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# 2012-2013 Presque Isle State Park Visitor Survey: Final Report

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Conservation and Natural Resources  
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Recreation, Park and Tourism Management  
The Pennsylvania State University

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# INTRODUCTION

## Study Background and Objectives

With its numerous lakefront, beach and water-based recreation and environmental educational opportunities, Presque Isle State Park has long been recognized as one of Pennsylvania State Parks' crown jewels. It attracts over 4.2 million visitors annually from the local region, the United States, and abroad. The geological and biological diversity of this park, along with its historical significance to the Erie region, has made the Park an attractive destination for nature enthusiasts and a variety of outdoor recreationists. It is a favorite spot for bird migration and, because of its many unique habitats, has been designated as a National Natural Landmark.

Over the last decade, several park improvements, expansions, and program efforts have occurred at Presque Isle State Park. Moreover, the contributions of the park to its local economy and ecology have been enhanced through innovative programming and facility improvements, including construction of the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in 2006. Despite Presque Isle's unique position as one of the Commonwealth's premier destination parks, State Park managers and local stakeholders (e.g., VisitErie, Presque Isle Partnership, Friends of TREC) do not have current data on park visitors, their park behaviors, their trip expenditures, and their opinions for improving park experiences. In 2011, these partners identified a need to better understand the characteristics, behaviors, expenditures, attitudes, and evaluations of visitors to Presque Isle State Park. Relevant questions asked by these stakeholders included:

*Who are our visitors?*

- What are the socio-demographic characteristics of Presque Isle State Park visitors and visitors at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?
- What are their patterns of use including their travel distance, frequency of use, length of stay, use of overnight accommodations, activity type, and group size?
- What areas/facilities at Presque Isle do visitors use; what other area attractions outside of Presque Isle State Park do they visit as part of their trip to the park?
- Who uses the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?

*What are our visitors looking for from their Presque Isle State Park visit and experience?*

- What are their satisfaction levels for specific Presque Isle State Park resources, amenities, and services and what is their overall level of satisfaction?
- How much money do visitors spend during their trips to Presque Isle State Park, both overall and for specific expenditure categories?
- What suggestions do visitors have for improving the management of Presque Isle State Park?

While previous studies had gathered some data on visitors' characteristics and trip behaviors, and desired improvements (Mowen, Kerstetter, Graefe, & Miles, 2006), they were limited in scope and did not assess park use across the four seasons. Moreover, prior studies had not assessed visitors' trip expenditures, their use of the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, and many other important managerial concerns (e.g., attitudes toward the beach resource, preferences for park management/marketing strategies, etc.). In response to these gaps, DCNR commissioned Penn State to conduct a four season survey to collect data and provide answers to these questions. This study was conducted from May 2012 to May 2013 and was funded through the generous contributions of DCNR, Penn State Behrend, Pennsylvania Sea Grant, Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority, Presque Isle Partnership, and Friends of TREC.

The purpose of this study was to collect, analyze, and interpret the following information:

- A socio-demographic visitor profile (e.g., age, sex, race, income, in-state vs. out-of-state residency, presence of children and number of children in groups)
- Trip characteristics and park activities and behaviors (e.g., travel distance, length of stay, frequency of visits, day use vs. overnight stay in the region)
- The type of overnight accommodations used for out-of-town visitors
- Park areas, facilities, and services used within a typical year
- Use of and attitudes toward the Tom Ridge Environmental Center; its facilities, programs, and services
- Recreation activities pursued within the park, including visitors' primary activity

- Other area attractions visited *outside* of the park as part of visitors' park trip
- Trip expenditures across specific categories (e.g., accommodations, restaurants, fuel, and other area attractions) spent within 50 miles of the park
- Whether visitors used information to plan for their trip to the park as well as the type of information used and the source(s) of that information
- Visitor preferences for recreation opportunities available in the park and the region, including what other activities, events, programs they would participate in if made available
- Visitor perceptions and behaviors related to beach recreation and the beach resource
- Visitor evaluation of quality across various park services and amenities as well as their overall satisfaction levels
- Visitor ideas and suggestions for improving park facilities
- Visitor ideas and suggestions for strategies that might help them extend their stay, increase their frequency of visitation, and their spending

## Methods

The overall survey methodology, sampling design, and questioning strategies were generally comparable with procedures used in prior Pennsylvania State Park visitor studies (e.g., PA-VUM) except that more sampling days were allocated to this effort. A systematic sampling plan was developed to survey Presque Isle State Park visitors on different days of the week, at different times of day, at different locations or zones within the park, and across different seasons. A detailed sampling schedule, which identified the specific survey zones, days, and time of day for on-site interviewing was established in consultation with the Bureau of State Parks and Sea Grant personnel. This sampling schedule provided for a total of 300 sampling days throughout the study period, with approximately 60 sampling days for winter sampling and 80 days each for the other seasons. The park was geographically divided into 5 survey zones to allow for more thorough coverage of the various activity areas within the park. Researchers implemented a roving intercept technique, traveling to selected sites within each

zone to locate and interview park visitors. Zones 2-5 were located within the park interior, while Zone 1 encompassed only the Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC). TREC received 32 survey days while all other survey zones received 67 total survey days each. A detailed sampling matrix is provided in Appendix A. Survey sampling shift times (e.g., AM, PM) were distributed evenly across the zones and shift times were also adjusted to fit the season.

On-site face-to-face interviews were used to obtain data from a sample of recreationists visiting the park. Only adults 18 years of age or older were eligible to participate in this study. All on-site surveys were conducted by trained Sea Grant project staff while all data entry and statistical analyses were conducted by Penn State RPTM staff. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete and included three different modules/versions (e.g., experience, economics, TREC). The TREC questionnaire version was only used for surveys conducted at the Center, while researchers systematically alternated between the other two versions when surveying within each of the other four zones. All three survey versions used a “base set” of consistent items, which assessed demographics, park behaviors, activity types, and use of information for trip planning. The experience version also included additional questions that assessed visitors’ perceived quality/satisfaction regarding various park services, their level of support for specific beach management strategies, and their overall satisfaction levels. The open-ended/economics version included additional questions assessing their suggestions for improving the quality of their visit, extending their length of stay, suggestions for new park activities/services/facilities, and visitors’ trip expenditures. The TREC version included specific questions about the Center including perceived quality assessments and visitors’ suggestions for improving exhibits and the overall Center experience. The TREC version also included trip expenditure questions.

