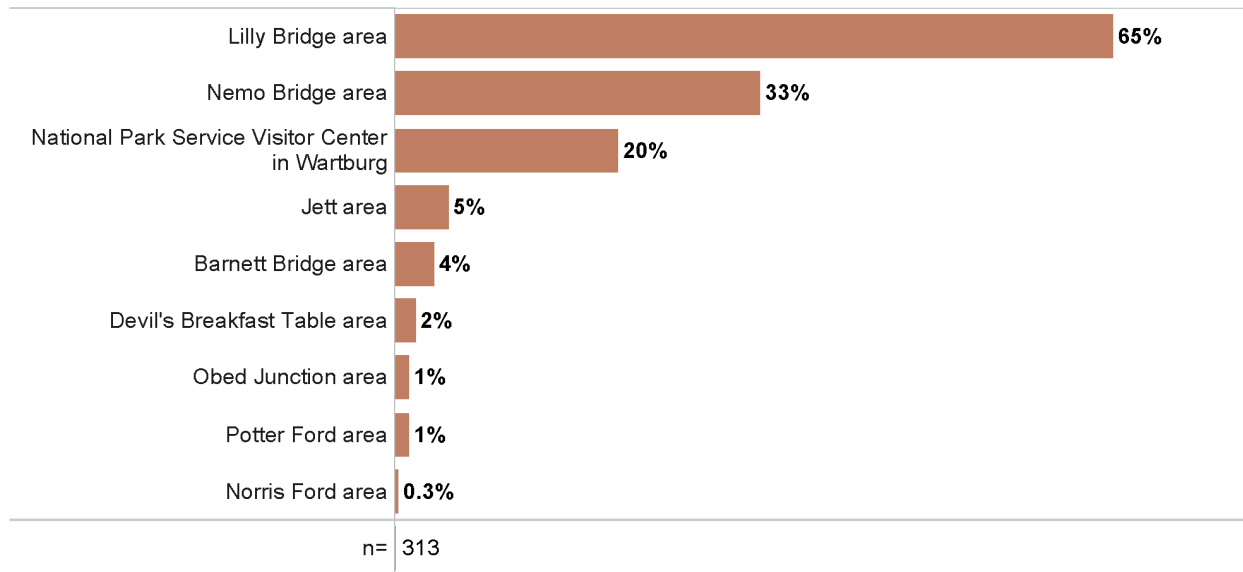


Figure 13. Park locations visited during the most recent trip to Obed.

- The most commonly visited location in Obed was the Lilly Bridge area (65% of respondents had either been there or planned to visit it on their trip), followed by the Nemo Bridge area (33%) and the National Park Service Visitor Center in Wartburg (20%).
- The Norris Ford area was the least-visited location from the list provided, with only .3% of respondents reporting having visited or planning to visit.

Question 22-23: Transportation

Respondents were first asked to indicate all the forms of transportation they personally used to travel from their home to Obed on their trip (Figure 14).

From the list below, select all forms of transportation you personally used to travel from your home to Obed Wild and Scenic River on this trip. Please mark all that apply.

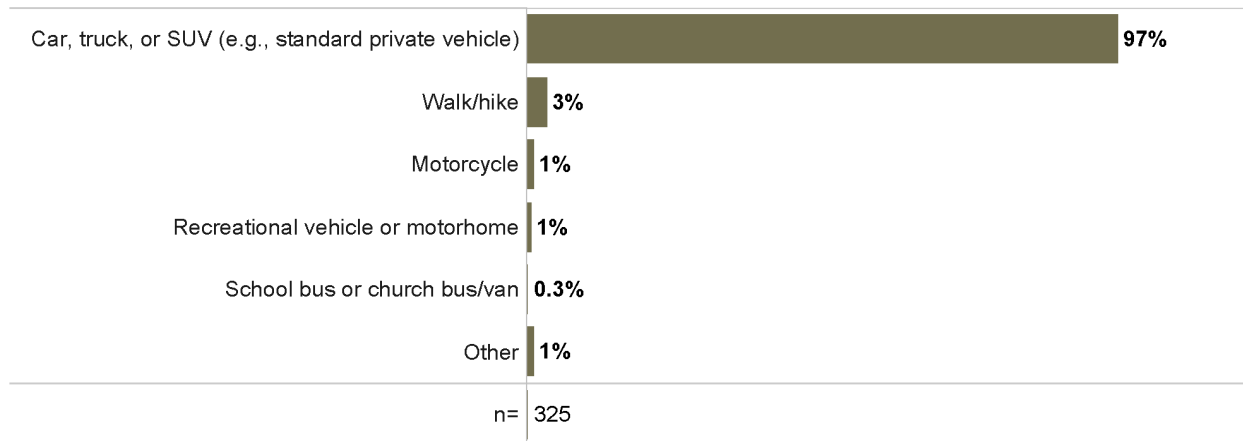


Figure 14. Forms of transportation used to travel from home to Obed on the recent trip.

- Nearly all respondents (97%) used a personal vehicle, such as a car, truck, or SUV, at some point during their trip from home to Obed.
- The second most common mode of travel was walking/hiking (3%), followed by motorcycles (1%), and recreational vehicles or motorhomes (1%).

Respondents were then asked a follow-up question about the single form of transportation they used to enter Obed on the day they were surveyed (Figure 15).

[If used at all during trip] Which form of transportation did you personally use to enter Obed Wild and Scenic River today?

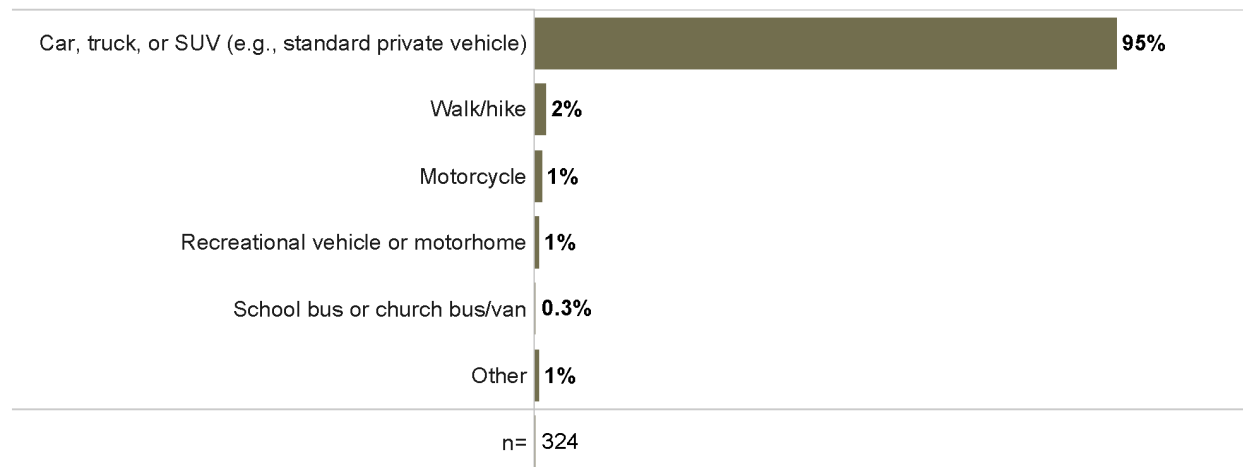


Figure 15. Form of transportation used to enter Obed on the day of the survey.

- The majority of respondents (95%) reported that they used their car, truck, or SUV to enter Obed on the day of the survey.
- This was followed distantly by those who walked/hiked into Obed (2%), those that used a recreational vehicle or motorhome (1%), and those who entered via motorcycle (1%).

If respondents entered the park using a multi-passenger private vehicle (i.e., car, truck or SUV, recreational vehicle or motorhome, or motorcycle), they were asked to indicate how many people were traveling in or on that vehicle (Figure 16).

