

*Visitor Expectations, Satisfaction & Knowledge of
Nature Tourism Opportunities in
Washington County, Maine*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Washington County, Maine is a region of vast opportunity and little visitation compared to other regions of the Maine coast. Few recent county-specific research studies exist to guide the decisions of local business owners, natural resource managers, and local organizations working on tourism development. This project, funded by the Center for Tourism Research & Outreach (cenTRO) was designed to support current efforts for economic development in Washington County by providing local businesses, economic and tourism development councils, and land managers with information regarding travel patterns, the consistency between visitor expectations and their satisfaction, and by highlighting tourism promotion needs in the region.

During the summer season of 2009, visitors were surveyed by three University of Maine at Machias students at four locations within the county (Roque Bluffs State Park, Cobscook Bay State Park, Quoddy Head State Park, and Grand Lake Stream). The survey was designed to elicit information from participants regarding their travel patterns and experiences, the relative importance of amenities and features in their decisions to visit, their satisfaction with different amenities and features, and their familiarity with existing nature tourism opportunities in the county. Information was collected from visitors using two survey instruments: a short on-site survey card and a more extensive mail/email back questionnaire. One-hundred seventy-one visitors responded to the on-site survey, 90 participants provided usable contact information for the follow-up survey, and 55 completed and returned the questionnaires, for a 61.1% response rate.

Visit and Visitor Characteristics

- Group sizes ranged from 1-23, however, most groups consisted of two people, representing 42% of all survey participants. Thirty-nine percent of groups included at least one youth under the age of 16. Most of the visitor groups were made up of family (76%).
- Length of stay ranged from a few hours to over 31 days. Forty-six percent of the respondents stayed for 3-6 days and an additional 18% stayed for 7-14 days. Participants who stayed overnight chose house/cabin rentals (28%), friends' houses (21%), and campgrounds (17%) for their accommodations. Relatively few participants (8.5%) stayed in hotels or motels.
- The majority of respondents (64%) had previously visited Washington County. Many of the participants had extensive experience in the area as 22% had visited between 6-10 times, and another 34% had visited more than 10 times. The most visited natural attractions or parks were Quoddy Head State Park (21%) and Cobscook Bay State Park (17%).
- One third of the study participants were between the ages of 50-59. Another quarter were 40-49, twenty-seven percent were above age 60, and 15% were under 40. The majority (64%) of study participants were female, and half had attained a graduate degree.
- The residences of the 50 participants who provided their zip codes represented 21 states and one province. The state most represented was Connecticut, followed by Maine, then New York and New Jersey.

Reasons for Visiting

- Nearly half (47%) of the study participants were return visitors who came to Washington County as their primary destination, and 18% came for the first time to the county as their primary destination. Most participants reported that they were in Washington County primarily for vacation (67%), or to visit friends and relatives (24%).
- Participants indicated that the scenic beauty (24%), exploring places proximate to Washington County (18%), the ocean/coast (18%), traveling with family & friends (16%), coastal state parks (15%), previous visits (15%), and the un-crowded nature of the county (15%) were the things that most influenced their decisions to visit.
- When asked to rate a given list of 21 reasons for visiting Washington County, ninety-four percent of participants rated appreciating the scenery as either “4” or “5, very important,” eighty-four percent rated exploring the natural environment highly, and 70-80% rated viewing wildlife, experiencing solitude, experiencing remoteness, walking or hiking, and taking a scenic drive off the beaten path highly. In contrast, specific activities such as swimming, bicycling/mountain biking, canoeing/kayaking, fishing, digging for clams, golfing, and four-wheeling were rated much lower.

Knowledge and Satisfaction with Amenities and Features

- The most common sources of information used by participants to plan their visits to Washington County were the internet (used by 65%), family & friends (used by 36%), Maine maps/atlasses/GPS (used by 22%), and travel books (used by 13%). Once here, most participants learned about opportunities through family & friends (24%), by asking local people (20%), by reading brochures found within the county (18%), by exploring for themselves (15%), and from local newspapers (15%).
- Quoddy Head State Park, Roque Bluffs State Park, and Reversing Falls were the attractions that participants were the most familiar with, at 86%, 60%, and 52% familiarity, respectively. Visitors rated their experiences at these attractions relatively highly with mean experience ratings of 4.54, 4.53, and 3.75, respectively out of 5.0. Other attractions, such as the Western Head Preserve (in Cutler), were little known (15% were familiar) yet received very high mean experience ratings (4.80 out of 5.0).
- The majority of participants were satisfied with directional signs (81% were satisfied), availability & quality of information (55 & 59% were satisfied, respectively), and customer service (53% were satisfied). Respondents were neutral or satisfied about the quality of dining (35% neutral, 39% satisfied) and the variety of restaurants (42% neutral, 29% satisfied). They were least satisfied with cell phone reception (39% were unsatisfied) and more spread in their evaluations of Internet access.
- The vast majority (92%) of participants rated their nature tourism experiences in Washington County as very good or excellent. The most common factors that influenced their experiences were the beautiful scenery (stated by 33%), the friendly people (stated by 22%), the hiking trails (stated by 13%), the good weather (stated by 13%), and the quietness (stated by 13%).
- Although relatively few participants had specific suggestions for how to make Washington County a more attractive place to visit, some suggested better cell coverage & internet access, better roads, more/better access to information, more/better restaurants,

more places to stay, more entertainment opportunities, and better marketing of attractions.

Conclusions

This study provides encouraging findings for the tourism community in Washington County. Visitors were highly satisfied with their experiences in the county. A large proportion of the study participants (64%) were return visitors, indicating they enjoyed vacationing in the county enough to choose to return multiple times (59% have visited more than five times and 71% for over five years). Even considering our location (remote yet part of a passage through to the Canadian Maritimes), Washington County was the primary destination for three quarters of the returning visitors. Also, half of the 36% of the study participants who were new visitors selected Washington County as the primary destination for their vacation, which indicates that new people are exploring the county. The vacationers who choose to travel to Washington County are attracted to the landscape and view it as an accessible destination. A series of reflections and recommendations based on the study results are included in the full report.

INTRODUCTION

Washington County is home to a wealth of nature-tourism attractions, including state parks, wildlife refuges, nature preserves, and private conservation lands. However, a previous study indicated the county's tourism economy consists largely of "pass through" visitors and receives only 1.5% of the overnight visits in Maine (VRC, 2004). It is a county of vast opportunity and little visitation, yet few recent county-specific research studies exist to guide the decisions of local business owners, natural resource managers, and local organizations working on tourism development.

This project was designed to support current efforts for economic development in Washington County by providing local businesses, economic and tourism development councils, and land managers with information regarding travel patterns, the consistency between visitor expectations and their satisfaction, and by highlighting tourism promotion needs in the region. This report will serve to identify specific amenities and features sought by visitors that are consistent with the plan for sustainable tourism development outlined by the Vacationland Resources Committee (VRC). As such, the research was guided by the following objectives:

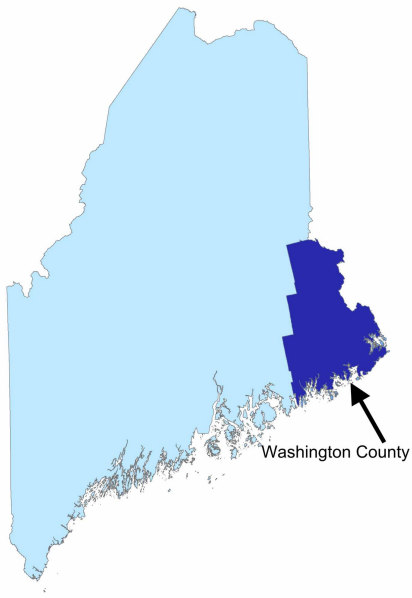
- Examine visitor characteristics, travel patterns, and experiences at three key destinations within Washington County.
- Assess the relative importance of amenities and features in drawing visitors to Washington County.
- Measure visitor satisfaction with different amenities and features, and their travel experiences in Washington County.
- Explore visitor familiarity with the existing opportunities in Washington County, and determine how they learned about them.
- Disseminate research findings to regional stakeholders including interested landowners, business owners, land managers, and economic and tourism development organizations.

SURVEY SITE

Coastal Washington County (Figure 1) is home to 44 towns and 32,000 people as well as 1.47 million acres of forested land and 133,000 acres of lakes and ponds (Mainerec, 2010). The opportunities for experiencing solitude and remoteness are endless in the county. Washington County's landscape is perfect for sea kayaking, sailing, boating, hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing among many other nature tourism activities. Also, the local festivals and events offer unique opportunities for those seeking cultural tourism or products made by local artisans.

Located in the Easternmost corner of the state of Maine, Washington County is within a day's drive from several urban areas (5.5hrs from Boston, 9hrs from New York, 4hrs from Portland, 1.5hrs from Saint John, NB). Washington County is a close neighbor to the highly popular (more than 2 million recreation visits per year) Acadia National Park (ANP, 2007), and lies along the major border crossing to the Canadian Maritimes. The challenge is to further develop Washington County's nature tourism opportunities in a way that is consistent with the local culture and land management strategies.

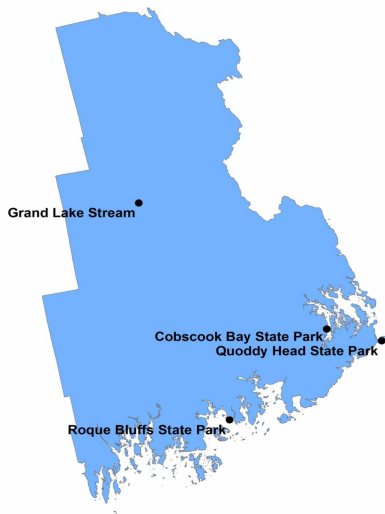
Figure 1. Location of Washington County in the State of Maine.