In total, interviewers approached 3,022 visitors to request their participation in the study. Among these visitors, 2,593 people were willing to participate for an overall response rate of 86.0%. Response rates for each of the four use seasons and across two survey zones (TREC vs. elsewhere) are provided in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. This report presents key survey results organized by topical area (e.g., visitor profile, trip visitation patterns, etc.). Each



section follows a consistent format, with the key findings illustrated by bullet points, followed by the relevant tables. Comparisons of key study variables (e.g., type of visitor, season of use, and survey location) are provided in the narrative when there were significant differences. Appendix B provides a copy of all three survey instruments combined into one document.

**Table 1: Survey Response Rate by Season**

	<b>Winter (12/1 – 2/28)</b>	<b>Spring (3/1 – 5/31)</b>	<b>Summer (6/1 – 8/30)</b>	<b>Fall (9/1 – 11/30)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Respondents	420	590	890	693	2593
Refusals	62	96	132	139	429
Response Rate	87%	86%	87%	83%	86%
Percent of Overall Sample	16.2%	22.8%	34.3%	26.7%	100%

**Table 2: Survey Response Rate by Presque Isle State Park Survey Location**

	<b>TREC (Zone 1)</b>	<b>Other Park Survey Locations (Zones 2-5)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Respondents	294	2299	2593
Refusals	25	404	429
Response Rate	92%	85%	86%
Percent of Overall Sample	11%	89%	100%

## RESULTS

### Visitor Profile

- Sex/gender within the sample was generally distributed evenly, with males representing a slight majority (56%).
- The average age of this adult sample was 48 years with 24% representing the 18-35 year age group, 27% representing the 36-50 year age group, 36% representing the 51-64 year age group, and 13% representing the 65 and older age group.
- Almost half (49%) reported household incomes greater than \$74,999 while 28% reported household incomes less than \$50,000.
- A large majority of the State Park visitors surveyed (94%) reported their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian. Other ethnicities reported included African-American and Hispanic.
- Over one out of four visitors at Presque Isle State Park traveled from out-of-state (27%).
- The demographic characteristics of visitors who traveled more than 50 miles to visit the park *and* who stayed overnight in the region were also examined. Almost half of these visitors (45%) were not Pennsylvania residents. They were more likely to report household incomes greater than \$75,000 (Table 3, next page). There were no differences in age, race, or gender between out-of-town overnight park visitors and other visitors.



**Table 3. Presque Isle State Park Visitor Profile**

Variable	All Visitors		Out-of-Town Overnight Visitors	
	% or Mean	n	% or Mean	n
<i>Residency Status</i>				
Pennsylvania Resident	72.5	2192	51.1	256
<i>Income</i>				
\$25,000 or less	8.5	185	3.8	15
\$25,000 to \$49,999	19.1	416	13.6	53
\$50,000 to \$74,999	23.2	505	21.0	82
\$75,000 to \$99,999	25.3	550	26.1	102
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20.7	450	29.4	115
\$150,000 or more	3.3	71	6.1	24
<i>Age</i>				
Average Age	48 Years		48 Years	
18-35	24.0	613	20.6	102
36-50	27.4	699	29.8	147
51-64	35.6	909	38.1	188
65 and Older	13.0	333	11.5	57
<i>Race/Ethnic Background</i>				
White	94.2	2409	92.5	454
Black or African American	4.0	103	4.7	23
Hispanic/Latino	1.8	45	2.9	14
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	55.9	1686	54.5	272
Female	44.1	1329	45.6	228

## Trip Visitation Patterns

- Presque Isle State Park visitors were predominately repeat users; only 9% of survey respondents said that they were visiting the park for the first time (Table 4).
- Approximately 1 out of 5 visitors (20%) reported that their trip to Presque Isle State Park was part of an overnight stay in the region, while 80% reported that their visit was a day trip.
- Across all park visitors, the average length of stay in the park was 3.8 hours. Only 11% visited for an hour or less, while 44% stayed for 4 hours or more.
- For *overnight visitors*, the average length of stay in the region was 4.7 nights and the average length of stay in the park (during their visit that day) was 4.89 hours. For *day trip visitors*, the average length of stay in the park was 3.5 hours.
- Among those who indicated that their visit was part of an overnight trip to the region, 43% said they were staying at a hotel/motel, 33% said they were staying at a friend's or family member's house (for free), and 16% said they were staying at a private campground.
- Visitors traveled an average of 89.6 miles from their home to the park. Approximately 30% reported traveling more than 50 miles from their home to visit the park.
- Approximately 17% of all visitors (N = 501) reported traveling farther than 50 miles to visit the park *and* staying overnight in the region during their trip. These out-of-town overnight visitors are an important visitor segment for the region's tourism industry. They form the basis for several statistical comparisons provided in this report.
- Presque Isle State Park visitors used the park on a frequent basis (particularly in comparison to other State Parks across the Commonwealth). Survey respondents reported that they made an average of 33 trips to the park over the past 12 months. Only 16% reported visiting the park only once during this time frame, while 57% reported visiting 10 or more times.
- The average group size for Presque Isle State Park visitors was 3.8 people. Approximately 20% visited alone, 38% visited with one other person, 24% visited in groups of 3 to 4 people, and 17% visited in groups of 5 or more people.
- About 71% of respondents indicated that there were no children under the age of 16 in their group (Table 4). Among those who were visiting with children (n=752), 37% reported one child, 35% reported two children, and 28% reported three or more children.