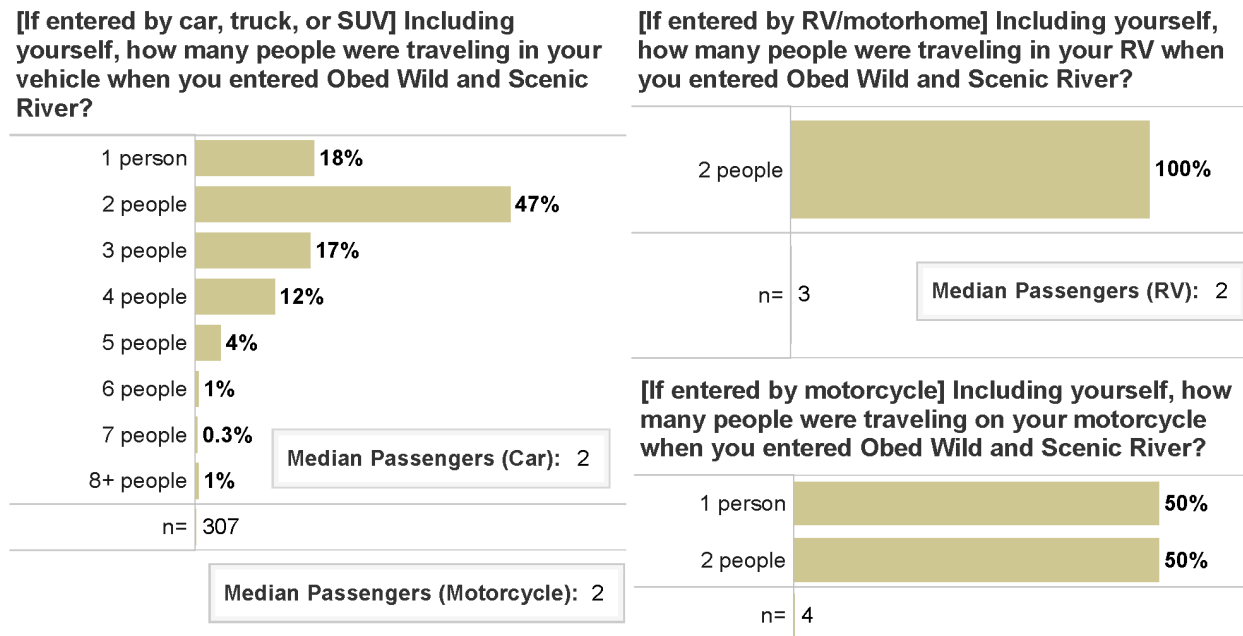


Figure 16. Number of people in or on respondent's vehicle when entering Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 12.

- Nearly half of respondents (47%) traveling by car reported two people. The next common group size was those driving on their own (18%), followed by those with three people (17%).
- All respondents entering Obed by RV/motorhome reported traveling in a group of two people.
- Half of motorcyclists (50%) were traveling on their own, while the other half (50%) with two people on the motorcycle.

Post-trip Survey Results

The following section provides results of the 100 post-trip visitor surveys received by mail-back or online following fieldwork conducted in Obed in summer 2025. Again, caution is recommended in the interpretation of figures with sample size lower than n=30, and categories on some questions may

not sum to 100% due to rounding differences and/or the opportunity to select more than one response option.

Questions 1–2: Information about Obed

First, respondents were asked what sources they used to obtain information about Obed prior to their trip, and whether they had the information they needed on their trip (Figure 17).

Prior to this trip, how did you obtain information about Obed Wild and Scenic River? Please mark all that apply

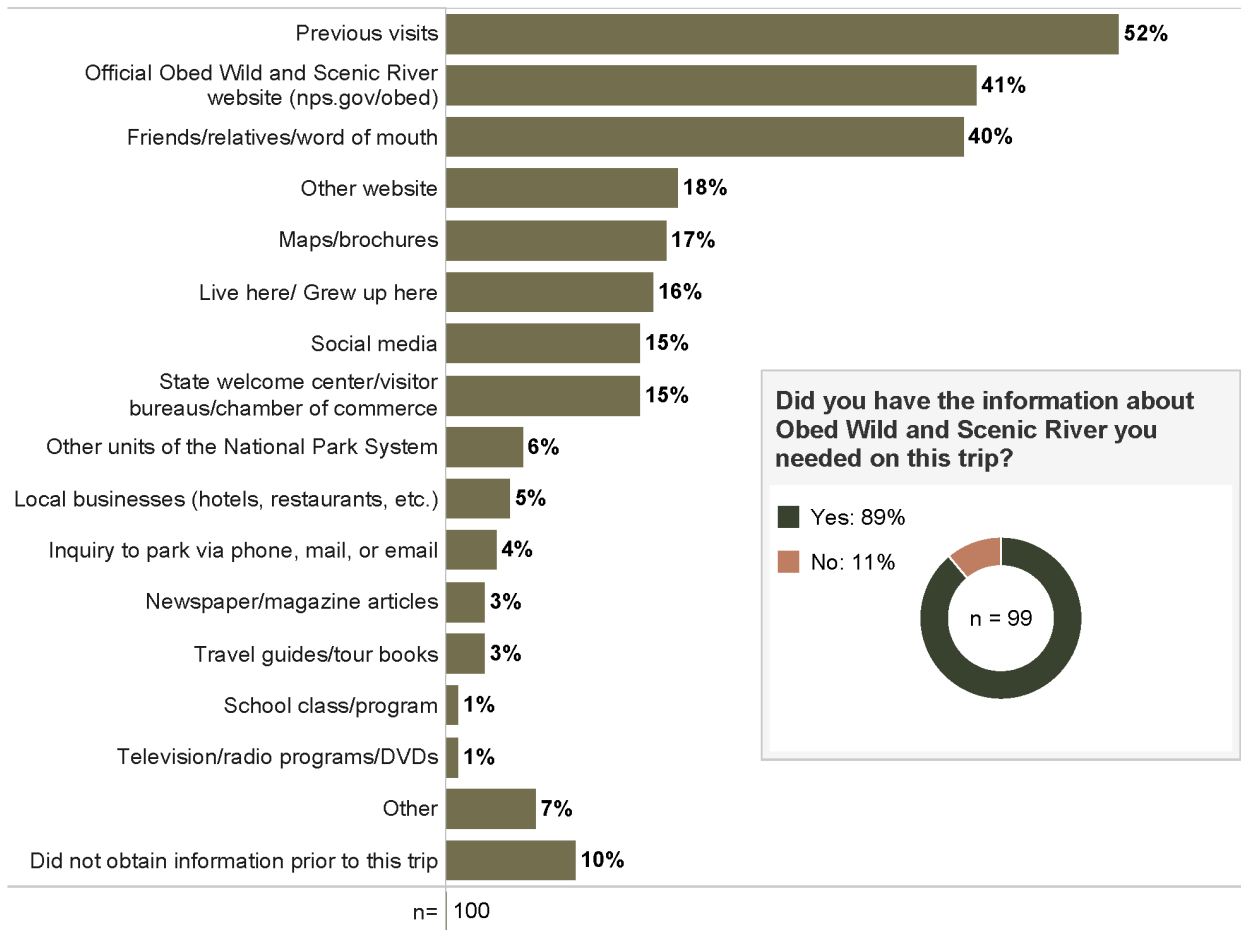


Figure 17. Sources used to obtain information about Obed prior to the trip.

- The most used resource was previous visits made to Obed, with 52% of respondents reportedly referring to previous trips. The second most common source was the official Obed website (nps.gov/obed) (41%), followed by friends/relatives/word of mouth (40%), other websites (18%), and maps/brochures (17%).
- In a follow-up question, 89% of respondents said that they had the information about Obed that they needed on their trip, while 11% indicated that there was information that they needed but did not have.

- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who did not have the information they needed on this trip were asked to elaborate.

Questions 7-9: Trip Characteristics

Respondents were asked if they visited other National Park Service sites on their trip away from home (Figure 18).

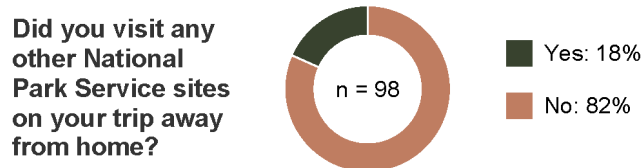
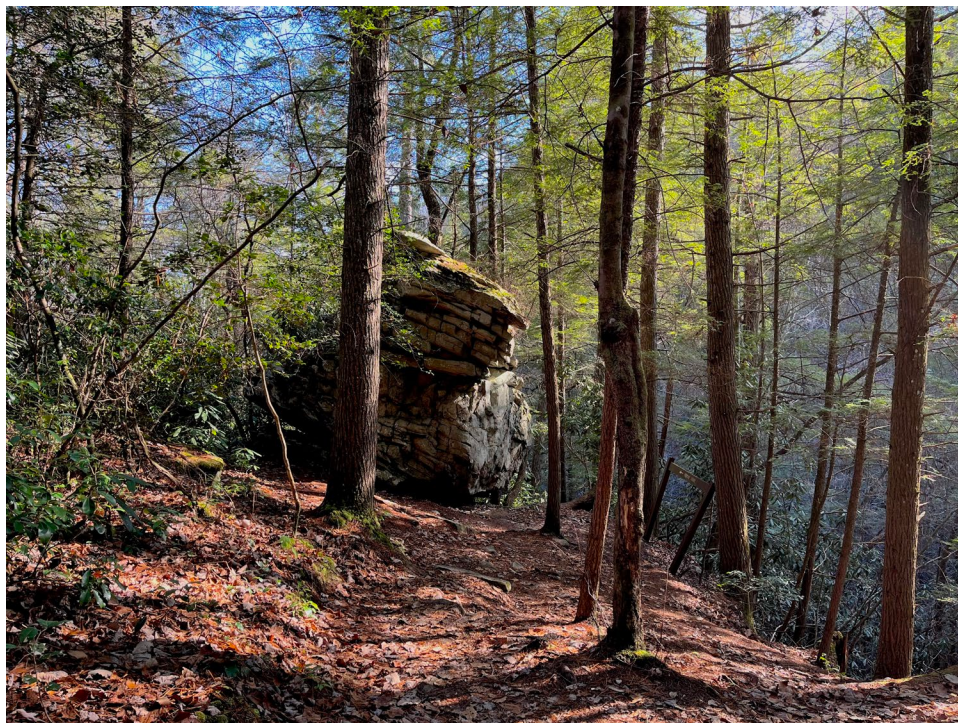


Figure 18. NPS sites visited on trip away from home.

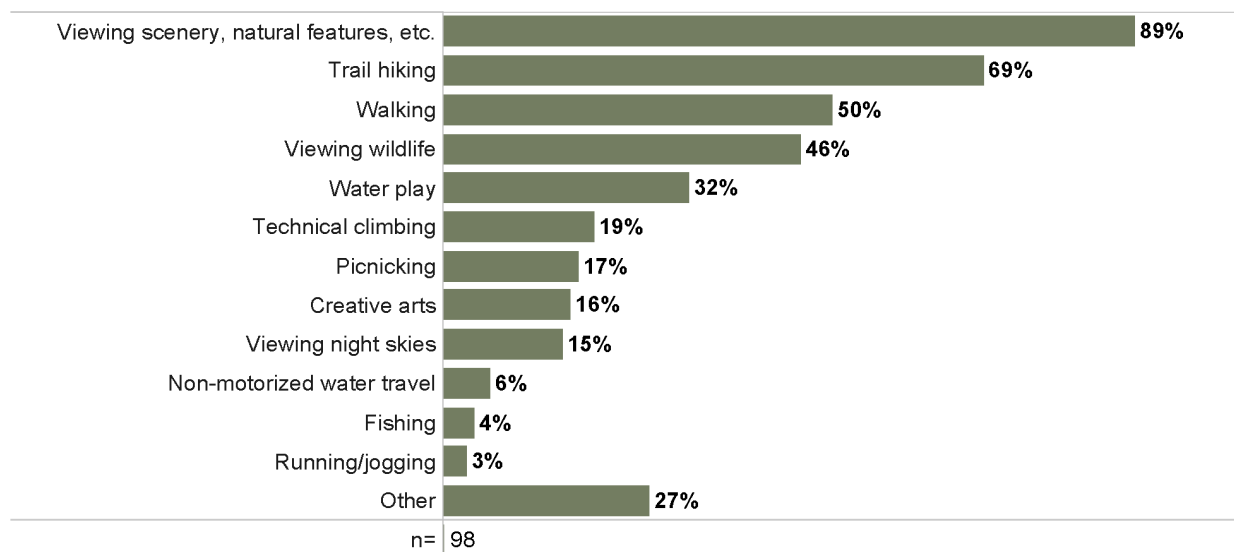
- The majority (82%) of all respondents had not visited other NPS sites on their trip, while 18% identified Obed as one of several NPS sites they visited while away from home.
- In an open-ended follow-up question, those who had visited other NPS sites on their trip were asked to list which one(s).

Survey respondents were then asked to identify all activities that they participated in while visiting Obed, and which of those was their primary activity (Figure 19).



Lily Bluff trails and area
NPS / Victoria Stauffenberg

On this trip, in which of the following activities did you personally participate within Obed Wild and Scenic River? Please mark all that apply



And which was your primary activity within Obed Wild and Scenic River during your visit (on the day you were contacted for this survey)?

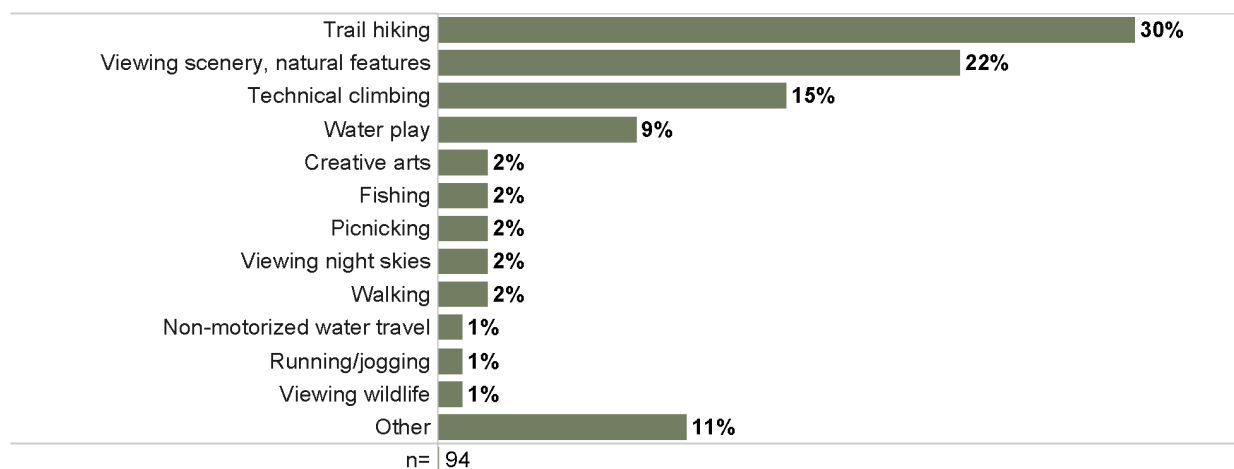


Figure 19. Participation in activities at Obed.