SURVEY METHODS

The Washington County Nature Tourism Survey, 2009, encompassed data collected from visitors by use of two instruments: a brief on-site visitor interview and a more detailed mail-back or Internet questionnaire. Three undergraduate students were hired to greet study participants in person, to describe the purpose of the study and to ask the visitors to participate. The student interviewers completed a three-day training program and the principal investigator observed and helped them for the first three days of interviews. Contacts were made at Quoddy Head State Park, Roque Bluffs State Park, Grand Lake Stream, and Cobscook Bay State Park (locations shown in Figure 2) between June 24th and August 28th.

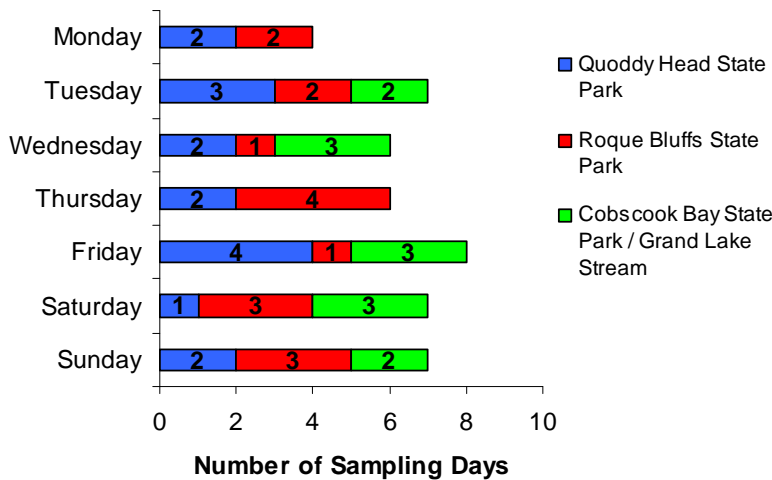
Figure 2. Location of sampling sites in Washington County.



Sampling and Onsite Interviews

A stratified random sampling scheme was used to capture a range of visitor types (day and overnight, short and long visit, Maine residents and non-residents). The sampling goal was to contact visitors at each of the sites two days per week over a nine week period during the peak tourism season (July– Sept.). However, due to uncontrollable circumstances, a total of 45 sampling days were completed (8 days short of the scheduled 53). Figure 3 shows the sampling coverage across the survey locations by day of week.

Figure 3 – Sampling days across the four locations according to day of week.



Visitors were approached at trailheads, boat ramps, and visitor centers, provided with a brief description of the study, and asked to participate. Visitors who agreed to participate completed a brief (2-4 minutes) on-site interview with the student staff (see appendix A for the on-site survey). The student interviewers also asked the visitors whether they preferred to receive the more extensive follow-up questionnaire via mail or email, and collected the appropriate contact information.

Procedures for the Questionnaire

One week following the initial contact, the principle investigator mailed or emailed the more detailed questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions regarding sociodemographics, travel patterns, visitor expectations, ratings of satisfaction, knowledge of nearby attractions and amenities, information sources used, and suggestions for nature tourism development they feel suitable for Washington County (see appendix B). The online version of the survey was created using SurveyMonkey Internet survey creation software. Questionnaire length did not exceed approximately 10 minutes to complete. Completed questionnaires were recorded as they were received, and participants (who had yet to return the questionnaire) were mailed or emailed as many as three surveys over a seven week period with personalized cover letters in order to attain the highest possible response rate. The visitor survey method followed guidelines for mail and Internet surveys outlined by Dillman (2000). A similar survey method used to study Maine island visitors achieved a response rate of 85% (Ednie & Daigle, 2007).

Cover Letters, Envelopes and Reminders

A cover letter (signed by the principle investigator) was included with each questionnaire (see appendix C). Printed on University of Maine at Machias (UMM) letterhead and personally addressed to each participant, the letter included: identification that the study was being conducted by UMM; an explanation of the purpose of the study; the importance of completing the questionnaire; and assurance that information collected would be held in the strictest of confidence. The letters were sent in UMM envelopes with the participants' addresses handwritten and regular postage stamps in order to differentiate from other mail surveys more common to American households. Participants who selected the online version of the questionnaire received a slightly briefer version of the cover letter as email body text along with a link to follow to complete the online questionnaire.

Survey Administration and Response Rates

To facilitate the survey mailing process, we created an Excel spreadsheet containing the respondent identification numbers, addresses or email addresses, mailing numbers (1, 2 or 3), and notes on non-deliverable questionnaires. The identification numbers that corresponded with on-site interview numbers were written on the back of each questionnaire or coded into the download link of email surveys. The date and applicable mailing (1, 2, or 3) were recorded when the completed questionnaires were received.

The first follow-up mailing was sent 2.5 weeks after the first mailing, and the second replacement questionnaire was sent 5 weeks after the first mailing. Each mailing contained a new copy of the questionnaire, a personalized cover letter, and a stamped envelope for returning the questionnaire. Each email contained a message outlining a brief version of the content in the cover letter and a link to the survey. The survey administration data as well as all of the onsite and detailed survey results were entered into the PASW Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2009).

The student interviewers were instructed to contact only one person per group and to only obtain information from visitors who do not reside or own summer homes in Washington County. Approximately 171 participants were contacted and asked to participate in the study (Figure 4). With very few exceptions, people who were asked to participate in the onsite questionnaire agreed. However, only 102 (59.6%) of the 171 who participated in the onsite questionnaire agreed to provide contact information for a more detailed survey. The principle investigator provided additional training and monitored student interviewers when this pattern emerged, yet was unable to improve willingness to participate in the follow-up survey. Twelve of the email addresses collected were unusable, leaving a total of 90 participants who were sent the questionnaire. Fifty-five (61.1%) of the 90 participants who agreed to participate in the follow-up survey completed and returned the detailed questionnaires.

Figure 4. Onsite visitor contacts by date.

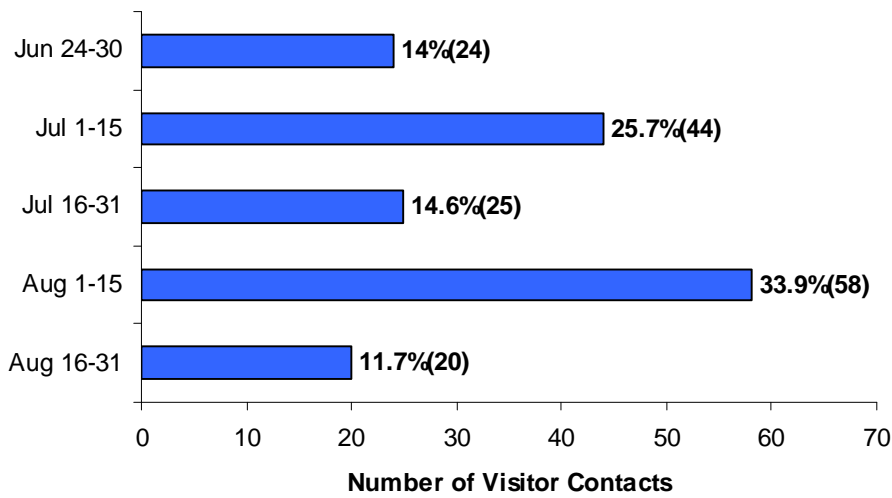


Figure 5 shows when returned questionnaires were received in relation to the mailing process. The majority (83%) of the email respondents completed the questionnaire after the first mailing, while only 40% of the mail-back respondents did (even though mailings were 2-3 weeks apart). The second mailing for mail-back questionnaires was important, yielding 55% of their return.

Figure 5. Questionnaire return by mailing (1, 2, or 3) according to mode sent (email or mail). Actual values are in brackets.

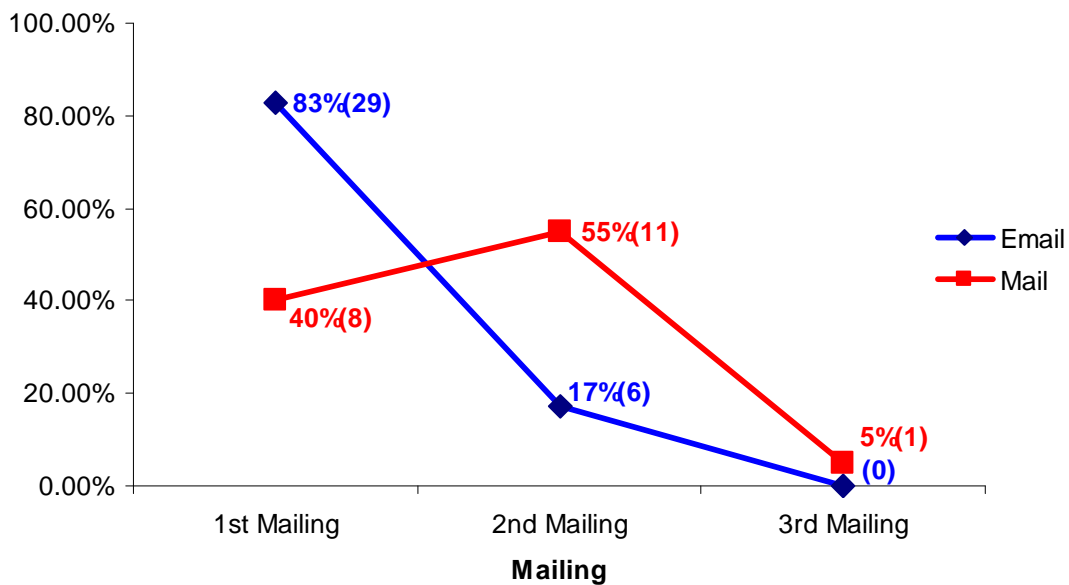


Table 1. Survey response rates.