**Table 4. Presque Isle State Park Trip Visitation Patterns**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>% or Mean</b>	<b>n</b>
<i>Trip Type – Part of an Overnight Trip to the Region</i>	20.2	522
<i>Trip Type - Day Trip</i>	79.8	2062
<i>If part of an overnight trip, average number of nights away from home (within 50 miles of the Park)</i>	4.7 nights	498
<i>Length of Stay at Presque Isle State Park</i>		
Average hours spent in Park	3.8 Hours	2581
1 hour	11.1	286
2 hours	26.2	677
3 hours	18.4	476
4 hours	15.1	390
5 or more hours	29.1	752
<i>First Time Visitor to Presque Isle State Park</i>	9.3	239
<i>Type of Overnight Accommodation</i>		
Hotel/Motel	43.0	226
Friend/Family House (free)	33.3	175
Private Campground	15.8	83
Other	4.9	26
Private Cottage/Camp	1.7	9
Bed & Breakfast	1.1	6
<i>Distance Traveled from Home to the Park</i>		
Average Total Distance Traveled	89.6 miles	2582
Visitors traveling 50 Miles or More	30%	779
<i>Visitors Traveling 50+ Miles <u>and</u> Staying Overnight in the Region</i>	16.6	501
<i>Number of Trips to the Park</i>		
Average Trips Per Year	33.0 trips	2,549
1 Trip Only	16.0	407
2 to 4 Trips	16.3	416
5 to 9 Trips	10.4	266
10 to 30 trips	29.2	744
31 or More Trips	28.1	716
<i>Group Size - Average Group Size</i>	3.8 people	2,588
Visited Alone	20.3	526
2 People Per Group	38.1	987
3 to 4 People Per Group	24.3	629
5 or More People Per Group	17.2	446
<i>Children Under 16 in Group</i>		
No Children in Group	70.9	1836
1 Child in Group	10.7	277
2 Children in Group	10.2	265
3 or More Children in Group	8.1	210

## Activity Participation and Facilities Utilized

Presque Isle State Park visitors were asked to identify each activity they had participated in (or planned to participate in) during their visit, as well as their primary activity (Table 5). The first column shows the range in valid percentages of visitors participating in the various activities, while the second column reflects what the visitors considered their primary or most important activity for their visit to the park. Visitors who indicated boating as an activity were asked about the type of watercraft used (Table 6). Finally, visitors were asked to indicate park areas, facilities, or services they visit or use in a typical year (Table 7) and the other attractions outside of the park they had visited or would visit during that particular trip (Table 8).

- Relaxing/hanging out (44%), viewing natural features (43%), hiking/walking (39%), driving for pleasure (26%), and swimming (22%) were the most frequently mentioned activities among Presque Isle State Park visitors. Hiking/walking (17%), relaxing/hanging out (13%), fishing from shore (12%), and other (8%), were most frequently mentioned as visitors' *primary or most important* activities.
- Hiking/walking was one of the more popular activities at the park (39%) and visitors who participated in this activity also tended to cite it as their most primary activity (17%).
- There are several activities in which primary participation was low relative to overall participation, suggesting they are ancillary activities for participants. These include viewing natural features (43%/3%), sunbathing (18%/3%), picnicking (18%/4%), and driving for pleasure (26%/5%).
- Visitors who indicated motorized or non-motorized boating as one of their park activities were asked to indicate the type of watercraft(s) used. Kayaks (45%), motorized boats (38%), and canoes (11%) were the most common watercraft used during their visit.
- Visitors were asked to indicate specific areas *within the park* that they used in a typical year. Beaches (81%), paved multi-purpose trails (69%), picnic areas (51%), and Perry Monument (49%) were the most frequently cited park areas used. Out of town overnight visitors were less likely than other visitors to use the trails, fishing piers, marina, and ponds.
- Finally, visitors were asked about area attractions *outside of the park* they visited (or would visit) on their trip to Presque Isle State Park. A slight majority (52%) reported that the park was the sole destination. Outside destinations indicated with the most frequency included restaurants/bars (30%), shopping areas (18%), and Waldameer/Waterworld (7%).
- Out of town overnight visitors were more likely than other park visitors to visit most types of attractions listed in the survey especially area restaurants/bars (55%), shopping areas (33%), Waldameer (17%), and Erie Zoo (11%) on their trip to Presque Isle State Park

**Table 5. Recreation Activity Participation and Primary Activity at Presque Isle State Park**

Type of Activity (Note: top 7 activities in each column are bolded for ease of reference)	Activity Participation*	Primary Activity
Valid %		
<b>Beach Activities</b>		
Swimming or wading	<b>22.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Sunbathing	<b>17.5</b>	2.5
Collecting shells, beach glass, etc.	10.6	1.0
Kite flying	2.2	
Surfing or windsurfing	< 1	
Parasailing	< 1	
Playing volleyball	< 1	
Using a metal detector	< 1	
Other: Playing in sand, walking on the beach, football	1.1	
<b>Fishing and Hunting</b>		
Fishing from shore	17.0	<b>12.3</b>
Ice fishing	2.7	2.5
Fishing from boats	2.3	1.6
Hunting waterfowl	< 1	
<b>Viewing, Learning about Nature &amp; Culture</b>		
Viewing natural features (e.g. scenery, wildlife, birds, flowers, fish, etc.)	<b>43.4</b>	2.7
Visiting the Tom Ridge Environmental Center	13.4	<b>6.7</b>
Visiting historic and pre-historic sites/areas	12.2	
Photography	10.8	2.0
Bird watching	10.3	1.8
Viewing wayside exhibits, interpretive kiosks	6.5	
Visiting the Stull Interpretive Center	< 1	
Scuba diving	< 1	
<b>Non-motorized Activities</b>		
Hiking or walking	<b>38.8</b>	<b>16.6</b>
Bicycling	8.0	4.3
Running for exercise	4.0	2.4
Non-motorized boating (canoeing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, etc.)	3.2	1.9
In-line skating	< 1	
Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing	< 1	
Ice skating, Ice hockey	--	
<b>Motorized Activities</b>		
Driving for pleasure on roads	<b>26.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Motorized boating	2.7	1.2
Taking a boat tour of the park	< 1	
Waterskiing, wakeboarding, or tubing	< 1	
<b>Other Activities</b>		
Relaxing, hanging out	<b>44.3</b>	<b>12.6</b>
Picnicking and family gatherings	<b>17.5</b>	3.6
Visiting a special event or festival	2.0	
Attending a program offered at the park	1.5	
Other: Deer hunting, DPI, triathlon, trick or treat, dog walking	11.6	<b>7.7</b>

\* Percentages do not equal 100% because respondents could report more than one activity

**Table 6. If Boater, Primary Watercraft Type Used at Presque Isle State Park**

<b>Watercraft Type</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>n</b>
Kayak	44.7	72
Motorboat	37.9	61
Canoe	11.2	18
Personal Watercraft (Jet Ski)	5.0	8
Tour Boat	5.0	8
Sailboat	3.7	6
Rowboat	2.5	4
Raft	< 1.0	1
Houseboat	< 1.0	1