- At least half of respondents reported viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (89%), trail hiking (69%), and walking (50%).
- Non-motorized water travel, fishing, and running/jogging were all uncommon activities (reported by 6% or fewer of respondents).
- Nearly one-third of respondents (30%) reported trail hiking as their primary activity, followed by viewing scenery, natural features, etc. (22%).

Questions 10-11: Reasons to Visit

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of various reasons to visit Obed on their trip and were then asked which of those was the most important reason for them to visit Obed (Figure 20).

How important to you were each of the following reasons or motivations for visiting Obed Wild and Scenic River on this trip?

Rating Category	n=	Percent Responding				
		1 - Not at all important	2 - Slightly important	3 - Moderately important	4 - Very important	5 - Extremely important
To spend time with family/friends	92	5%	3%	7%	28%	57%
To view wildlife or natural scenery	94		5%	6%	38%	50%
To relax	93	4%	3%	13%	31%	48%
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	92	3%	10%	8%	43%	36%
To get physical exercise	96	1%	7%	19%	39%	34%
To visit a National Park Service site	92	15%	22%	20%	20%	24%
To experience solitude	93	11%	8%	20%	38%	24%
To learn more about nature	93	15%	13%	27%	25%	20%
To learn more about American history and culture	93	17%	22%	23%	22%	17%
Other (if specified)	21	10%		5%	5%	81%

And which was the most important reason for you to visit Obed Wild and Scenic River on this trip?

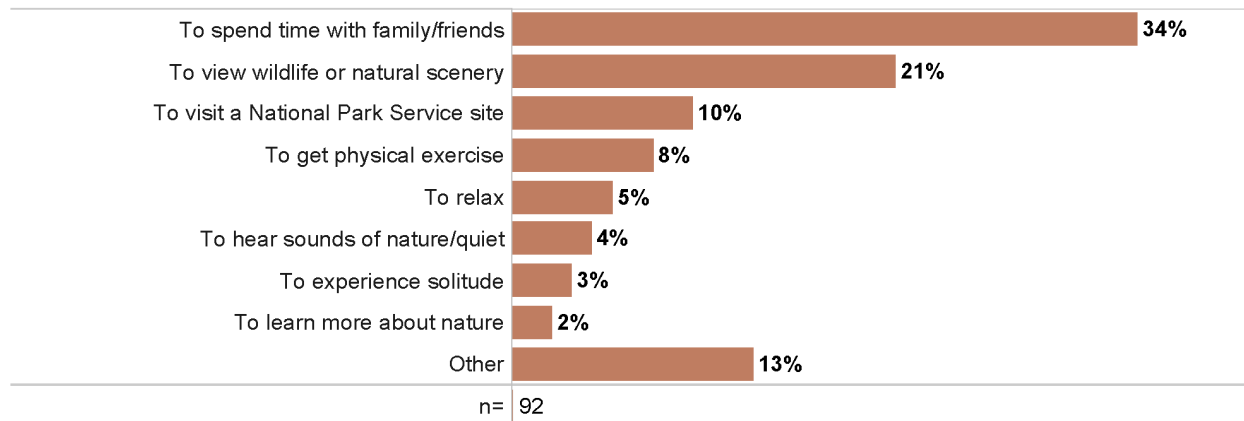


Figure 20. Reasons or motivations to visit Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 13.

- Most respondents chose spending time with family/friends (57%) and viewing wildlife or natural scenery (50%) as extremely important reasons for their trip to Obed.
- Other important reasons rated were to relax and to hear sounds of nature/quiet (48% and 36% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- The least important reasons rated were to learn more about nature and to learn more about American history and culture (only 20% and 17% of respondents, respectively, reported them as extremely important, and 15% and 17% of respondents, respectively, rated them as not at all important).

- The most common response about the most important reason was to spend time with family/friends (34%), followed by viewing wildlife or natural scenery (21%), and visiting a National Park Service site (10%).

Questions 12-13: Programs, Services, and Learning

Respondents were asked to identify all programs and services in which they personally participated in Obed during their trip (Figure 21).

On this trip, in which of the following programs and services did you personally participate within Obed Wild and Scenic River? Please mark all that apply

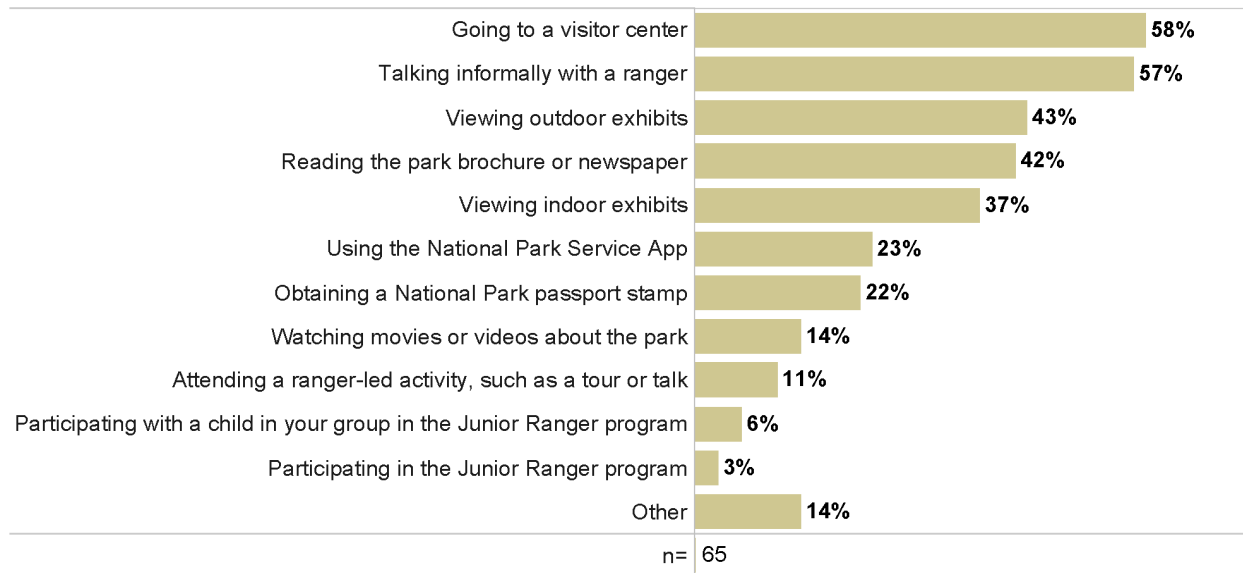


Figure 21. Participation in programs at Obed.

- The two most-used programs or services were going to a Visitor Center and talking informally with a ranger, with over half of respondents (58% and 57%, respectively) participating in each of them.
- Several other programs or services were engaged in by at least one-third of respondents: viewing outdoor exhibits (43%), reading the park brochure or newspaper (42%), and viewing indoor exhibits (37%).

Two follow-up questions asked if respondents learned anything from park staff, programs, and/or exhibits about American history, nature, and/or culture, and what specific subjects they would like to learn about in the future (Figure 22).

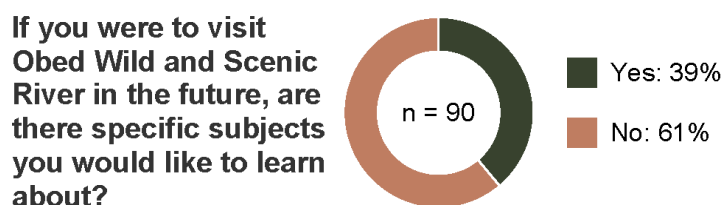


Figure 22. Learning outcomes while visiting Obed.

- Less than half of respondents (39%) reported that if they were to visit Obed in the future, there are specific subjects they would like to learn about.
- Respondents who said yes to this question were asked to elaborate.

