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Northwest Montana Fall Visitors - 2004

Norma P. Nickerson
The University of Montana- Missoula

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Northwest Montana Fall Visitors – Descriptive Data Fall 2004

By Norma Nickerson and Graduate students:

John Adams, Hartwell Carson, Paul Clark, Meri Gracia, Kara Grau,
Megan McBride, Chrissy Oschell, Randy Tanner , Karin Valentine

This descriptive data presentation is based on a survey conducted by graduate students in Dr. Norma Nickerson's "Consumer Behavior in Travel and Tourism" graduate course during the fall semester 2004.

Visitors to northwest Montana were intercepted during three days (Friday-Sunday) in September 2004 in three locations. In West Glacier, visitors walking in the area of the souvenir shops, restaurant, and the gas station were approached. In Whitefish, visitors were intercepted as they walked the boardwalks in the downtown area or were diners waiting in line at a breakfast restaurant. Finally, at Big Mountain Ski and Summer resort, visitors who rode the tram to the top of the mountain were intercepted at the top.

Visitors were asked if they would complete a one-page, front and back questionnaire about their visit to Northwest Montana. Northwest Montana was defined as including the east side of Glacier National Park all the way west to the Idaho border and about 60 miles south of the park to Polson, Montana. This area was chosen for the study as it represents a national park, gateway communities, and natural resource areas important for the tourism businesses.

The questionnaire included three sections. The first section measured the relative value of various attributes that were important to their northwest Montana visit. These values, adapted from the study by Borrie, Freimund, and Davenport (2002), were written to examine the perceived values of Yellowstone National Park. Twelve of the original 24 items were included in this questionnaire. Since, the study area boundaries were not limited to just the national park, additional items were needed to represent other attributes a visitor might value in the area. Nineteen additional values were added. The value questions included environmental values (taken from the Yellowstone study), personal values such as a need to escape or renewal, societal values such as area growth and use, and tourism values such as a place for shopping, dining, and entertainment. The value items were on a 6-point scale anchored by 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The items were prefaced with the statement, "It is important to me that northwest Montana is:"

The second section of the questionnaire was trip information such as the purpose of their trip, where they stayed and activities. Finally, demographics were included as the third section.

Visitors were intercepted on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 am until 5:00pm at the three locations in mid-September. Eight surveyors were dispersed to the locations for the data collection. The survey was completed on site and returned to the survey personnel. The questionnaire took approximately four minutes to complete. There were 385 completed and useable surveys returned. The data collection weekend was chilly and rainy and therefore the results in the activity segment most likely do not represent typical activities for that time in September.

In summary, visitors represented 44 states and eight foreign countries. Their main purpose for visiting was vacation and one-half had been to the area in the past ten years. Visitors highly value northwest Montana for its scenic beauty, naturalness and clean air and water and are most likely to be on the trip for the environment and scenic beauty. Scenic driving and day hiking were the most popular activities on this trip and over half of the respondents spent at least one night in Glacier National Park. The following pages display the percent response found for each question.