\* Percentages do not equal 100% because respondents could report more than one watercraft type

**Table 7. Presque Isle State Park Facilities Visited/Used in a Typical Year**

<b>Facility or Area</b>	<b>Valid %</b>	<b>n</b>
Beaches	81.1	2098
Paved multi-purpose trails	68.9	1781
Picnic areas	50.9	1315
Perry Monument	49.0	1266
Other trails	39.6	1024
Tom Ridge Environmental Center	38.8	1003
Fishing piers	34.9	902
Presque Isle Light House	33.8	873
Lake Erie or Presque Isle Bay	33.3	862
Ponds	27.1	701
Boat launches	18.9	488
Marina	17.4	449
Food concessions	16.8	434
Boat tours of Lake Erie	12.9	334
Gull Point Natural Area	12.8	331
Bike rental office	7.8	203
Boat rental office	4.4	113

\* Percentages do not equal 100% because respondents could report more than one facility/area used



**Table 8. Area Attractions *Outside* of Presque Isle State Park Visited on this Trip**

Attraction	All Visitors		Out of Town Overnight Visitors	
	Valid %	n	Valid %	n
No other attraction visited	51.5	1328	18.2	91
Restaurants/Bars	29.5	761	54.6	273
Shopping areas	17.5	451	33.2	166
Waldameer, Inc. and Waterworld	7.2	185	17.2	86
Erie Zoo	4.0	102	10.6	53
Presque Isle Downs and Casino	3.9	101	9.0	45
Historic sites	3.8	98	10.2	51
Museums	3.2	83	9.4	47
Sporting events	2.8	73	5.8	29
Local wineries	2.8	73	7.4	37
Theatres/Arts Centers	1.8	46	3.0	15
Splash Lagoon Waterpark	1.3	33	3.0	15
Golf Courses	1.3	34	2.0	10
Music venues	1.3	34	1.8	9
Other	2.7	70	4.4	22

\* Percentages do not equal 100% because respondents could report more than one attraction visited on the trip

## Perceptions of Quality, Overall Satisfaction, and Management Opinions

Visitors were asked to evaluate a number of Presque Isle State Park features, resources, and services in terms of their quality and overall satisfaction (Table 9) and share their opinions concerning the beach resource and beach management practices (Table 10).

- Presque Isle State Park was rated extremely high for 12 of the 14 quality attributes assessed, with over 80% of the scores in the “good” or “very good” categories.
- Visitors were most satisfied with the scenery, feeling of personal safety, condition of the natural environment, condition of the trails, and perceived value for the money invested in the visit (Approximately 95% or more reporting good/very good).
- Presque Isle State Park attributes receiving lower ratings (< 80% good/very good) included restroom availability (66% good/very good) and restroom cleanliness (51% good/very good).
- Items receiving the most “not applicable” responses included quality of the park programs, helpfulness of employees, and condition of trails. Generally, these “not applicable” responses reflect the fact that the respondents did not encounter or use these items during their visits.
- Overall satisfaction at Presque Isle State Park was extremely high with almost 99% indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied. This evaluation was consistent with prior surveys conducted at this park and across other State Parks in the Commonwealth.
- In terms of the beach resource and beach management strategies, visitors were more likely to agree that they valued the lifeguards (91% agreement), supported temporary closures for health reasons (90% agreement) or replenishment reasons (78% agreement), and that beach parking was adequate (90% agreement). Furthermore, 70% agreed that they preferred swimming at Presque Isle beaches over other beaches because of the lifeguards.
- Beach resource/strategy items that received less approval (or agreement) included potential value-added services that could be offered by the park or its concessionaires. For example, only 22% agreed they wished there were coin operated shower stalls and changing rooms and only 31% agreed they wished there were chair or umbrella rentals.
- In terms of food and beverage services, only 36% felt that there were not enough places to get food and beverages at the park. However, a slight majority (59%) agreed that they wished food and beverage vendors provided patio-style seating and dining areas.

- Park visitors who traveled 50 miles or more *and* stayed overnight in the region gave higher ratings than did other park users on the following park features: the condition of the natural environment, the condition of the beaches, and the overall cleanliness of the park. These out-of-town, overnight visitors were also more likely than others to support temporary beach closings for safety purposes and to perceive that restroom facilities were adequate.
- In terms of seasonal variations, springtime visitors rated the park’s cleanliness and the condition of park beaches lower than did visitors surveyed at other seasons. Summer visitors rated restroom cleanliness lower than did fall or winter visitors.
- Springtime visitors were less likely than visitors from the other seasons to support beach closures for safety purposes, but were more likely to desire food & beverage patio style seating as well as chair and umbrella rentals. Both summer and spring visitors were less likely than fall or winter visitors to agree that the park’s restroom facilities were adequate.
- Summer and fall visitors reported higher levels of overall satisfaction than did the visitors surveyed during spring and winter.

**Table 9. Visitor Quality Ratings for Presque Isle State Park**

State Park Feature/Attribute <sup>a</sup>	Mean	% Good or Very Good	% Not Applicable
Scenery	4.79	98.4	---
Feeling of personal safety	4.63	96.6	<1
Condition of the natural environment	4.54	96.2	<1
Value for the money invested in this State Park visit	4.48	94.9	10.9
Condition of trails in this State Park	4.43	95.3	14.4
Helpfulness of employees	4.41	91.7	19.4
Quality of park programs	4.36	84.8	41.9
Cleanliness of this park	4.35	92.2	<1
Condition of the beaches	4.32	89.4	5.7
Condition of developed recreation facilities	4.25	89.9	8.8
Adequacy of signage	4.16	82.5	1.3
Maintenance of facilities (roads, shelters, buildings)	4.11	81.7	1.4
Restroom availability	3.81	66.4	4.6
Restroom cleanliness	3.44	50.5	11
Overall Satisfaction <sup>b</sup>	4.51	% Satisfied or Very Satisfied 98.8	

a - measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=average, 4=good, and 5=very good

b - measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=Neither, 4=satisfied, 5=very satisfied.