Questions 14-15: Use of Devices

Two survey questions were focused on the use of electronic devices, their importance, and the quality of service provided. First, respondents were asked which personal electronic devices they used while in Obed (Figure 23).

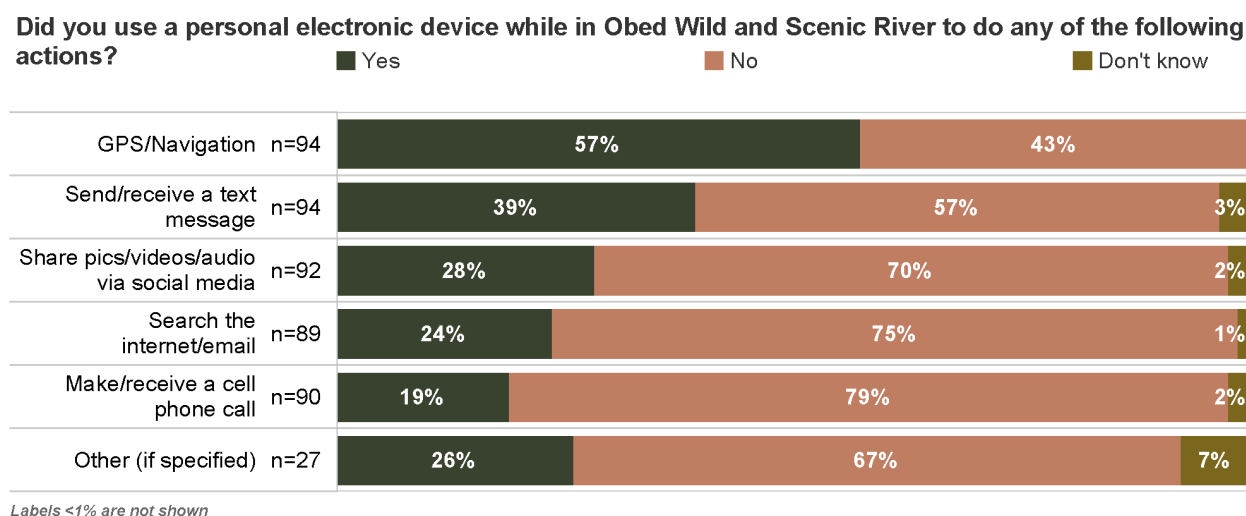
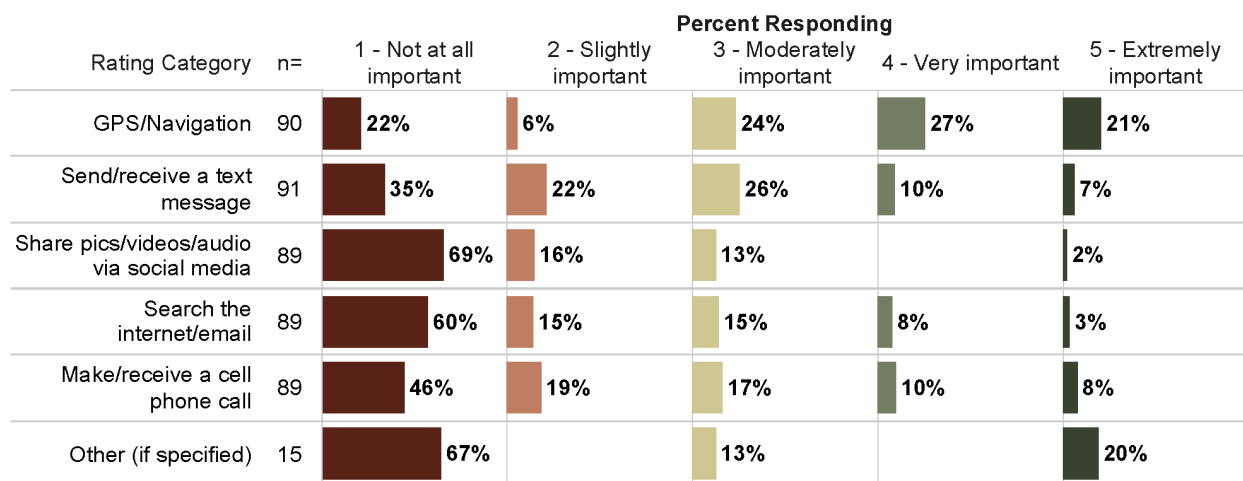


Figure 23. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 14.

- Over half of respondents (57%) reported using GPS/Navigation, and over one-third of respondents (39%) reported sending/receiving a text message.
- Conversely, only 19% of respondents reported making/receiving a cell phone call.

Then, respondents were asked to rate both the importance of each of these electronic device uses (Figure 24), and the quality of their service (Figure 25).

How important to you was it during your visit to Obed Wild and Scenic River to use personal electronic devices to do each of the following?

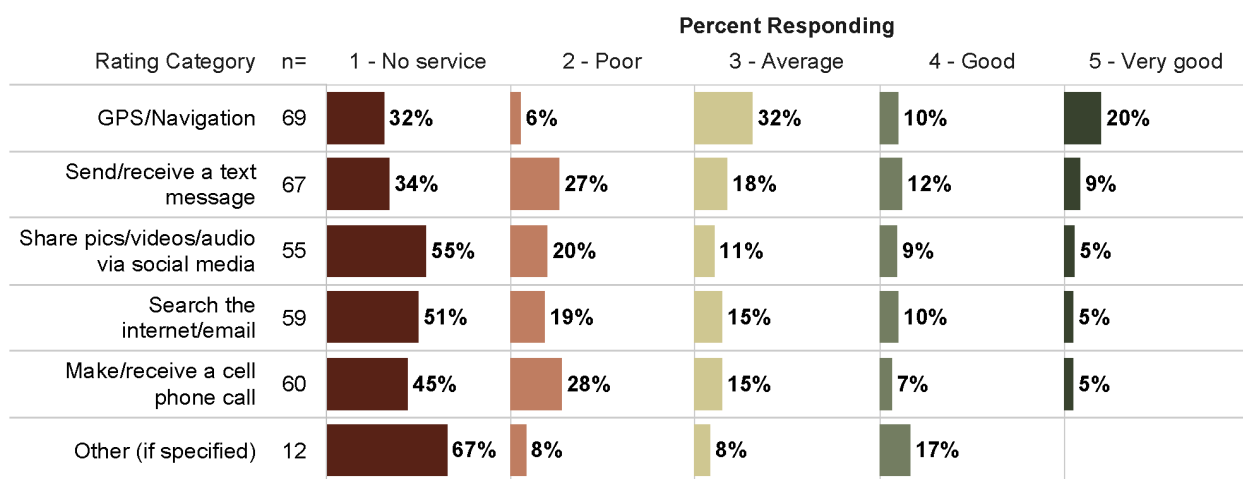


Categories sorted in descending order by percent answering "Yes" to "Did you use a personal electronic device while in the park to do any of the following actions?" (With "Other" anchored at bottom)

Figure 24. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 15.

- The most important device uses were GPS/Navigation and making/receiving a cell phone call (21% and 8% of respondents, respectively, rated them as extremely important).
- Sharing pics/videos/audio via social media was rated as extremely important only by 2% of respondents, and not at all important by 69% of respondents.

How would you rate the quality of service to do each of the following?



Categories sorted in descending order by percent answering "Yes" to "Did you use a personal electronic device while in the park to do any of the following actions?" (With "Other" anchored at bottom)

Figure 25. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Obed. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 16.

- NPS/Navigation was rated as very good or good by 20% and 10% of respondents, respectively. However, 32% of respondents reported that they had no service for this.
- At least one-third of respondents (ranged from 34% to 55%, depending on the service) reported that they also had no service to send/receive a text message, share pics/videos/audio via social media, search the internet/email, or make/receive a cell phone call.
- However, a small percentage of respondents (ranging from 5% to 9%, depending on the service) rated these services as very good.