Survey Sites	# Completed onsite surveys	# Visitors who agreed to participate	# Visitors who completed the detailed questionnaire
Quoddy Head State Park	102	62	33
Roque Bluffs State Park	59	34	19
Grand Lake Stream / Cobscook Bay State Park	10	6	3
	171	102 <i>(59.6% of the 171 on-site participants)</i>	55 <i>(61.1% of the 90 who agreed to participate and who had usable addresses)</i>

Non-response bias checks revealed that there were no significant differences between participants who returned the questionnaires and those who did not. Chi-square tests for differences were completed for questions regarding Washington County as the primary destination ($X^2=2.088$, 1df, $P=0.150$), the primary purpose of the visit ($X^2=5.208$, 3df, $P=0.157$), the group size ($X^2=20164$, 4df, $P=0.706$), whether they had visited Washington County before ($X^2=0.437$, 1df, $P=0.508$), the group type ($X^2=5.269$, 3df, $P=0.153$), the length of stay ($X^2=9.451$, 7df, $P=0.222$), and the preference for survey mode ($X^2=1.712$, 1df, $P=0.191$).

RESULTS

The survey questionnaires were coded and the data were entered into the statistical software. Open-ended questions were summarized and categorized, and frequency distributions and cross-tabulations were calculated. The results section is organized into three broad categories: visit and visitor characteristics; reasons for visiting; and knowledge of and satisfaction with amenities and features.

Visit and Visitor Characteristics

Several visitor use characteristics were analyzed, including group size and type, length of stay, selection of accommodation, previous experience in Washington County, and general information about the participant group. Figure 6 shows the visitor group sizes, which ranged from 1-23 people. The mean, median, and mode for group size were 2.81, 3, and 2, respectively. Groups of two people represented 42% of the survey participants, only 4% traveled alone, and 30% of respondents traveled in groups of 3-5 people. Thirty-nine percent of the groups included at least one youth (Figure 7). The mean, median, and mode numbers of youth per group were 1.68, 1, and 1, respectively. The largest number of youths per group was 8. Most of the visitors reported that they were traveling with family (76%) and only one participant reported traveling with an organized group which in this case was a high school group (Figure 8).

Figure 6. Visitor group sizes, N=54.

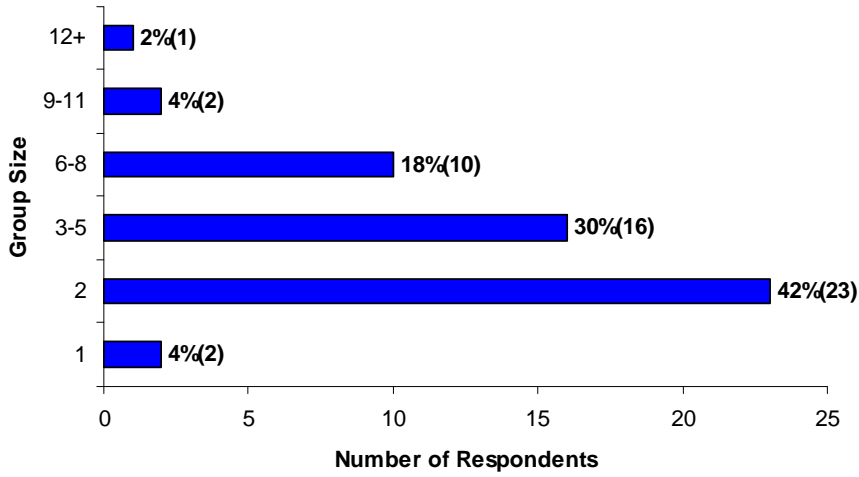


Figure 7. Groups with youth under 16, N=54.

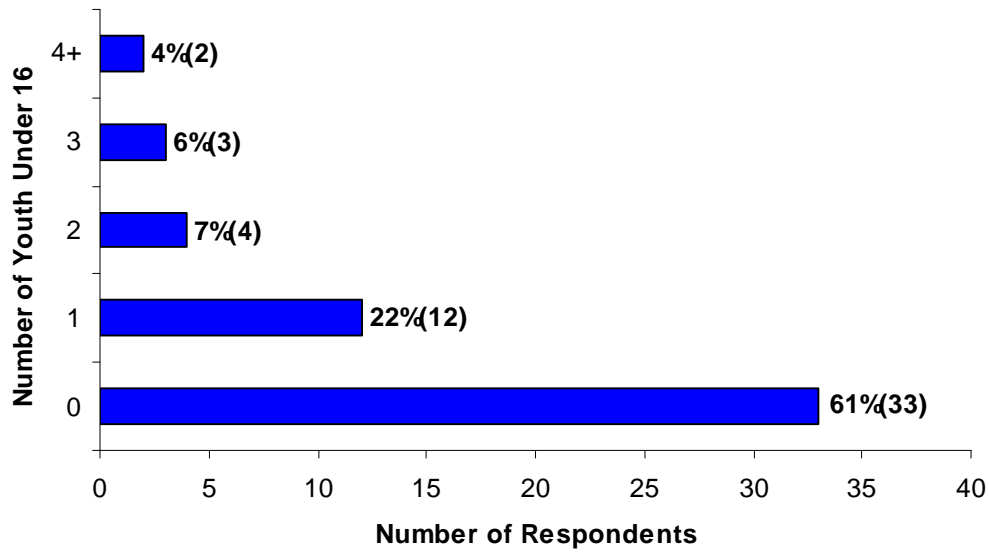
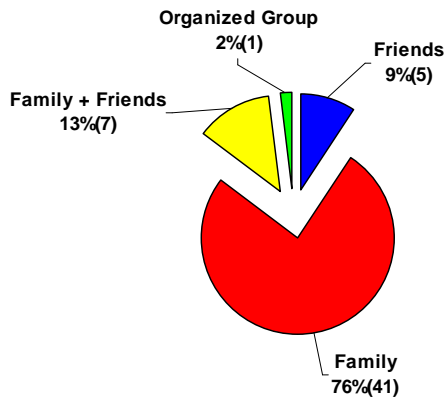


Figure 8. Group Type, N=54.



Forty-six percent of the survey respondents reported that they stayed in Washington County for 3-6 days, and 18% stayed for 7-14 days. Only 9% stayed for less than a day, and 11% stayed for more than two weeks (Figure 9). Participants who visited for more than a day reported staying in a variety of accommodations (Figure 10). The most popular accommodations were house/cabin rentals (28%). Many participants stayed with friends or family in the county (21%) or stayed at a campground (17%). Only 8.5% of respondents reported staying in hotels or motels. Three of the 8 participants who reported using an “other” accommodation provided a description of where they stayed and they included backcountry camping, staying at a church, and staying at the Humboldt Institute (a scientific field station located in Steuben, ME).

Figure 9. Length of stay, N=55.

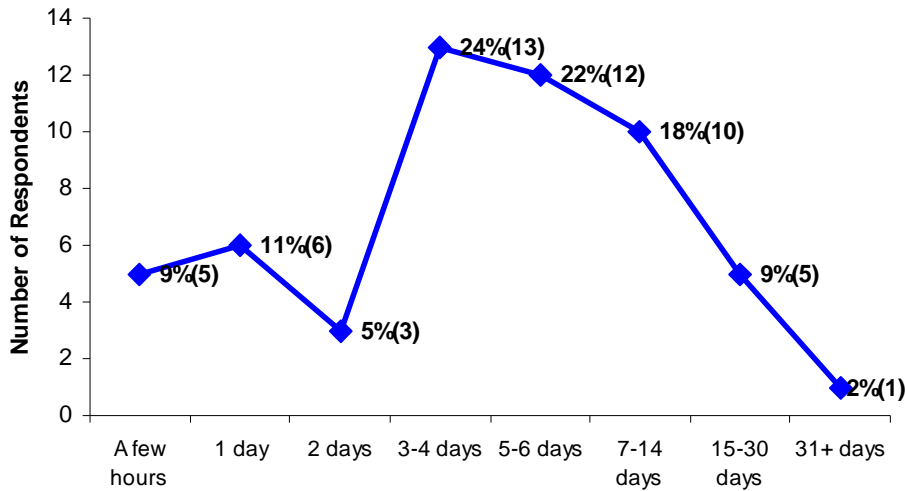
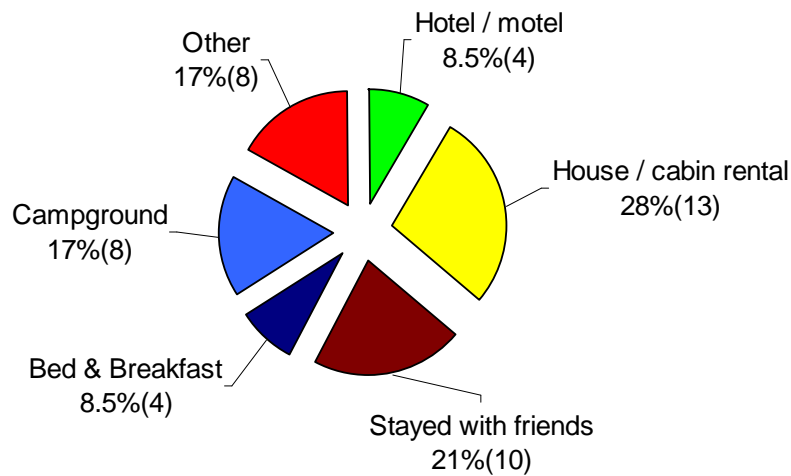


Figure 10. Choice of accommodation, N=47.



On the survey, participants were asked to provide written comments on their accommodations below the checkboxes where they selected the type. Respondents provided the following feedback:

Hotels/motels

- “The Machias Motor Inn was wonderful. The view was great and the place was up-to-date and very clean.”
- “Poor availability of hotels.” (Stayed in rental house/cabin)

House/cabin rental

- “Good.”
- “Lots of rentals available.”
- “Not too much to choose from.”
- “Very nice where we stayed. Beautiful house and great view, well when the fog cleared.”
- “We have stayed there three times in the past 4 years. We have been VERY happy each time. The first time we stayed in a small, cute, rustic cabin. The last two years we have used Hearts of Maine to secure a rental home and couldn’t have been more pleased. The quality of these homes has been remarkable. The prices in the early spring and fall are reasonable, most of the prices during the summer are prohibitive. We were able to secure a house this year, for the week of the Fourth of July, on just two weeks notice. Though it was one of the very few that were still available.”
- “We stayed at Cobscook Cottages and they were very nice.”

Stayed with Friends

- “Fair.”
- “We have found lodging in the Machias area to be adequate, although ‘well worn’. Clean and at a reasonable price.”