**Table 10. Visitor Response to Beach Management Strategies**

Statement <sup>a</sup>	Mean	% Agree or Strongly Agree	% Don't Know
I value the lifeguards that are provided at Presque Isle beaches.	4.48	91.1	6.9
I would support temporarily closing sections of the beach for safety purposes.	4.45	89.9	1.5
Beach parking areas are adequate at Presque Isle.	4.26	90.4	4.8
I would support temporarily closing sections of the beach for beach replenishment purposes (e.g., for adding sand).	4.22	78.4	2.2
I prefer swimming at Presque Isle beaches to swimming at other beaches because of the lifeguards.	4.03	69.6	10.8
Beach house facilities at Presque Isle State Park are adequate.	3.89	78.1	20
Outdoor foot showers are adequate for rinsing off at Presque Isle beach areas.	3.80	73.2	15.5
Restroom facilities at Presque Isle State Park are adequate.	3.77	72.5	6.1
I wish that food and beverage vendors at Presque Isle provided patio-style seating and dining areas.	3.56	58.7	10.5
There are <u>not</u> enough places to get food and beverages at Presque Isle State Park.	3.08	35.9	9.5
I wish there were chair and umbrella rentals available at Presque Isle State Park.	3.04	30.7	13.4
I wish there were coin-operated indoor shower stalls and changing rooms available at Presque Isle beach areas.	2.37	21.7	15.2

<sup>a</sup> measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree

## Use of Trip Planning Information

One purpose of this study was to assess how visitors use information to plan their trip to Presque Isle State Park *and* what information sources they used. Survey questions focused specifically on the “what,” “when,” and “where” aspects of the information search process. Use of trip planning information was also compared across type of user (out-of-town overnight visitors vs. others), season of use (winter, spring, summer and fall), and survey location (at TREC vs. other areas in the park). Tables 11 and 12 present findings from the full sample (all visitors) and from visitors who traveled 50 miles or more and stayed overnight in the region.

- Overall, only 15% of all park visitors obtained information about the region during their trip or in preparation for it (Table 11). Out-of-town overnight visitors were more likely than other park visitors to obtain information for their trip planning (42%).
- Visitors who did obtain information were asked about the type obtained (Table 12). Park maps were the predominant type used (66% among the entire sample, 74% among out-of-town overnight visitors). In general, out-of-town overnight visitors used the various types of information at higher rates than did other park visitors. However, other park visitors were more likely than out of town overnight visitors to cite “other” sources.” These “other” sources included weather reports, ice reports, fishing information, and beach advisories.
- Visitors were also asked “when” they received their trip information. A majority (69%) said that they received this information before they left home (Table 13).
- Finally, park visitors were asked about the *source* of their trip information. The internet (62%), the park office (29%), and “other” (17%) were the most commonly identified sources (Table 14). Other sources included hotels, AAA, family/friends, mailings, and rest-stops.
- Visitors surveyed at TREC were more likely than visitors surveyed elsewhere in the park to obtain trip information about the region during their trip or in preparation for it.
- Summer visitors were more likely than visitors from other seasons to obtain trip information.
- When comparing the type of information obtained, summer and fall visitors were more likely than other visitors to use park maps, spring visitors were more likely than others to use the PA Visitors Guide, spring and summer visitors were more likely than others to use the Erie Visitor Guide, and winter visitors were more likely to use “other” types of information.
- When comparing the source of trip information, winter visitors were *less* likely than other visitors to obtain information at the park office, summer visitors were more likely than others to obtain information over the internet, and winter and spring visitors were more likely than others to obtain information from newspapers/magazines and “other sources.”

**Table 11. Was Information about the Region Obtained for the Trip?**

Response	All Visitors		Out-of-Town Overnight Visitors	
	Valid %	n	Valid %	n
Yes	14.5	374	41.7	209
No	85.5	2211	58.3	292

**Table 12. Type of Information Obtained for the Trip**

Type of Information	All		Out-of-Town Overnight Visitors	
	Valid %	n	Valid %	n
Park Map	65.7	243	73.9	153
Other	29.4	109	18.3	38
Erie Map	21.0	78	28.4	59
Erie Visitors Guide	18.1	67	24.5	51
PA Visitors Guide	10.2	38	14.9	31

**Table 13. Timeframe when Trip Information was Obtained**

When Received/Obtained	Valid %	n
Before leaving home	69.3	244
After leaving home	30.7	108

**Table 14. Origin or Source of the Trip Information**

Source	Valid %	n
Internet	62.3	231
Park office	28.6	106
Other	16.7	62
Newspaper or magazine article	10.0	37
Pennsylvania Visitor Center	7.5	28
Erie Visitor Center	3.0	11
Smartphone App	2.4	9

## Economic and Expenditure Questions

### Economic Questions

Another goal of this research was to gather a more accurate profile of visitor expenditures for future economic impact analyses. In this survey, visitors were asked a range of questions about their monetary expenditures during their State Park trip. Additional economics questions focused on the respondents' trip itinerary (see Table 15). These questions were asked to establish a context for evaluation of the reported trip expenditures. What follows in this section of the report is a description of economics data for all park visitors and by park visitors with different travel distances (e.g., less than 50 miles, 50 miles or more).

- Most of the respondents (92%) indicated that Presque Isle State Park was their primary trip destination.
- A majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they did spend some money within 50 miles of Presque Isle State Park on their current trip.
- Many respondents, however, indicated that they spent no money on many of the specific expenditure categories listed on the survey instrument (see Table 16, next page).
- When queried about how many people their reported expenditures were covering, the most typical response (36%) was 3-5 visitors while 21% said that their expenditures covered just one person (themselves). Furthermore, only 10% said that their expenditures covered five or more people.

**Table 15. Presque Isle State Park Trip Profile (for Economics Section)**

Economics Questions	% or mean	n
<i>Was Presque Isle State Park your primary destination on this trip?</i>		
Yes	91.9	2396
No	8.1	197
<i>Did you or other members of your party spend money on this trip within 50 miles of this park?</i>		
Yes	59.1	855
No	40.9	594
<i>Number of people covered by expenses</i>		
Average number of people	3.16	2,462
1 person	20.5	115
2 people	34.1	191
3-5 people	35.7	200
5 or more people	9.6	54

## Specific Trip Expenditures – Proportion of Spending and Spending Amounts

In addition to the contextual economics questions, visitors were asked how much they spent on this trip within 50 miles of Presque Isle State Park for ten categories of expenditures. The results shown in the following tables provide the percentage of visitors reporting expenditures in each category (Table 16) and the average amount spent in each category, first among those spending some money in each category (Table 17) and then for all park visitors (Table 18). A brief summary of these findings is now provided.