Question 16: Physical Difficulties

Respondents were asked if anyone in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Obed. If such a condition was identified, respondents were asked to specify the type of difficulty (Figure 26).

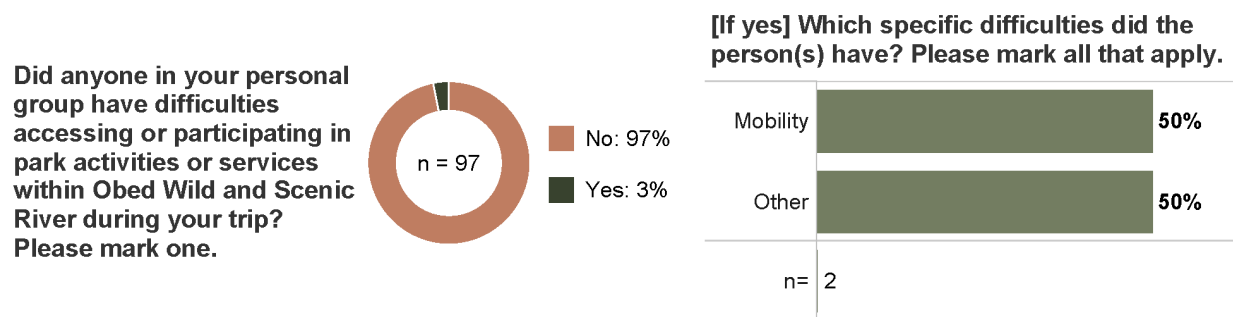


Figure 26. Physical difficulties while visiting Obed.

- The majority of respondents (97%) reported that nobody in their personal group had a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities or services during their visit to Obed.
- Among the 3% of respondents who identified at least one difficulty, 50% reported mobility issues in their group, with 50% reported some other difficulties.

Questions 19-21: Visitor Experience

Respondents were then given several statements about Obed and asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each given statement (Figure 27).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

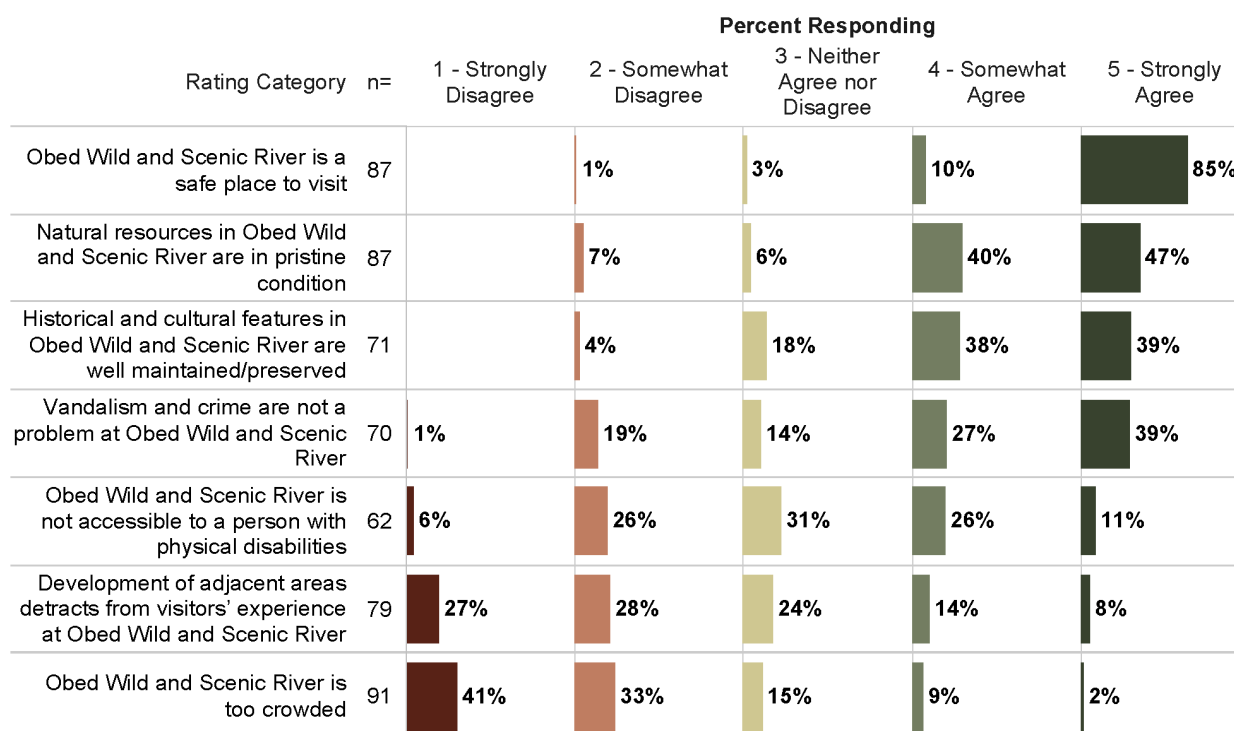


Figure 27. Rating Obed experience. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 17.

- From all the statements listed, “Obe Wild and Scenic River is a safe place to visit” received the most consensus with a combined 95% of respondents saying they either strongly or somewhat agree with it. That was followed by “Natural resources in Obed Wild and Scenic River are in pristine condition” and “Historical and cultural features in Obed Wild and Scenic River are well maintained/preserved” (87% and 77% of respondents, respectively, strongly or somewhat agreed with these statements).
- Conversely, “Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors’ experience at Obed Wild and Scenic River” and “Obed Wild and Scenic River is too crowded” received the least support, with 22% and 11% of respondents, respectively, either somewhat or strongly agreeing with these statements, and at least one-quarter of respondents strongly disagreeing with each of them.

Next, respondents were asked to rate the quality of park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Obed (Figure 28).

How would you rate the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Obed Wild and Scenic River?