Bed & Breakfasts

- “Amazing – very welcoming, kind... it was like coming home to family each day even though we had only known each other for a few days.”
- “We enjoyed the Harbor House in Jonesport so much that we are returning next year.”
- “Wonderful, friendly, clean, safe, easy access to major through fares, just all around delightful.”

Campgrounds

- “Cobscook Bay Park is excellent.”
- “Cobscook is the most beautiful place we’ve ever camped – the sites are gorgeous, though some not level enough for a tent.”
- “Great, clean, friendly, helpful staff.”
- “Perfect as is – NO MORE development, please.”
- “We came to camp and chose Cobscook Bay because it was a little bit “off the beaten path.” It has some of the nicest campsites I’ve ever seen – they are large and very private, which we appreciated. (Flush toilets would be an asset to this campground, though!). Overall, a lovely park, and we enjoyed our stay.”
- “We like it the way it is.”

Most (64%) of the survey respondents had been to Washington County before (Figure 11). Participants who had visited before were asked how many times, and their responses ranged from 1-55 previous visits with a mean, median, and mode of 14.03, 7.5, and 1, respectively. Thirteen percent had visited only once, and 41% had visited between 1-5 times. Many of the respondents had extensive experience in the area as 22% had visited between 6-10 times, and another 34% had visited more the 10 times.

Figure 11. Proportion of respondents who have previously visited Washington County for nature tourism, N=55.

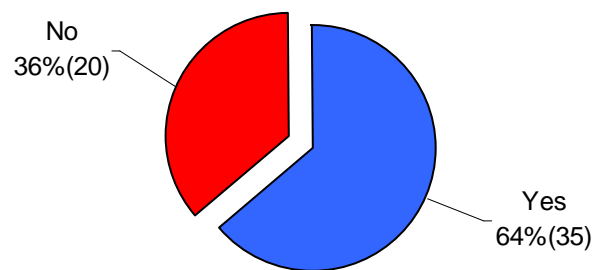
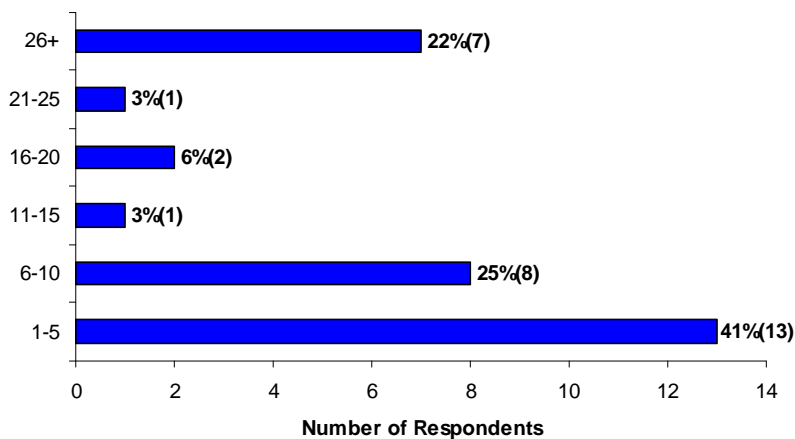


Figure 12. Number of previous visits to Washington County for nature tourism, N=32.



To learn more about experience, respondents who had previously visited were asked to list their most visited spot in Washington County, to provide the number of years they have visited that place, and the number of times they visited last year. The most common places listed were state parks (41%) or towns (38%). The towns listed included Machias (10%), Lubec (10%), Cutler (3%), Jonesport (3%), Milbridge (3%), South Addison (3%), and Trescott (3%). Several participants also listed specific local attractions as presented in Figure 13.

The study participants who provided their most visited places had been going to them for many years. Twenty-nine percent of respondents have been visiting those places for over 26 years. An additional 32% had been visiting for 6-10 years (Figure 14). The number of years visiting ranged from 1-67 years, where the mean, median and mode number of years visiting were 17.48, 10, and 10, respectively. Nearly half of the participants who have previously visited Washington County visited once last year and another 26% visited three or more times last year. Only twenty-six percent did not visit at all last year. The number of visits last year ranged from 0-6, the mean was 1.48, and the median and mode were both 1. Participants were also asked to indicate whether they visit Washington County most years, and 75% of the respondents reported that they did.

Figure 13. Most visited places in Washington County, N=29.

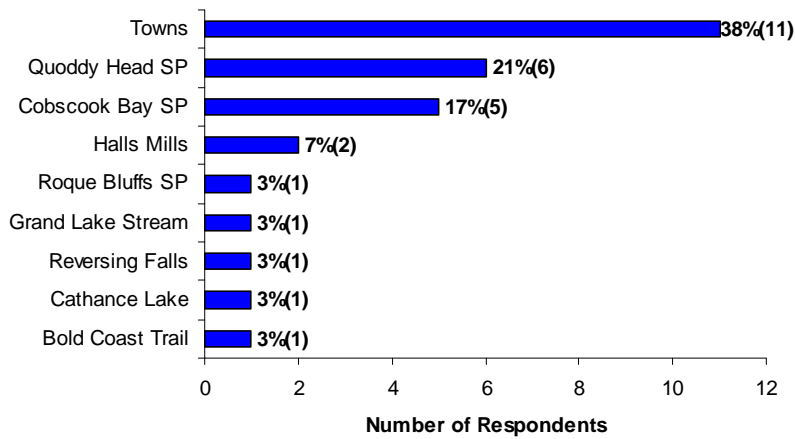


Figure 14. Years going to their most visited place in Washington County, N=31.

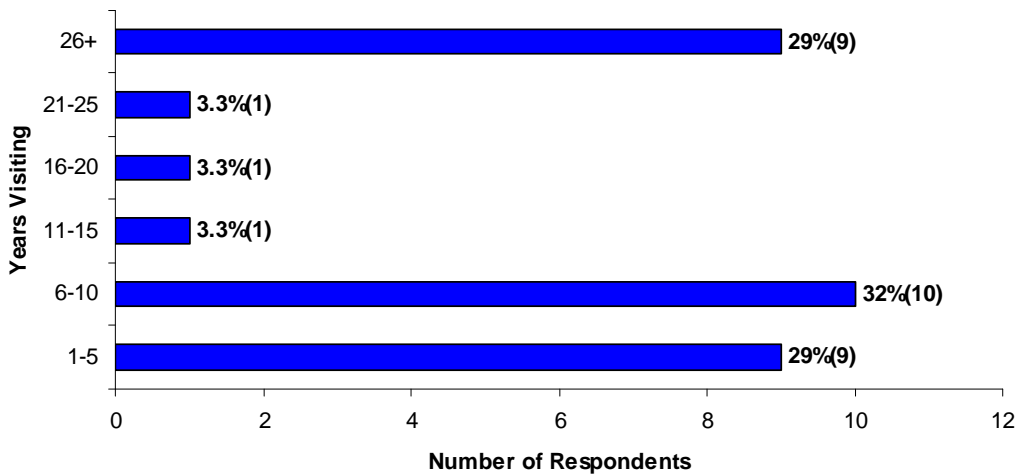
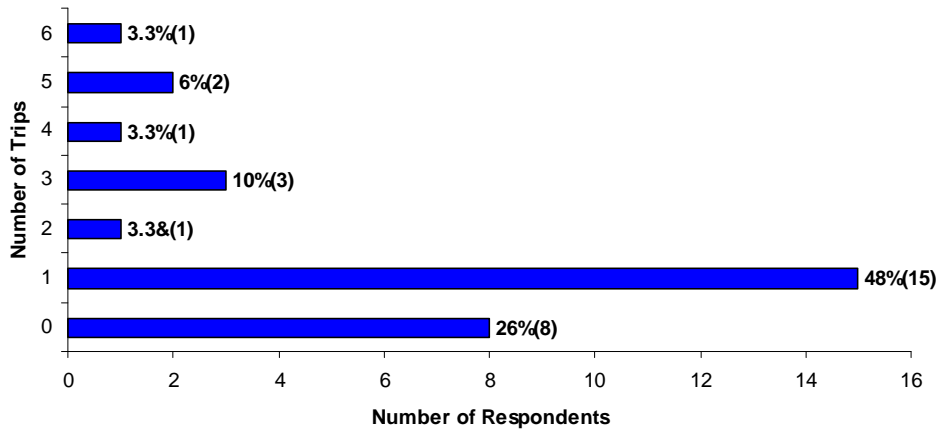


Figure 15. Number of trips to their most visited place last year, N=31.



The survey included a few general questions about the background of the study participants, including age, gender, level of education, and State of residence. One third of the study participants were between the ages to 50-59. Another quarter were 40-49, twenty-seven percent were above age 60, and 15% were under 40. The majority (64%) of study participants were female, and half of the participants have attained a graduate degree (Figures 17&18). The residences of the 50 participants who provided their zip codes represented 21 states and one province. The state most represented was Connecticut, followed by Maine, then New York and New Jersey (Figure 19).

Figure 16. Age of participants, N=52.

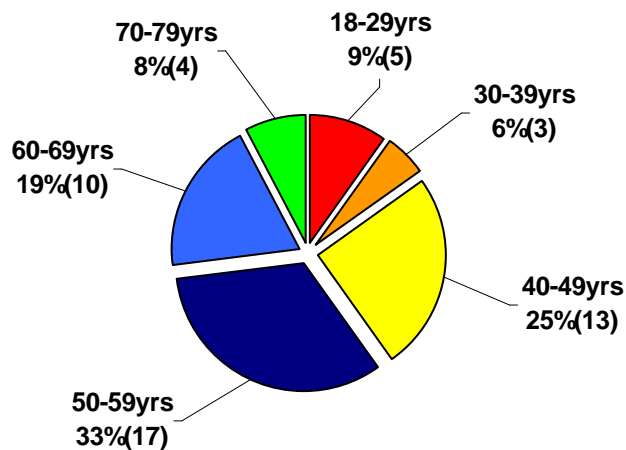


Figure 17. Gender of participants, N=52.