	It is important to me that northwest Montana is: Strongly Disagree ←————→ Strongly Agree						<u>Mean</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
A place of scenic beauty	3%	1%	0%	2%	13%	80%	5.58
A natural place	4%	1%	1%	4%	16%	75%	5.52
An area with clean lakes and streams	3%	1%	1%	5%	17%	74%	5.51
A place with natural areas	3%	1%	1%	5%	23%	67%	5.45
An area with clean air/visibility	3%	1%	2%	5%	17%	71%	5.44
A place that protects fish and wildlife habitat	2%	3%	5%	7%	18%	66%	5.34
A place for all living things to exist	3%	1%	5%	8%	21%	62%	5.29
A place to see wildlife	3%	3%	4%	6%	20%	64%	5.28
A place for outdoor recreation	3%	1%	5%	12%	25%	54%	5.16
A place to relax	3%	2%	4%	12%	27%	52%	5.13
An area with friendly local people	3%	2%	6%	10%	28%	50%	5.08
An area with ample access to public land	2%	2%	6%	16%	27%	47%	5.03
A wildlife sanctuary	2%	7%	20%	19%	21%	30%	4.95
A place to learn about nature	3%	3%	10%	14%	27%	44%	4.90
A place to be inspired	3%	4%	8%	16%	24%	45%	4.89
A historical resource	1%	4%	10%	18%	25%	43%	4.89
A place for solitude	3%	4%	8%	18%	28%	39%	4.81
A place to escape from my everyday life	3%	5%	10%	18%	25%	39%	4.75
An area providing a small town atmosphere	4%	4%	12%	17%	27%	37%	4.68
A place to gather with my family/friends	5%	7%	11%	18%	26%	34%	4.54
A place to renew my sense of personal well being	4%	7%	13%	20%	22%	34%	4.52
An area with working farms and ranches	5%	5%	15%	19%	23%	33%	4.48
A place to develop my outdoor skills and abilities	2%	7%	20%	19%	21%	30%	4.40
A place to be challenged	3%	7%	16%	23%	23%	29%	4.40
A sacred/spiritual place	5%	8%	18%	21%	19%	29%	4.30
A social place	4%	9%	24%	20%	19%	24%	4.12
A place with a variety of restaurants	6%	9%	23%	23%	22%	19%	4.03
A place with planned urban growth	15%	14%	17%	14%	17%	24%	3.77
A place for shopping	15%	16%	23%	23%	13%	10%	3.35
A place for entertainment	16%	20%	21%	22%	12%	9%	3.21
A place for nightlife	28%	24%	22%	13%	8%	6%	2.66
On this trip, I am visiting northwest Montana for:							
The natural environment/scenic beauty	6%	2%	4%	7%	16%	65%	5.21
The recreation opportunities	6%	8%	14%	18%	22%	32%	4.38
The opportunity for solitude	10%	12%	16%	19%	19%	25%	4.00
The social atmosphere	18%	19%	19%	18%	14%	13%	3.29

What is the purpose of this trip to northwest Montana?

84%	Vacation/recreation/pleasure	5%	Other
26%	Visit friends/relatives	3%	Just passing through
8%	Business/convention/meeting	3%	Shopping

What was your main purpose for visiting northwest Montana?

64%	Vacation/recreation/pleasure	9%	Business/convention/meeting
18%	Visit friends/relatives	2%	Just passing through
16%	Other	2%	Shopping

Percent who had visited northwest Montana in the past 10 years: 50%

Percent who flew on a commercial air carrier for any portion of their trip? 45%

Total nights away from home on this visit: 9.4 nights

Total nights spent in northwest Montana on this visit: 5.4 nights

Percent who stayed at least one night in each of the following areas on this trip:

56%	Glacier National Park	11%	Bigfork
47%	Whitefish	7%	Polson
33%	Kalispell	7%	Hungry Horse
27%	West Glacier	3%	Libby
17%	Columbia Falls	3%	Eureka

Activities engaged in while visiting northwest Montana during any visit:

80%	Scenic driving	10%	Nightlife activities
60%	Day hiking	9%	Attending festivals/events
58%	Wildlife watching	7%	Canoe/kayak
43%	Visiting historic sites	7%	Rafting
39%	Recreational shopping	7%	Mountain biking
31%	Visiting museums	6%	Motor boating
27%	Picnicking	6%	Snow skiing/boarding
24%	Visiting art galleries	4%	Gambling
17%	Camping (developed areas)	3%	XC skiing
16%	Fishing	2%	Snowmobiling
13%	Camping (primitive areas)	2%	Hunting
11%	Backpacking	2%	Off highway riding/ATV
11%	Golfing		

Primary activity participated in on this trip to northwest Montana:

44%	Scenic driving	2%	Motor boating
18%	Day hiking	2%	Mountain biking
9%	Wildlife watching	2%	Golfing
5%	Backpacking	2%	Recreational shopping
4%	Fishing	2%	Nightlife activities
3%	Attending festival/special event		

Visitor Characteristics

Average age: 50.72 years

Male-female ratio: 53:47

Highest level of education completed:

38%	College degree	14%	High school degree
22%	Graduate degree	5%	Technical college
20%	Some college	1%	Less than high school degree

Annual household income:

7%	Less than \$20,000	14%	\$60K-\$79,999	19%	\$120,000 +
14%	\$20K-\$39,999	13%	\$80K-\$99,999		
23%	\$40K-\$59,999	10%	\$100K-\$119,999		

Where respondents were from:

11% CA
9% each WA, MT
6% Alberta
5% MN
4% each FL, IL
3% each OR, WI, OH, NC, MI, CO

Other states represented:

AK, AL, AR, AZ, CT, DC, GA, HA, IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MO, MS, ND, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, UT, VA, WY **States not represented:** DE, LA, NE, SD, VT, WV

Other countries represented:

Canada: Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario
Australia
Britain
Germany
Ireland
Italy
Netherlands
New Zealand