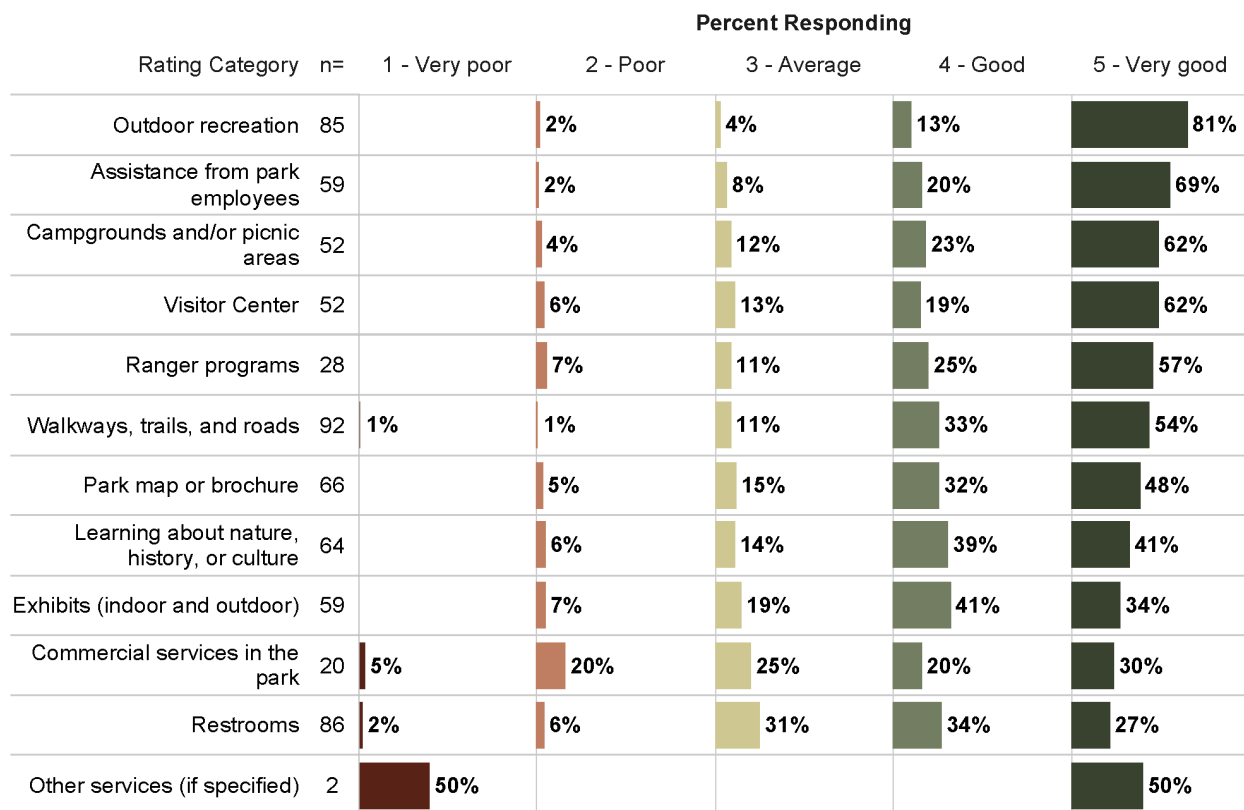


Figure 28. Rating the quality of specific Obed facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 18.

- Over half of respondents (ranging from 81% to 54%) rated the outdoor recreation opportunities, assistance from park employees, campgrounds and/or picnic areas, the Visitor Center, ranger programs, and the walkways, trails, and roads as very good.
- Conversely, fewer than half of respondents rated the park map or brochure, the opportunities to learn about nature, history, or culture, the exhibits (both indoor and outdoor), commercial services in the park, and the restrooms as very good. For these ratings categories, respondents were most likely to say that they were either very good, good, or in some cases, average.

Finally, respondents were asked to rate overall quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreation opportunities (Figure 29).

Overall, how would you rate the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Obed Wild and Scenic River?

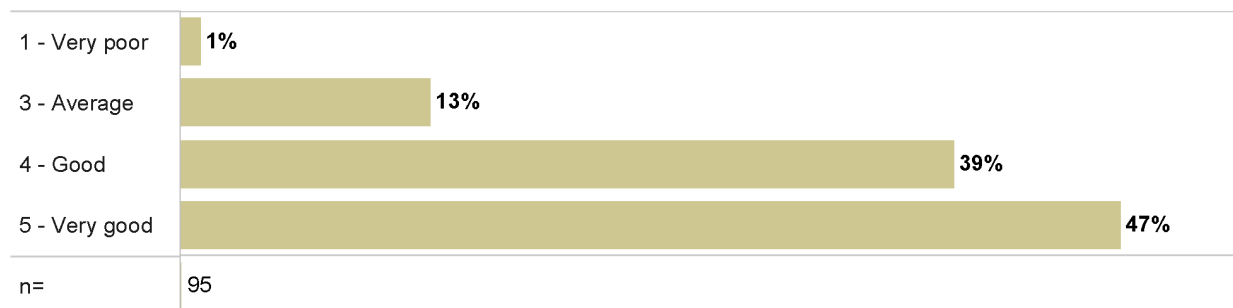


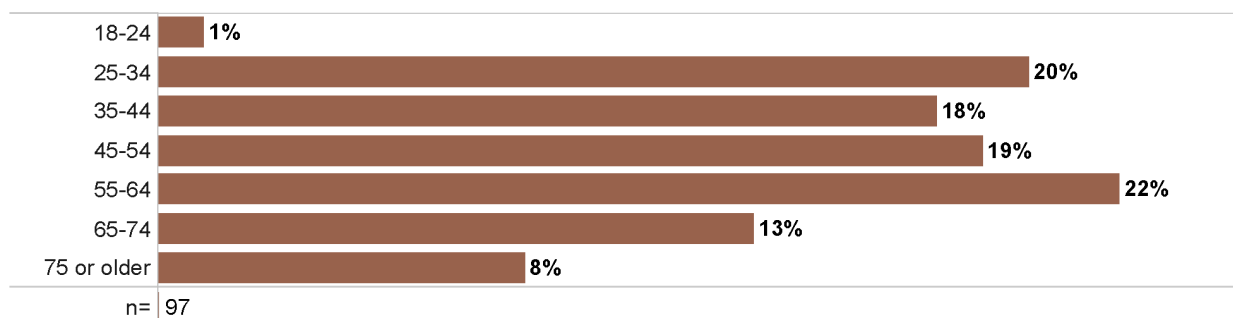
Figure 29. Rating overall quality of Obed facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

- In general, about just under half of respondents (47%) rated the quality of the park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities in Obed as very good, and another 39% rated them as good.
- Roughly one out of seven respondents rated the overall quality as average or below.

Questions 22-28: Background/Demographics

In the final section of the post-trip survey, respondents were asked various questions about their personal and household demographics. Figure 30 depicts descriptive statistics for respondent age and education.

What is your age?



What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

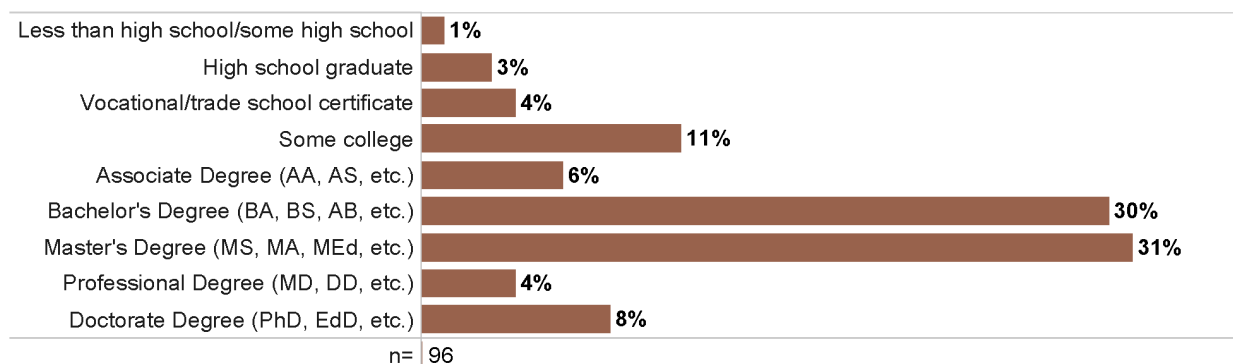


Figure 30. Respondent demographics: age and level of education.

- The most common age categories were 55 to 64 (22%), 25 to 34 (20%), and 45 to 54 (19%). The least represented age group were those 18 to 24 (only 1% of the participants surveyed).
- Most survey respondents reported obtaining higher education, with a combined 79% having some college degree, and a plurality (31%) holding a master's degree.

Respondents were also asked to identify their race(s) and if they were of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (Figure 31).

What is your race and/or ethnicity? Mark all that apply.