- Across the 10 expenditure categories, visitors were most likely to report spending in restaurants and bars (28%), for gasoline and oil (23%), and for motel, lodge, cabin or bed & breakfast (10%).
- Few visitors overall reported any spending on “local transportation,” “outfitter related expenses,” “camping” and “outdoor recreation and entertainment” expenditure categories.
- Visitors traveling 50 miles or more to the park were more likely than visitors who traveled less than 50 miles to spend money across the various expenditure categories, particularly for restaurants and bars (61%), gasoline and oil (49%), motel, lodge, cabin, or bed & breakfast (30%), groceries (15%), and souvenirs, clothing, other misc. (11%).

**Table 16. Summary of Specific Trip Expenditure Percentages**

Economic Expenditure Items	Everyone	n	Traveled 0-49 miles	n	Traveled 50 miles or more	n
Motel, Lodge, Cabin, B&B, etc.	9.6%	1443	0.5%	993	29.9%	448
Restaurants and Bars	28.0%	1441	13.0%	992	61.1%	447
Groceries	7.8%	1443	4.4%	993	15.2%	448
Outfitter Related Expenses	1.7%	1442	1.8%	992	1.6%	448
Sporting Goods	4.9%	1444	3.9%	993	7.1%	449
Camping	1.9%	1443	0.1%	993	6.0%	448
Local Transportation	0.2%	1442	0.1%	992	0.4%	448
Gasoline and Oil	22.6%	1441	10.6%	992	49.0%	447
Outdoor Recreation/Entertainment	3.0%	1444	1.1%	993	7.1%	449
Souvenirs, Clothing, Other Misc.	4.6%	1444	1.7%	993	10.9%	449



- Table 17 shows the average amount spent among only those visitors reporting spending something in each category. These numbers cannot be totaled because they are based on a varying number of individuals making the various types of purchases.
- Table 18 shows the average amount spent among all visitors in the survey. These averages include those spending nothing in various categories, and therefore can be totaled to indicate the average total amount spent for all categories.
- The average total amount spent during visitors' trips to Presque Isle State Park (all visitors) was \$80.95. Those traveling under 50 miles spent an average total amount of \$15.61 while those traveling 50 miles or more spent a total average amount of \$226.09 (Table 18).
- Camping expenses were made by only about 2% of the entire sample, but the average amount spent in this category was \$283.21 (Table 17).
- Motel, lodge, cabin, and B&B expenditures were made by only about 10% of visitors, and the average amount spent in this category was \$244.15. (Table 17).
- Local transportation expenses (which included bus services, shuttle fees) were made by less than 1% of visitors, but the average amount spent in this category was \$258.33. These expenses likely came from visitors who were part of a commercial bus tour in the region.
- Outfitter related expenses (including guide fees and equipment rentals) were made by only about 2% of all visitors and the average amount spent in this category was \$21.92.
- The most frequently indicated expenses (e.g., restaurants and bars, gas/oil, groceries) averaged \$74.91 for restaurants and bars, \$71.41 for gas and oil, and \$75.34 for groceries (Table 17).
- For those visitors traveling 50 miles or more, these expense amounts were somewhat higher and averaged \$95.61 for restaurants and bars, \$85.21 for gas and oil, and \$85.38 for groceries.
- Those who traveled 50 miles or more spent more on sporting goods (\$86.81 vs. \$36.36) and outdoor recreation and entertainment (\$63.41 vs. \$35.18) than did those who traveled less than 50 miles to visit the park (Table 17).

**Table 17. Summary of Average Spent - Among Visitors Spending Something in Each Category**

Economic Expenditure Items	Everyone	n	Traveled 0-49 miles	n	Traveled 50 miles or more	n
Motel, Lodge, Cabin, B&B, etc.	\$244.15	139	\$120.20	5	\$248.78	134
Restaurants and Bars	\$74.91	403	\$31.52	129	\$95.61	273
Groceries	\$75.34	112	\$59.82	44	\$85.38	68
Outfitter Related Expenses	\$21.92	25	\$17.78	18	\$32.57	7
Sporting Goods	\$59.10	71	\$36.36	39	\$86.81	32
Camping	\$283.21	28	\$175.00	1	\$287.22	27
Local Transportation	\$258.33	3	\$200.00	1	\$287.50	2
Gasoline and Oil	\$71.41	325	\$43.10	105	\$85.21	219
Outdoor Recreation/Entertainment	\$56.19	43	\$35.18	11	\$63.41	32
Souvenirs, Clothing, Other Misc.	\$77.21	66	\$68.18	17	\$80.35	49

**Table 18. Summary of Average Spent Among All Park Visitors**

Economic Expenditure Items	Everyone	n	Traveled 0-49 miles	n	Traveled 50 miles or more	n
Motel, Lodge, Cabin, B&B, etc.	\$23.52	1443	\$0.61	993	\$74.41	448
Restaurants and Bars	\$20.95	1441	\$4.10	992	\$58.39	447
Groceries	\$5.85	1443	\$2.65	993	\$12.96	448
Outfitter Related Expenses	\$0.38	1442	\$0.32	992	\$0.51	448
Sporting Goods	\$2.91	1444	\$1.43	993	\$6.19	449
Camping	\$5.50	1443	\$0.18	993	\$17.31	448
Local Transportation	\$0.54	1442	\$0.20	992	\$1.28	448
Gasoline and Oil	\$16.10	1441	\$4.56	992	\$41.75	447
Outdoor Recreation/Entertainment	\$1.67	1444	\$0.39	993	\$4.52	449
Souvenirs, Clothing, Other Misc.	\$3.53	1444	\$1.17	993	\$8.77	449
<b>TOTALS – ALL SPENDING</b>	<b>\$80.95</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$15.61</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>\$226.09</b>	<b>--</b>

## Tom Ridge Environmental Center Questions

The Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC) represents a signature facility for visitors to connect with the natural and cultural features of Presque Isle State Park and the Erie tourism region in general. The Center contributes to park visitor experiences through innovative exhibits and programming and it attracts over 100,000 visits annually. Since its opening in 2006, however, few studies have examined the behaviors and perceptions of its visitors. Thus, the present study included a targeted effort to collect data at the Center (32 days of sampling). In addition to core survey questions asked elsewhere through the park, Center visitors were asked about TREC, its facilities, programs, and services. Visitors surveyed elsewhere in the park were also asked about their use of TREC.

