

## Conclusion

NFS lands support nearly 205 million recreation visits each year. These recreation visitors spend over 7.5 billion dollars in communities near the NFS land. In addition, there are about 175 million occasions of people viewing the forest landscape from travel corridors within the forests. Recreation on NFS lands provides a significant contribution to the physical and mental health and well-being of the American public, as well as significant economic contribution to many communities located near NFS lands. Balancing the variety of recreation demands is an important and challenging task for forest managers. The comprehensive and reliable data provided through the NVUM program helps managers to better understand the customers they serve, to identify the national forest recreation market niche, and to target limited resources where they will best serve both forest visitors and the American public as a whole.

NVUM results have challenged some common perceptions about recreation visitation patterns. On many NFS lands the bulk of the recreation budget is used to maintain overnight and developed facilities, yet nationally only 8 percent of visits include spending the night on NFS lands in developed campgrounds. Only about one-third of national forest site visits occur on developed day or overnight facilities, and nearly half of these are visits to ski areas. The majority of visitation is actually day use. Day users tend to come to the same forest many times each year and stay for short periods of time. Sixty-two percent of all national forest site visits occur in undeveloped areas of the forest and grasslands (4 percent in designated Wilderness and 58 percent in undeveloped non-Wilderness areas). Undeveloped, unconfined (unmanaged) recreation is one of the Chief's identified threats. Monitoring and managing the effects of recreation visitors in these undeveloped areas, where a large number of people come for short duration visits, is time consuming and labor intensive for the agency because visitors are not concentrated in a few specific areas.

This report has summarized the first 'round' of visitor monitoring. The second 'round' of monitoring began in October 2004. As re-sampling on each unit occurs, trends in recreation use and visitor characteristics will be estimated and reported. This information will help managers match recreation facilities and services to the changing demographics and needs of their customers.

For more information:

Separate reports for each national forest and grassland are available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum>. The full NVUM dataset is scheduled to be released in the fall of 2005, through the USDA Forest Service's Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) Human Dimensions module.