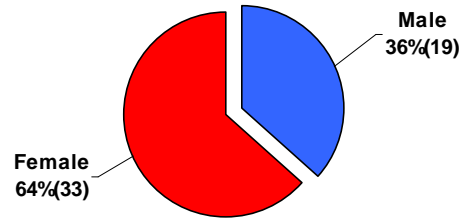


Figure 18. Level of Education, N=52.

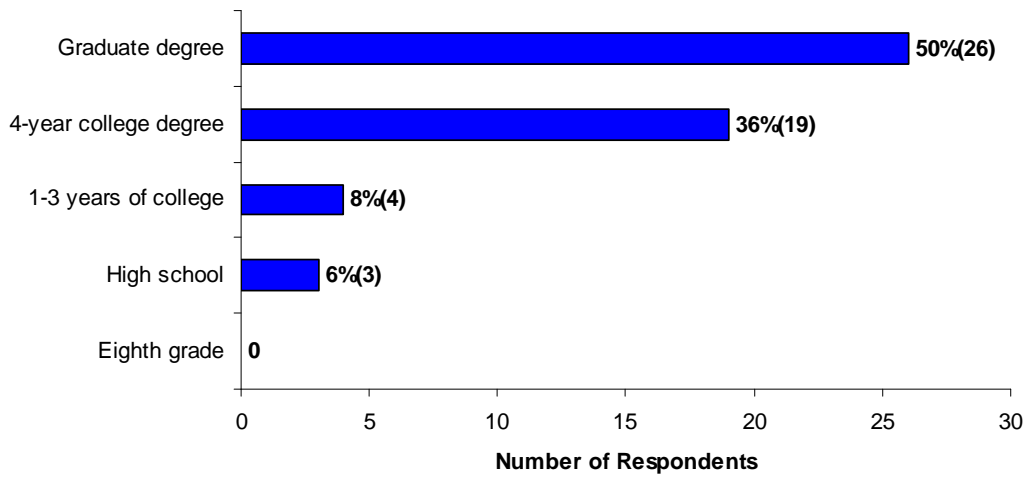
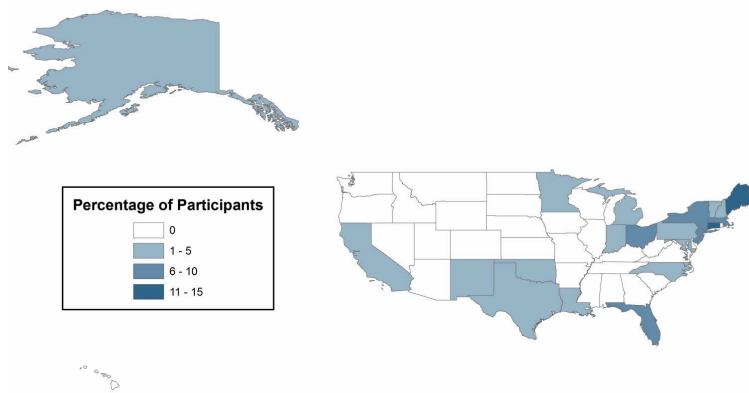


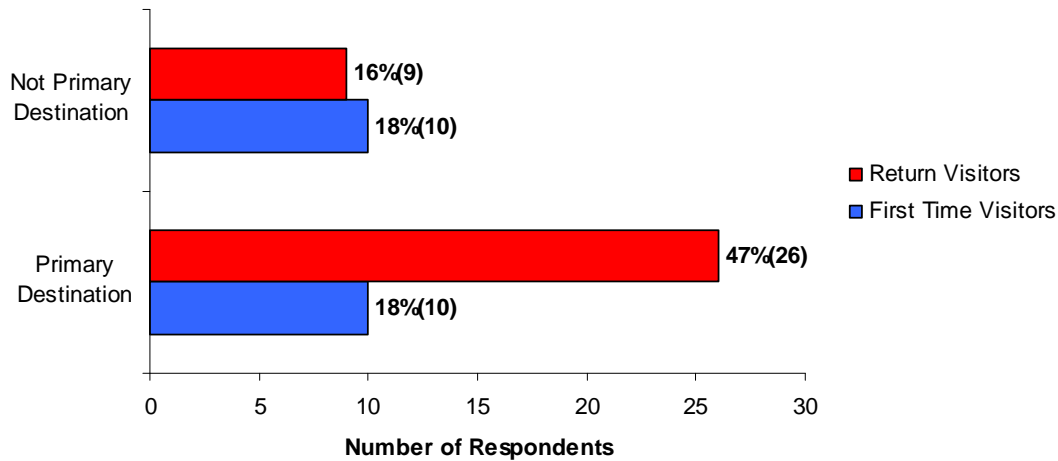
Figure 19. Participant State of residence, N=50.



Reasons for Visiting

In order to learn about what brought the visitors to Downeast Maine, they were asked if Washington County was their primary destination, the primary purpose of their trip, and the top three considerations that most influenced their decision to visit the region. Sixty-five percent reported that Washington County was their primary destination. Nearly half (47%) of the study participants were return visitors who came to Washington County as their primary destination, and 18% of the participants came for the first time to Washington County as their primary destination (Figure 20). The nineteen respondents for whom Washington County was not a primary destination were going to Bar Harbor or Acadia National Park (6), other areas in the Canadian Maritimes (4), Camden and other areas along the Maine coast (4), Campobello, Canada (3), Orono, Maine (1), and Connecticut (1).

Figure 20. Washington County as the primary destination, N=55.



Sixty-seven percent of participants reported that they were in Washington County primarily for vacation, 24% to visit friends and/or relatives, and 9% indicated they were in Washington County for an “other” reason. Those who selected “other” were asked to specify, and the responses provided included they were passing through to a different destination (2), attending a wedding (1), and on a mission trip (1). Participants were also asked to list the top three things, other than those in Figure 21, that influenced their decisions to travel to Washington County. Table 2 provides a list of the reasons provided in order of frequency.

Figure 21. Primary purpose of visits to Washington County, N=55.

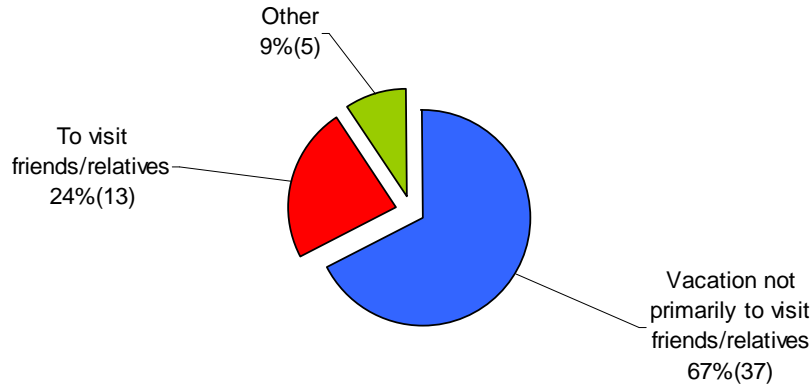


Table 2. Things that influenced decisions to visit Washington County, N=119.

	Number of times listed	% of participants by whom it was listed
Scenic beauty	13	24%
Exploring places proximate to Washington County	10	18%
Ocean / coast	10	18%
Traveling with family & friends	9	16%
Coastal State Parks	8	15%
Previous visits	8	15%
Uncrowded / less people	8	15%
Hiking	6	11%
Never been there before	6	11%
Lighthouses	5	9%
Viewing wildlife	5	9%
Cool climate	5	9%
Seafood	4	7%
Recreation access / opportunities	3	5%
Relaxation	3	5%
Wild blueberries / blueberry pie	2	4%
Price	2	4%
Undeveloped coast	2	4%
Fishing	2	4%
Nice facilities	2	4%
Lifestyle of area	1	2%
Beaches	1	2%
The local people	1	2%
Good setting for creative work	1	2%
Scenic route instead of highway	1	2%
Escape the city	1	2%

In order to learn about what visitors expected from their trips to Washington County, the study participants were asked to rate the importance of a series of 21 reasons for visiting on a 5-point Likert scale. Table 3 shows the frequencies in percentages allocated to each degree of importance for the 21 potential reasons. Ninety-four percent of participants rated appreciating the scenery as either “4” or “5, very important” in their decisions to visit Washington County. Eighty-four percent rated exploring the natural environment highly, and 70-80% rated viewing wildlife, experiencing solitude, experiencing remoteness, walking or hiking, and taking a scenic drive off the beaten path highly. In contrast, 94% of participants rated four wheeling as “1, not important” or “2.” Between 80-90% provided low ratings for digging for clams, saltwater fishing, freshwater fishing, golfing, and sailing. Also, 70-80% gave low importance ratings for swimming and biking/mountain biking as reasons for their visits to Washington County. The data from this survey tend to suggest that the visitors we interviewed were in the county more to simply enjoy the landscape than to partake in a particular activity (Figures 22 & 23). The ratings for some items were more spread, such as viewing fishing harbors, visiting historical sites, beach combing, and canoeing or kayaking. Eighty-two percent of participants rated viewing lighthouses as neutral or important, and 72% rated birding as neutral to not important.

The survey respondents were also asked to describe any “other” opportunities that were important in their decision to visit Washington County, and also to indicate the first, second, and third most important reasons for their visits based on the items in table 3. Four participants provided other important opportunities, which included eating local food (seafood, blueberry pie), proximity to Campobello Island, feeling at home in the local culture, and visiting family and friends. Figure 24 shows the opportunities that participants commonly rated (by at least 5 respondents) in the top three as reasons for visiting. Appreciating scenery, exploring the natural environment and walking or hiking were most consistently rated in the top three important opportunities, followed by experiencing remoteness, viewing lighthouses, and experiencing solitude. Interestingly, all of the other opportunities were rated as top three reasons for between 1-4 people, except four wheeling and sailing.

Table 3. Reasons for visiting Washington County.