- Among visitors surveyed at TREC (N = 294), a majority (59%) were repeat visitors and 41% were first time visitors. TREC respondents averaged 6 trips to the Center annually (Table 19). Among visitors surveyed elsewhere in the park (N = 2,299), a majority (61%) said they had visited TREC while 39% said they had not (Table 20). For those who had visited TREC, the average number of visits was 3.3 times annually.
- TREC visitors (surveyed at TREC or elsewhere in the park) were asked what could be done to get them to *visit more frequently*. While many comments were positive (i.e., nothing to suggest/keep up the good work), some did suggest changes to exhibits, programs/facilities, movies, and general operations. When TREC non-users were asked if anything could be done to get them to visit TREC, 83% said, “no” (Table 20).
- Visitors surveyed at TREC evaluated the Center’s facilities and services very favorably with 6 out of 7 survey items being rated as good to excellent by 95% of respondents (Table 21). Interpretive displays and the Tower received the highest ratings while the restaurant/café received lower (but still favorable) ratings. There was little variation in perceived quality across the various TREC facilities/services assessed in the questionnaire.
- Visitors surveyed at TREC were asked if there was anything that could be done to *improve the quality of their Center experience*. A majority (78%) said nothing could be done to improve their experience (Table 19). Among the 22% who felt something could be done, adding new/rotating exhibits, placing the aqua lab up front, fixing broken exhibits, lowering exhibits for children, bringing back the dinosaur exhibit, changing movies, extending operation hours, increasing the visibility of DCNR staff, and improving signage were common issues identified.
- Visitors surveyed at TREC were asked if *any facilities or exhibits were missing* from TREC. Again, a majority (77%) indicated “no.” Those indicating missing facilities/exhibits (23%) cited things such as outdoor exhibits/nature trails, historical exhibits, aquatic/wetland/water quality exhibits, tactile exhibits, missing exhibit “parts,” and a schedule of park events/tours.

**Table 19. TREC Visitation and Opinions - Visitors Surveyed at TREC**

Variable	% or Mean	n
<i>Is this your first visit to TREC?</i>		
Yes	41.0	120
No	59.0	173
Average number of trips to TREC annually	6.06 trips	213
<i>Is there anything that TREC could do to improve the quality of your experience at this Center?</i>		
Yes*	21.6	63
No	78.4	228
<i>Any facilities/ exhibits missing from TREC?</i>		
Yes*	23.0	221
No	77.0	66

\* Those who said “yes” were asked what could be done to improve their experience or what facilities/exhibits were missing. These responses are provided in report narrative above.

**Table 20. TREC Visitation and Opinions - Visitors Surveyed Elsewhere in the Park**

Variable	% or Mean	n
<i>Have you ever visited TREC?</i>		
Yes	60.7	1388
No	39.3	898
Average number of trips to TREC annually	3.33 trips	1387
<i>Is there anything that could be done to get you to visit TREC? (question asked of non-users)</i>		
Yes*	16.6	148
No	83.4	745

\* Those saying “yes” were asked what could be done to get them to visit. Their responses are provided in the report narrative.

**Table 21. TREC Visitor Evaluation of the Center’s Features and Services**

Item <sup>a</sup>	Mean	% Good or Very Good	% Not Applicable
Interpretive and interactive displays	4.70	97.9	1.4
TREC tower	4.70	97.0	21.2
Movies on the Big Green Screen	4.69	98.2	43.2
Educational and recreational programs	4.68	97.4	48.3
Aquaculture labs	4.63	96.1	64.4
Gift shop	4.60	96.2	19.5
Restaurant/Café	4.16	78.8	54.8

<sup>a</sup> Measured on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = average, 4 = good and 5 = very good

## Synthesis of Open-ended Comments

Responses to various open-ended questions in this study were each reduced into a small, manageable set of themes. This process involved looking for common responses and grouping them into themes. “Themes... (i.e. categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea” (Creswell, 2013, p. 186). When necessary, sub-themes are highlighted to provide the reader with a more detailed understanding of visitor responses. Please note that the total number of responses to each theme may differ from the total number of responses aligned with each subtheme because some individuals made multiple points in their response to this question.

**Question: “What activities or services would you like to see available at Presque Isle State Park that currently do not exist?”**

**THEME: FACILITIES (n=228 or 21% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Place more benches throughout the Park (n=21)
- Place more garbage cans throughout the Park (n=17)
- Build a campground on the Park (n=17)
- Build a dog park (n=15)
- Build more bathrooms (n=15)
- Have a bait shop on the Park (n=13)
- Place more water fountains throughout the Park (n=11)
- Put better sand on the beaches (n=11)
- Offer accessible facilities (n=10)
- Place more picnic tables throughout the Park (n=10)
- Build more parking lots (n=10)
- Build more trails/paths (n=10)

**THEME: CAN’T THINK OF ANYTHING (n=193 or 18% of responses)**

**THEME: EVERYTHING IS FINE (n= 164 or 15% of responses)**

Sample comments included: “...This is one of the nicest parks I have visited...,” “...The Park is perfect with all the programs and events they have,” and “It is a wonderful place; we are very blessed to have such a nice park that does not change.”

**THEME: PROGRAMMING (n=154 or 14% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Offer music events (n=43)
- Offer guided tours (n=38)
  - Bus tours (n=9)
  - Miscellaneous (n=29)

- Offer kids programs/activities (n=16)
- Hold bonfires on the beach (n=10)
- Lessons for boating, sailing, paddle boarding, etc. (n=9)
- Miscellaneous suggestions (n=70)

Note: One individual who made a negative comment said, “[Don’t hold] so many special events.”