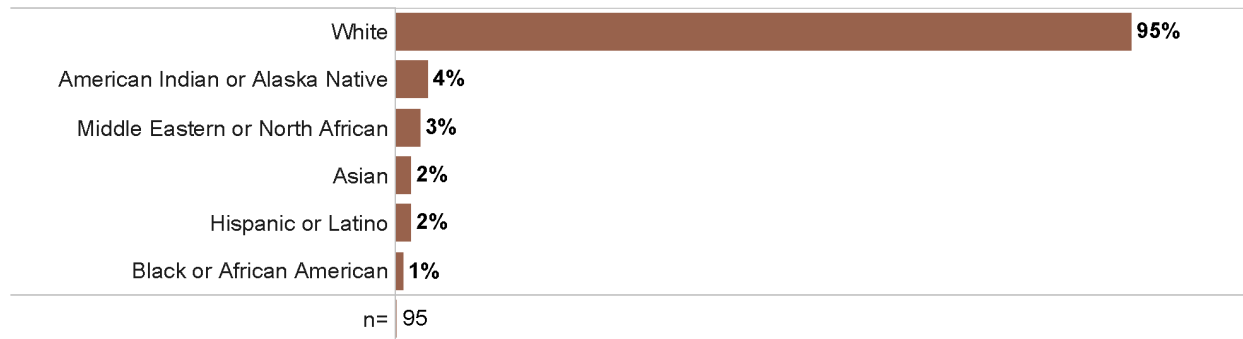


Figure 31. Respondent demographics: race and/or ethnicity.

- The majority of respondents (95%) were White, while 4% were American Indian or Alaska Native.

Finally, at a household level, respondents were asked to report annual income and number of contributors, as well as how many people (adults and children) live in their household (Figure 32).

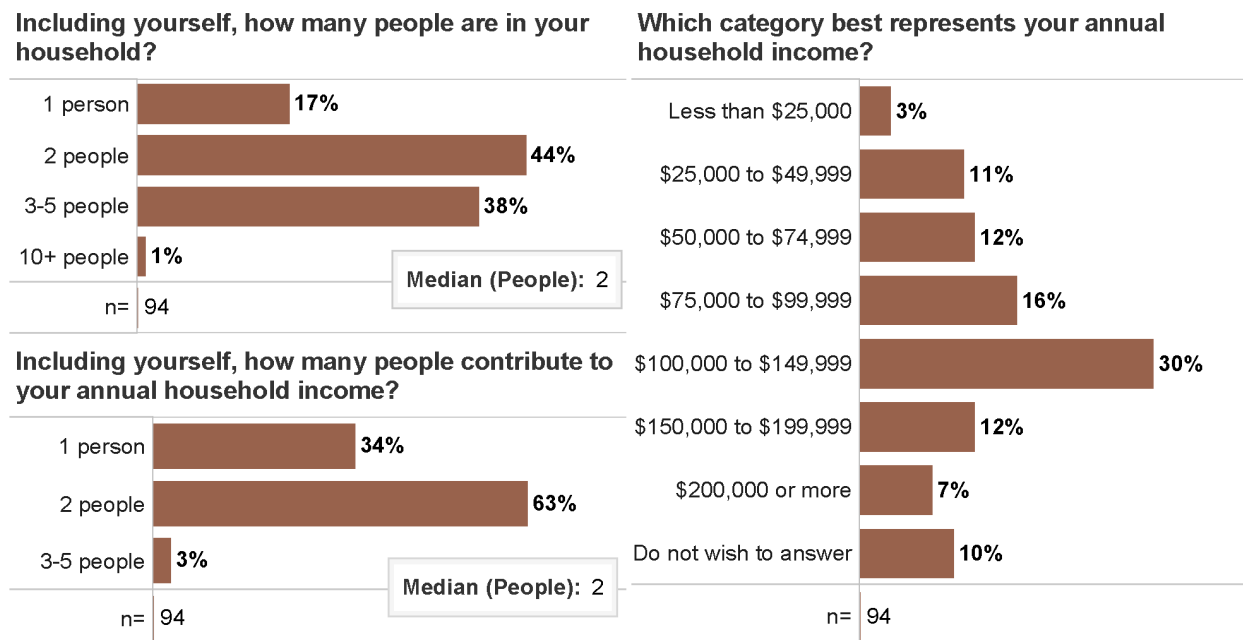


Figure 32. Household demographics: annual household income and household size. Tabular data shown in this figure are presented in Appendix A, Table 19.

- The plurality of respondents (44%) had two people in their household, followed by those with 3-5 people (another 38%).
- The plurality of respondents (30%) reported that their annual household income was between \$100,000 and \$149,999, while 16% reported between \$75,000 and \$99,999.
- Most respondents (63%) came from a dual-income household.

Literature Cited

National Park Service (NPS). 2025. 2025 Socioeconomic Monitoring of Obed Wild and Scenic River: Visitor intercept and post-trip surveys.
<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2317765>

Appendix A: Accessible Tables

Table 8 through Table 19 contain tabular data from figures found in the body of the report.

Table 8. Data from Figure 2. Previous visits to Obed.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Obed over the past 12 months?	219	4
[If not first-time visitor] Including this visit, how many visits have you made to Obed over the past five years?	219	15

Table 9. Data from Figure 3. Visits made to other NPS sites within the past year.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
How many visits have you made to other NPS sites over the past 12 months?	325	3

Table 10. Data from Figure 8. Number of nights spent in the local area around Obed, by accommodation type.

Accommodation Type	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If backcountry camping in Obed] Number of nights	4	2
[If camping in Obed] Number of nights	15	3
[If camping outside of Obed in the local area] Number of nights	41	2
[If lodging outside Obed in local area] Number of nights	24	2
[If staying in unpaid accommodations] Number of nights	11	3

Table 11. Data from Figure 9. Number of adults and children in respondent's personal group, and total group size, while visiting Obed.

Age Category	Sample Size (n)	Median
Adults	325	2
Children	325	0
Total group size	325	2

Table 12. Data from Figure 16. Number of people in respondent's vehicle when entering Obed.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
[If entered by car, truck, or SUV] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your vehicle when you entered Obed?	307	2
[If entered by RV/motorhome] Including yourself, how many people were traveling in your RV when you entered Obed?	3	2
[If entered by motorcycle] Including yourself, how many people were traveling on your motorcycle when you entered Obed?	4	2

Table 13. Data from Figure 20. Reasons or motivations to visit Obed.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
To visit a National Park Service site	92
To experience solitude	93
To hear the sounds of nature/quiet	92
To learn more about nature	93
To learn more about American history and culture	93
To spend time with family/friends	92
To get physical exercise	96
To view wildlife or natural scenery	94
To relax	93
Other (if specified)	21

Table 14. Data from Figure 23. Use of personal electronic devices while visiting Obed.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	90
Send/receive a text message	94
Search the internet/email	89
GPS/Navigation	94
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	92
Other (if specified)	27

Table 15. Data from Figure 24. The importance of the use of personal electronic devices while visiting Obed.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	89
Send/receive a text message	91
Search the internet/email	89
GPS/Navigation	90
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	89
Other (if specified)	15

Table 16. Data from Figure 25. Quality of service for personal electronic devices while visiting Obed.

Device Use	Sample Size (n)
Make/receive a cell phone call	60
Send/receive a text message	67
Search the internet/email	59
GPS/Navigation	69
Share pics/videos/audio via social media	55
Other (if specified)	12

Table 17. Data from Figure 27. Rating Obed experience.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Obed is a safe place to visit	87
Obed is too crowded	91
Natural resources in Obed are in pristine condition	87
Vandalism and crime are not a problem at Obed	70
Obed is not accessible to a person with physical disabilities	62
Historical and cultural features in Obed are well maintained/preserved	71
Development of adjacent areas detracts from visitors' experience at Obed	79

Table 18. Data from Figure 28. Rating the quality of Obed facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities.

Rating Category	Sample Size (n)
Visitor Center	52
Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)	59
Restrooms	86
Walkways, trails, and roads	92
Campgrounds and/or picnic areas	52
Assistance from park employees	59
Park map or brochure	66
Ranger programs	28
Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rental, etc.)	20
Other services (if specified)	2
Learning about nature, history, or culture	64
Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)	85

Table 19. Data from Figure 32. Household demographics: annual household income and household size.

Question	Sample Size (n)	Median
Including yourself, how many people are in your household?	94	2
Including yourself, how many people contribute to your annual household income?	94	2