	1. Not Important	2	3	4	5. Very Important	Total #
			%			
Appreciating scenery	2	0	4	18	76	55
Exploring the nat. environment	2	3	11	31	53	55
Walking or hiking	7.5	7.5	11	26	48	54
Experiencing solitude	9	4	9	36	42	53
Scenic drive off the beaten path	4	4	13	40	39	54
Experiencing remoteness	11	8	9	33	39	54
Viewing wildlife	6	7	17	33	37	54
Beach combing (sea glass, etc.)	17	11	24	22	26	54
Viewing lighthouses	9	9	19	39	24	54
Birding	23	21	28	13	15	53
Canoeing or kayaking	38	9	21	21	11	53
Visiting historical sites	13	23	21	36	7	53
Freshwater fishing	79	6	7	2	6	52
Viewing fishing harbors	18	9	13	56	4	54
Bicycling or mountain biking	57	13	17	9	4	53
Digging for clams	75	6	11	4	4	53
Swimming	56	17	21	3	3	53
Sailing	68	13	13	4	2	53
Saltwater fishing	75	6	13	6	0	53
Golfing	83	4	9	4	0	52
Four wheeling	94	0	6	0	0	53

Figure 22. Sample reasons for visiting related to enjoying the landscape.

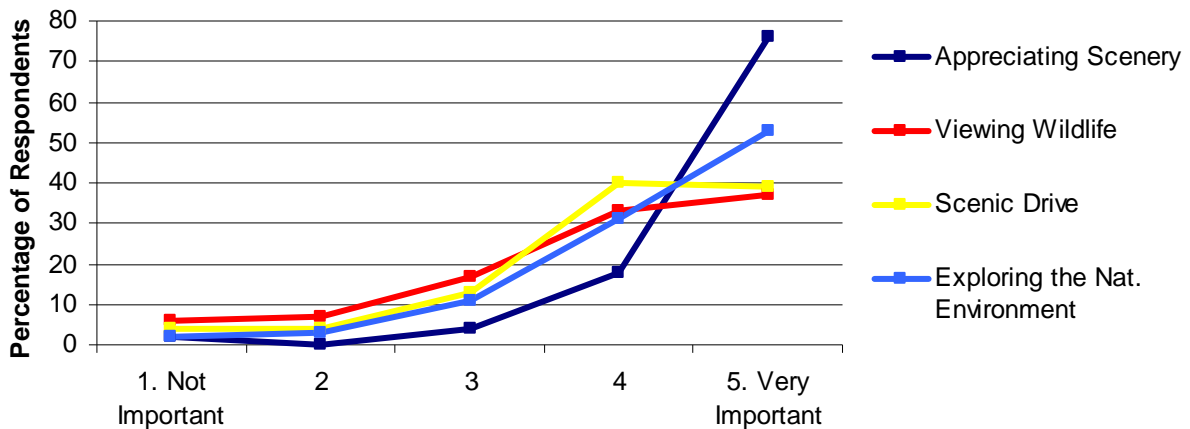


Figure 23. Sample reasons for visiting related to specific activities.

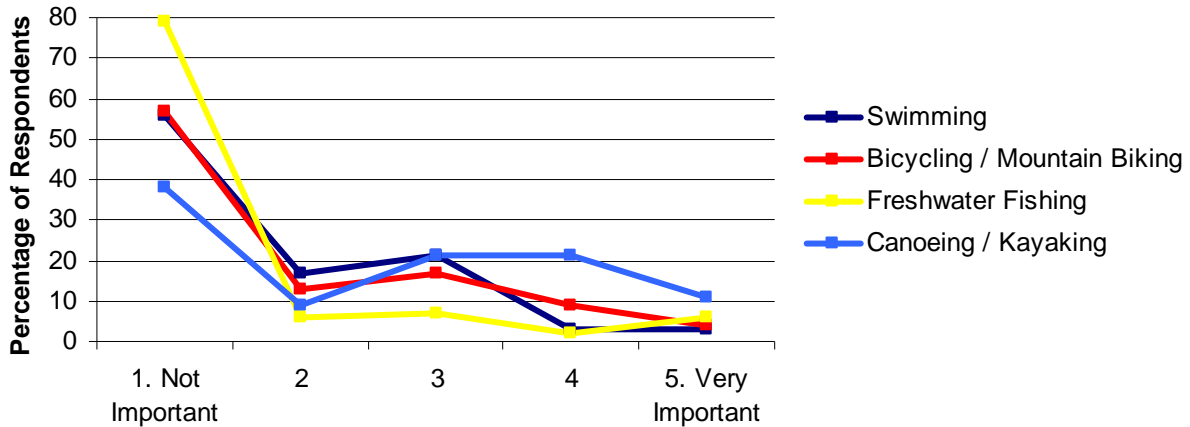
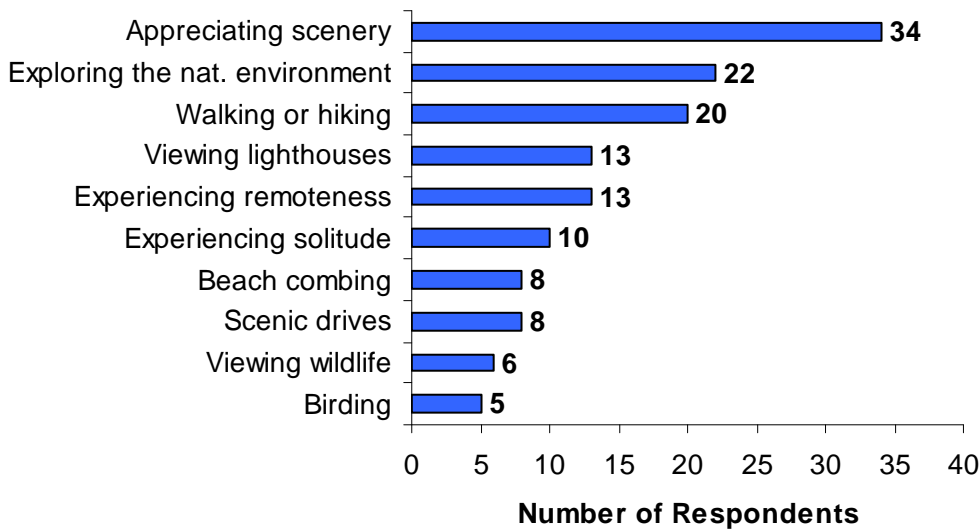


Figure 24. Most important opportunities in participants' decisions to visit, N=157.



Knowledge of and Satisfaction with Amenities and Features

To develop an understanding of how familiar visitors were with nature tourism opportunities in Washington County, respondents were asked to list at least three sources of information they used to plan their visits (table 4), and also to list ways they learned about opportunities once they were here (table 5). Prior to their visits, participants most commonly used the Internet, they asked family & friends, and they used maps and travel books to plan their trips. Once in Washington County, they relied more on family & friends, locals, brochures found within the county, their own exploration, and local newspapers the most. Although the Internet is a very important source of information, large proportions of visitors used some combination of personal and community knowledge before and during their trips. Fifty-four percent of the participants used either prior experience, word of mouth, or family & friends in planning their trips. Sixty

percent used either family & friends, advice from local people, campground staff, retail & B&B workers, or word of mouth to learn about opportunities while they were here.

Table 4. Sources of information used to plan their visits, N=106.

	Number of times listed	% of participants by whom it was listed
Internet	36	65%
Family & friends	20	36%
Maine maps/atlasses/GPS	12	22%
Travel books	7	13%
AAA/CAA	5	9%
Past experience	5	9%
Word of mouth	5	9%
Brochures found in Wash. County	4	7%
DownEast magazine	3	5%
Other magazines	2	4%
Local newspapers	2	4%
Cobscook Trails Guide	1	2%
Nature Guides	1	2%
Asked local people	1	2%
Books of Maine	1	2%
TV travel channel	1	2%

Table 5. How participants learned about opportunities once they were already in Washington County, N=76.

	Number of times listed	% of participants by whom it was listed
Family & friends	13	24%
Asked local people	11	20%
Brochures found in Wash. County	10	18%
Exploration	8	15%
Local newspapers	8	15%
Campground office info & staff	5	9%
Calais visitor center	4	7%
Maine maps/atlasses/GPS	3	5%
Local retail workers / B&Bs	3	5%
Road signs	3	5%
Internet	2	4%
Nature guides	2	4%
Travel books	2	4%
Word of mouth	1	2%
TV travel channel	1	2%

A series of questions on the survey inquired about the participants' familiarity and experiences with 13 locations in the county. For each, participants were asked to indicate whether they had: (a) never heard of; (b) heard of but never visited; (c) visited once; or (d) visited multiple times. For locations they had been to at least once, participants were asked to rate the quality of their experiences as one of: 1, poor; 2; 3; 4; or 5, excellent. The following table shows the proportion of participants who have visited each location at least once, and the mean rating of their experiences.

Table 6. Familiarity with and experience ratings for attractions in Washington County.

	Proportion who have visited at least once	Mean experience rating
Quoddy Head State Park	86% (N=49)	4.54 (N=41)
Roque Bluffs State Park	60% (N=45)	4.53 (N=30)
Reversing Falls	52% (N=42)	3.79 (N=19)
Cobscook Bay State Park	46% (N=43)	4.56 (N=18)
Bold Coast Trail (Cutler)	42% (N=43)	4.53 (N=15)
Jasper Beach	38% (N=38)	4.13 (N=16)
Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge	33% (N=42)	4.08 (N=12)
Grand Lake Stream	24% (N=43)	4.11 (N=9)
Western Head Preserve (Cutler)	15% (N=41)	4.80 (N=5)
Shackford Head State Park	10% (N=40)	4.25 (N=4)
Sunrise Rail-Trail	10% (N=42)	4.67 (N=3)
Rocky Lake Public Reserve	7% (N=42)	4.00 (N=3)
Ice Age Trail	0% (N=41)	

Participants were also asked to describe what it is about the locations that shaped their experiences. Many participants provided positive comments about the attractions in general, such as, "all of the sites were beautiful in their own way," "beautiful scenery, very cold water, foggy, wet weather," "great hiking, remoteness," "opportunity to view unspoiled settings," and "nature at it's best!" The following location-specific comments were provided:

Quoddy Head State Park:

- Excellent hiking trail (3)
- Friendly people
- Nice exhibit
- Beautiful lighthouse

Roque Bluffs State Park:

- Beautiful beach (2)
- Peaceful

Cobscook Bay State Park:

- Large, private campsites
- Beautiful views
- Great tides
- Camping at Cobscook is hard with kids

Bold Coast Trail

- Beautiful scenery
- Needs better trail markers

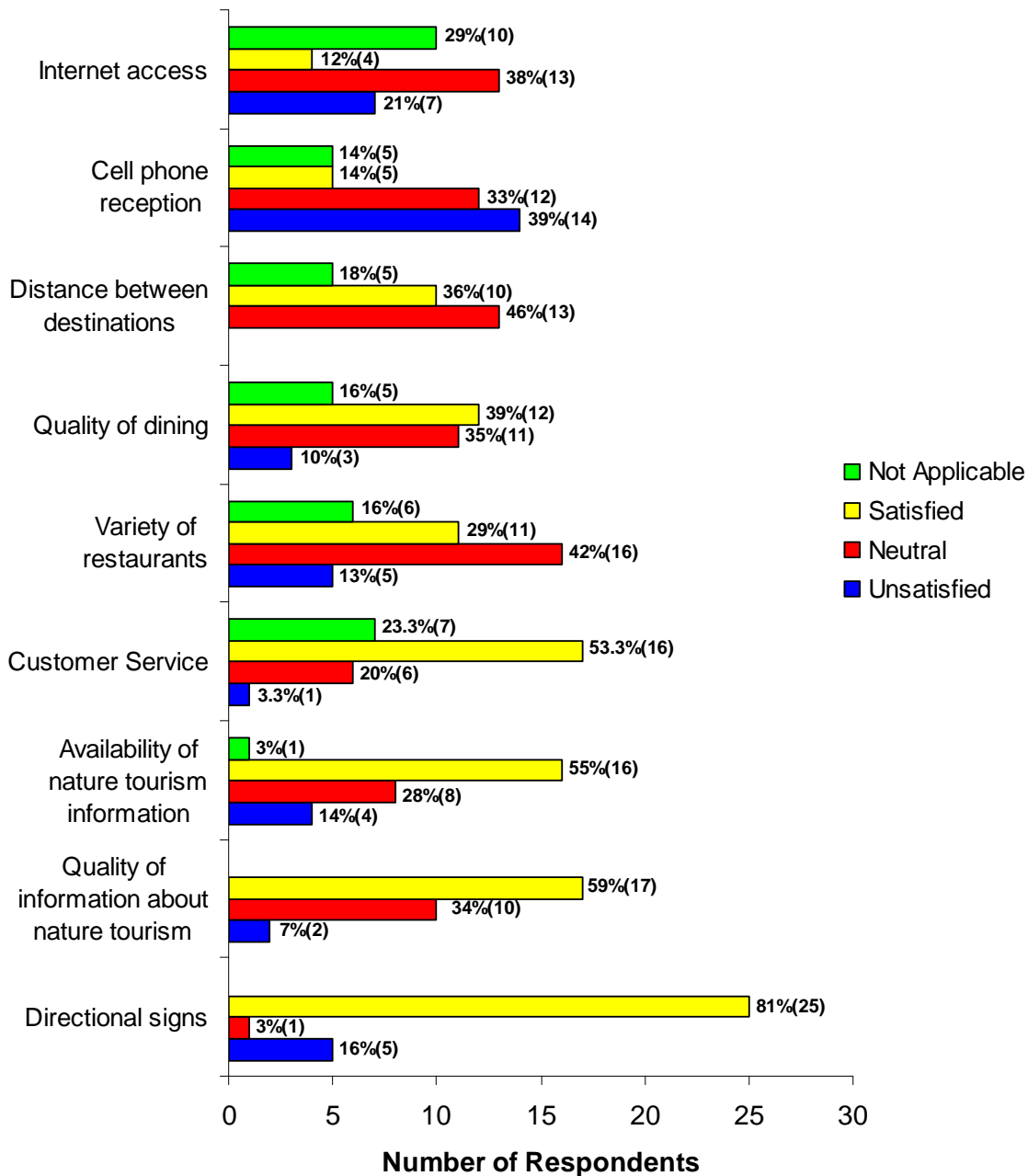
Jasper Beach

- Amazing to listen to the sound of the waves
- Great beach
- Beautiful rocks

To learn more about visitor satisfaction with specific amenities and features in Washington County, the survey asked participants to indicate whether they were “unsatisfied,” “neutral,” “satisfied,” or if the feature was “not applicable” for nine specific items (Figure 25).

Unfortunately, a glitch occurred for a week-long period with the Internet survey software and eight survey respondents were unable to provide complete responses for the series of questions. Population size ranges from 28-38 depending on the item (number of respondents are provided in brackets following percentages). Overall, the majority of participants were satisfied with directional signs (81% were satisfied), availability & quality of information (55 & 59% were satisfied, respectively), and customer service (53% were satisfied). Respondents were neutral or satisfied about the quality of dining (35% neutral, 39% satisfied) and the variety of restaurants (42% neutral, 29% satisfied). They were least satisfied with cell phone reception (39% were unsatisfied) and more spread in their evaluations of Internet access. They were also given three spaces to provide an evaluation of other items that influenced their experiences in the region. Only two respondents provided additional items – and both were communicating their dissatisfaction with the condition of the roads in Washington County.

Figure 25. Satisfaction with experience components in Washington County.



Participants were asked to provide an overall rating of their nature tourism experiences in Washington County and to list the three factors that influenced their experience the most. Figure 26 shows that the vast majority (92%) of the respondents rated their experiences as very good or excellent. Table 7 illustrates the influential factors listed by more than one participant. The most common factor listed was the beautiful scenery (33%), followed by friendly people (22%),

hiking trails (13%), good weather (13%), and quietness (13%). Several factors that are not included in the table were listed by only one participant, including: gift shops, seafood, proximity to lakes, amount of public protected land, beautiful accommodations, bike trails, easy access to information, reasonable travel time, and uniqueness. The only negative factor provided was “not enough to do,” and that was listed by only one participant.

Figure 26. Overall rating of nature tourism experiences in Washington County, N=52.

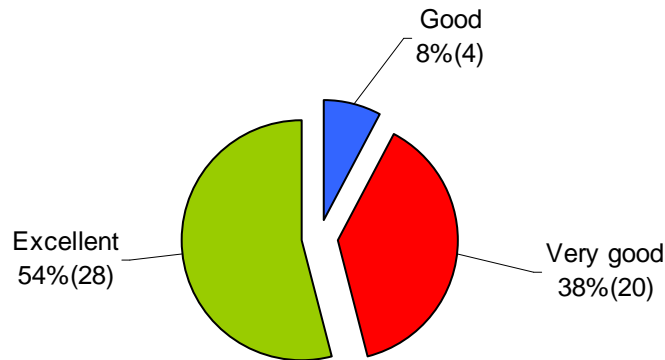


Table 7. Factors that most influenced overall experiences, N=90.

	Number of times listed	% of participants by whom it was listed
Beautiful scenery	18	33%
Friendly people	12	22%
Hiking trails	7	13%
Good weather	7	13%
Quietness (few tourists)	7	13%
Undeveloped coastline	5	9%
Wildlife viewing experiences	5	9%
Time with family & friends	4	7%
Great state parks	4	7%
Great fishing	3	5%
Remoteness	3	5%
Cleanliness of beaches/trails	3	5%
A new experience	2	4%

Finally, participants were asked what Washington County needs to make it a more attractive place to visit. Although the most common response was for it to stay the same (13%), the participants did provide some informative suggestions. Better cell coverage & Internet access, better roads, better access to tourism information, and more/better restaurants were each listed by

9% of the study participants. Suggestions listed only by one individual were not included in the table, and consisted of, lower air fares to Bangor, continued research into fisheries, less development, more shopping, better reception to tourists from locals, better weather/less fog, more saltwater fishing access, more state parks on lakes, more road signs, and more public restrooms.

Table 8. Changes that would improve nature tourism experiences in Washington County, N=44.

	Number of times listed	% of participants by whom it was listed
Stay the same	7	13%
Better cell coverage & Internet access	5	9%
Better roads	5	9%
More/better access to tourism information	5	9%
More/better restaurants	5	9%
More places to stay (incl. low cost options)	3	5%
More entertainment opportunities	2	4%
Better marketing of attractions	2	4%

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

This study provides encouraging findings for the tourism community in Washington County. Visitors were highly satisfied with their experiences in the county. A large proportion of the study participants (64%) were return visitors, indicating they enjoyed vacationing in the county enough to choose to return multiple times (59% have visited more than five times and 71% for over five years). Even considering our location (remote yet part of a passage through to the Canadian Maritimes), Washington County was the primary destination for three quarters of the returning visitors. Also, half of the 36% of the study participants who were new visitors selected Washington County as the primary destination for their vacation, which indicates that new people are exploring the county. The vacationers who choose to travel to Washington County are attracted to the landscape and view it as an accessible destination.

We have prepared the following set of reflections and recommendations based on the study results:

- ❖ Visitors are attracted to Washington County for a general experience of being in a natural, scenic area; not for one specific attraction, event, or activity. They come because it is a beautiful, un-crowded, remote place to explore. The majority of the study participants (75%) stayed in the county for three or more days. However, the participants expressed little familiarity with many of the most common attractions in the county. We expect that many of the study participants would have rated various activities more highly in their decisions to visit Washington County if they knew about the opportunities that exist here. Therefore, considering the existing diversity of opportunities to explore the natural environment that exist within the county, we suggest the need for a unified

approach to marketing nature tourism activities. Local businesses, parks, and community groups related to nature tourism could only benefit from shared marketing as it would allow potential visitors to see that they can easily be entertained for multiple days in this remote county.

- ❖ The Internet is the most common source of information used to learn about nature tourism opportunities in Washington County prior to visits, but once here, visitors rely on family & friends, locals, and brochures for further direction. This finding suggests two actions. First, it will be important to further develop the existing regional tourism websites (such as Downeast Acadia Regional Tourism (<http://www.downeastacadia.com/>), sites developed by chambers of commerce and those developed by partnering interest groups) to better educate potential visitors on tourism opportunities in a way that is consistent with community interests. Second, for once visitors are here, it would be beneficial to develop a series of new brochures that highlight a variety of nature tourism opportunities in the county to be distributed by local businesses and community partners. This would help to better inform visitors of the diverse opportunities for exploration, various outdoor activities, indoor alternatives, and dining and lodging.
- ❖ Once visitors reach this area, a primary way they learn about attractions is from local people. This includes staff at local businesses as well as residents that they meet. However, only just over half of the survey respondents indicated they were satisfied with customer service. The implication is a need to inform local people about tourism opportunities and to train front line staff to be effective communicators of tourism opportunities in the county.
- ❖ Visitors are attracted here because they appreciate the scenic beauty, the remoteness, and the opportunity for solitude. Local residents appreciate this place for the same reasons and don't want to see that change. So promoting tourism for its economic value while maintaining the qualities everyone wants requires a managed balance. It is difficult, in a time of limited resources, to prioritize the development of management and monitoring plans for natural attractions, but these are crucial. It will also be necessary to be proactive about managing recreational use as new opportunities develop and gain popularity – such as the Sunrise Trail. Visitor education and monitoring will be needed as this trail gains popularity for locals and tourists alike, traveling in multiple modes (walking/jogging, bicycling, four-wheeling, skiing, snowmobiling, etc.).
- ❖ The visitor characteristics and demographics recorded in this study can be useful for target marketing. Over half (52%) of the study participants were above the age of 50, most (61%) did not travel with youth under 16, and the vast majority (86%) had a 4-year college or graduate degree. Most visitors (72%) were either traveling with one other person or in a group of up to 5 people, and the majority (76%) were traveling with family. Participants came from 21 states and one province, however, the most represented states were Connecticut, Maine, New York, and New Jersey. A classic marketing approach would be to focus on current visitors and to find specific opportunities to promote the DownEast region to prospective travelers within this demographic. However,

we also see the potential to expand the market by trying to attract a more broad segment of the population if specific marketing opportunities could be identified (ie. social network marketing).

- ❖ The most popular type of accommodation in the county was house/cabin rentals. Although most of the comments provided about houses and cabins were positive, others indicated that enhancement of the accommodations could be beneficial. The open comments portion of the accommodations question revealed phrases such as, “adequate, although well worn,” “not too much to choose from,” and “poor availability of hotels.” We suggest that cabins are likely an important part of the Washington County experience for many visitors (based on frequency), therefore, owners need to maintain the quality and attractiveness of them in an increasingly competitive tourism market. We also note the lack of alternatives to houses/cabins as a potential limiting factor to the number of tourists who choose to stay in the county.
- ❖ There is a clear need for further Washington County-specific research in order to continue to develop tourism in a sustainable way. The volume of tourism and the characteristics of the attractions in Washington County are so different from neighboring regions that much of the existing work (that combines regions) yields limited findings that are directly applicable for local stakeholders. Suggestions for future research include onsite surveys that are developed through partnerships between business owners and tourism managers, studies into the economic impact of tourism in the county, segmenting visitors by activity preference according to visitor characteristics to guide target marketing, examining the shoulder seasons to help diversify the tourism economy, and understanding the visit decision process after receiving information from initial inquiries.

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APPENDIX A: Onsite Survey

Interviewer Name:

Date:

Time:

Location:

1. Is Washington County the primary destination of your travel away from your place of residence?

- Yes
 No (primary destination: _____)

2. What is the primary purpose of your visit to Washington County? (check one)

- Vacation not primarily to visit friends or relatives
 To visit friends or relatives
 A business or work trip
 Other: _____

3. How many people are here with you today? _____

4. Have you visited Washington County for nature tourism before? Yes No

5. Which of the following best describes your group:

- Friends From an organization (scouts, etc.)
 Family Other (describe: _____)
 Alone

6. How much time do you plan on spending in Washington County on this visit?

- A few hrs 3-4 days 15-30 days
 One day 5-6 days 31+ days
 2 days 7-14 days

Would you be willing to provide contact information so we can ask you more about your experiences here?

To participate, please provide contact information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Thank You!

Washington County Nature Tourism Survey, 2009

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Since each interviewed person will represent many others who will not be surveyed, your cooperation is extremely important. The answers you provide will be confidential. Names and contact information will be collected for the sole purpose of sending the follow-up questionnaire. Our results will be summarized so that the answers you provide cannot be associated with you or anyone in your group or household. Your name and address will not be given to any other group or used by us beyond the purposes of this study.

APPENDIX B: Detailed questionnaire

Washington County Nature Tourism Survey 2009

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this study. We would like to know about your nature tourism experiences in Washington County, Maine. Please answer the questions based on your visit to Washington County during which we met you. Your name and personal information are confidential.

1. Was Washington County the primary destination of your travel away from your place of residence?

Yes No (what was your primary destination? _____)

2. What was the primary purpose of your visit to Washington County? (check one)

Vacation not primarily to visit friends or relatives

To visit friends or relatives

A business or work trip

Other: _____

3. Other than the primary purpose indicated above, what were the top three things that influenced your decision to travel to Washington County?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. How important were the following opportunities in your decision to visit Washington County?
Please check one box on the scale of 1 to 5 for each opportunity.

	1. Not Important	2	3	4	5. Very Important
A) Appreciating scenery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B) Viewing wildlife	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C) Birding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D) Exploring the natural environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E) Viewing lighthouses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F) Experiencing solitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G) Experiencing remoteness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H) Viewing fishing harbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I) Visiting historical sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J) Swimming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K) Bicycling or mountain biking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L) Four Wheeling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M) Walking or hiking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N) Beach combing (sea glass, driftwood, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O) Canoeing or kayaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P) Sailing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q) Golfing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
R) Freshwater fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S) Saltwater fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T) Digging for clams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U) Scenic drive off the beaten path	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
V) Other (please describe):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which out of the list above were the three most important opportunities in your decision to visit Washington County (provide the letter)?

First most important ____ Second most important ____ Third most important ____

5. How many people were in your group when we met you, including yourself? ____
How many were under 16? ____

Which of the following choices best describes your group:

- Friends Alone
 Family From an organization (scouts, etc.)
 Family plus friends Other (describe: _____)

6. How much time did you spend in Washington County on this visit?

- A few hours 3-4 days 15-30 days
 One day 5-6 days 31+ days
 2 days 7-14

7. If you stayed overnight, please indicate the type of lodging you used:

- Hotel / motel House / cabin rental Stayed with friends / relatives
 Bed & breakfast Campground Other: _____

Please comment on the quality and availability of lodging in Washington County:

8. Prior to this visit, have you come to Washington County for nature tourism before?

- Yes (please provide number of times you have visited: _____)
 No (please skip to question 10)

9. What is your most visited spot in Washington County?

How many years have you been visiting the place you listed above? ____

How many times did you visit that place last year? ____

Do you visit that place most years? Yes No

10. Prior to coming to Washington County, what were at least three sources of information you used to plan your visit?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

11. Once you were here, how did you learn about opportunities that you didn't know about ahead of time?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

12. Please indicate your familiarity with the following locations in Washington County. For the locations you have visited at least once, please rate the quality of your experience and briefly tell us what it is about the location that shaped your experience.

	Never heard of	Heard of, but never visited	Visited once	Visited multiple times	1. Poor	2	3	4	5. Excellent	Characteristics
	Familiarity				Experience Quality					
Roque Bluffs State Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quoddy Head State Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Grand Lake Stream	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cobscook State Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Shackford Head State Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Moosehorn Nat. Wildlife Refuge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Rocky Lake Public Reserve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bold Coast Trail (Cutler)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Western Head Preserve (Cutler)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Reversing Falls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ice Age Trail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sunrise Rail-Trail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jasper Beach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please list locations you visit that are not listed above):										
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

13. How satisfied were you with the following aspects of your experience in Washington County?

	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Not Applicable	Comments
Directional signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Availability of nature tourism information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quality of information about nature tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cell phone reception	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Internet access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Distance between destinations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quality of dining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Variety of restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (please list):					
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

14. Overall, how would you rate your nature tourism experiences in Washington County?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

What three factors most influenced your experience?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

15. What does Washington County need to make it a more attractive place for you to visit?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

16. What is your age?

- 18-29 50-59 70-79
 30-39 60-69 80 or older
 40-49

17. Are you? Male Female

18. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Eighth grade
 High school
 1-3 years of college (includes 2-year degree)
 4-year college degree
 Graduate degree

19. What is the zip code of your primary residence? _____

Thank you for sharing your experiences!
Please feel free to share any additional comments below...

APPENDIX C: Cover Letter Sample

Date

<Address>

Dear <First Name>,

Recently you were contacted at <intercept location> and asked to participate in a visitor study. The purpose of this study is to assess your experiences on your trip. To ensure high quality visitor experiences, we need a better understanding of travel patterns and visitor perceptions of the nature tourism opportunities in Washington County.

We would greatly appreciate your help by filling out the enclosed questionnaire. It deals primarily with trip activities and assessment of travel experiences. Please answer the questions based on your visit to Washington County during which we met you. Information from this study will help provide high quality nature tourism experiences in Washington County, and will assist in informing local tourism initiatives about visitor satisfaction with the current opportunities.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire as thoroughly and accurately as possible, and return it in the self-addressed pre-paid envelope. You have been selected as part of a sample of visitors to nature tourism destinations in Washington County. The usefulness of this survey depends on those selected, such as you, returning the questionnaires. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only; your response will be held in the strictest of confidence. Once you return the questionnaire, your name and address will be eliminated from the computer database. Your name will never be associated with your responses.

This provides you the opportunity to express your views on nature tourism opportunities in Washington County. If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact me at (207) 255-1303.

Your willingness to participate in this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Andrea Ednie
Assistant Professor
Environmental Recreation & Tourism Management