**THEME: CONCESSIONS (n=111 or 10% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Food and beverage services (n=50)
  - Put a restaurant in the Park (n=17)
  - Offer something more than food stands (n=17)
  - Offer healthier food (n=5)
  - Put a coffee shop in the Park (n=5)
  - Miscellaneous (n=6)
- Equipment rentals (n=46)
  - Jet skis (n=20)
  - Sailboats/boats (n=6)
  - Bikes (n=3)
  - Paddle boarding (n=3)
  - ATVs (n=3)
  - Fishing (n=3)
  - Rollerblades (n=2)
  - Other (n=6)
- Beach rentals (n=13)
  - Chairs (n=5)
  - Umbrella (n=4)
  - Miscellaneous (n=4)

**THEME: INFORMATION (n=60 or 6% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Provide better signage (n=27)
  - To locations within the Park (n=15)
  - Interpretive panels (n=4)
  - Warning signs (n=3)
  - To the Park (2)
  - Miscellaneous (n=3)
- More advertising (n=11)
  - “[Use] flyers that advertise all the opportunities [throughout] the Park. Run some more commercial ads or promotions.”
- Make maps of the Park available (n=9)

Visitors who responded to this open-ended question were also asked a follow-up question: Would you be willing to pay a small fee for these services? A slight majority of visitors (57%) said “no” while 43% said “yes.”

**Question: “If you could ask managers to improve the facilities at Presque Isle State Park, what would you ask them to do?”**

**THEME: MAINTENANCE (n=270 or 23% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Clean beaches (n=65)

*“...Groom the beaches more [by getting] rid of logs, sticks, [and] debris.”*

- Maintain trails (n=34)

*“Keep trails clear of weeds and sticks...” and “...Low hanging branches could be trimmed, or cracks in... trails... repaired.”*

- Fix the parking lots (n=23)

*“Fix parking lots [that have] a lot of potholes and “Repaint parking lots, the parking angles are confusing.”*

- Clean areas around the Park (n=19)
- Fix water fountains (n=17)
- Fix potholes in roads (n=12)
- Miscellaneous (n=123)

Nine positive comments were made; they included, *“Grass is getting cut nicely,” “Nothing comes to mind, everything seems [to be] clean and kept up...,”* and *“Upkeep of facilities as is — doing good job.”*

**THEME: BATHROOMS (n=252 or 21% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Clean the bathrooms (n=174)
- Keep bathrooms open (n=127)
  - Year round (n=77)
  - Longer each season (n=12)
  - Longer each day (n=8)
  - Miscellaneous (n=30)
- Re-stock bathrooms (n=41)
  - With soap (n=15)
  - With hand towels (n=15)
  - With toilet paper (n=11)
- Build more bathrooms (n=22)
- Remodel bathrooms (n=19)
- Add more stalls in bathrooms (n=8)

**THEME: FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT (n= 176 or 15% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Provide new picnic tables (n=86)
- Focus on parking areas (n=47)
  - Upgrade parking areas (n=31)
  - Build more parking areas (n=10)
- Provide new grills (n=46)
- Place more trashcans throughout the Park (n=37)
- Build new shelters/pavilions (n=24)
- Place more benches throughout the Park (n=21)

**THEME: IT'S ALL GOOD (n=123 or 10% of responses)**

Examples of individuals' comments included the following:

*"Very nice. No improvement is needed."*

*"...Everything was very well kept for the amount of use the facilities get."*

*"...It seems well maintained for the amount of visitors that come and keeping it still 'environmentally undisturbed.'"*

**THEME: NOTHING (n=94 or 8% of responses)**

**Question "What could managers do to increase your visitation or extend your length of stay at Presque Isle State Park?"**

**THEME: DON'T KNOW/CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING (n=224 or 33% of responses)**

**THEME: NOTHING—CONTENT/HAPPY (n=186 or 28% of responses)**

Visitors *"loved the atmosphere [which is] quiet [and] relaxing..."* They also believed the park was "beautiful," "peaceful," and provided opportunities to participate in a variety of activities.

**THEME: OTHER SUGGESTIONS**

Visitors' suggestions for getting them to visit more frequently or stay longer generally mirrored comments from the other open-ended questions. Specific responses included: more programming (e.g., night programs, concerts, tours), addition of in-park camping opportunities, improving facilities, keeping restrooms open longer, providing more concessions/rentals, and cleaning up the beaches. A number of park visitors further added that they hoped the park would stay "free."



## Question “What could managers do, if anything, to increase your visitation at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?”

### THEME: NOTHING (n= 411 or 35% of responses)

Most comments were positive (i.e. “...Its wonderful. Staff are nice; they have activities and movies for the public;” “...It is a gem, beautiful;” and “...breathtaking every time we visit...”).

Negative comments (n=14) primarily focused on lack of interest.

### THEME: EXHIBITS (n=243 or 21% of responses)

#### Sub-Themes:

- Change the exhibits (n=164)  
*“Change exhibits around, it gets boring to see the same things since it opened up”*
- Add more exhibits (n=42)  
*“[Add] new exhibits that have not been here before...”*
- Bring back dinosaur exhibit (n=26)  
*“Cool dinosaur exhibits. Keep them if possible, you’ll draw more visitors.”*
- Bring aquatics lab out to the lobby (n=16)
- Suggestions for specific types of exhibits (n=20)
  - Exhibits for children (n=6)
  - Nature focused (n=4)
  - Hands-on/Interactive (n=3)
  - History focused (n=2)
  - Miscellaneous (n=5)

### THEME: MOVIES (n=194 or 17% of responses)

#### Sub-Themes:

- Add, rotate or change movies (n=83)  
*“Rotate movies on the big screen. Add new movies because we saw the same one twice.”*
- Decrease the cost of movies (n=75)  
*“Movies are too expensive. [I] would have loved to see them all, [but it] just wasn’t feasible.”*
- Like the movies (n=27)  
*“Love the movies during the Christmas holiday...”*
- Suggestions for movies (n=11)
  - Show longer movies (n=3)
  - Show movies at night (n=2)
  - Show nature movies (n=2)
  - Miscellaneous (n=4)

### THEME: PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES (n=185 or 16% of responses)

#### Sub-Themes:

- Offer more programs (n=94)
  - Special events (n=32)

- Children’s activities (n=19)
- Fishing seminars (n=5)
- Live animals (n=5)
- Tours (n=5)
- Miscellaneous (n=29)
- Review facilities and their operations (n=74)
  - Café (n=19)
 

*Includes lowering the cost of food (n=4), offering better food (n=4), hours of operation (n=3), offering more variety of food (n=2), and miscellaneous (n=5)*
  - Gift shop (n=11)
 

*Includes positive (e.g., “amazing gift shop”) and negative (e.g., “gift shop is overpriced”) comments*
  - Make TREC more visible through signage (n=6)
  - Miscellaneous (n=27)

**THEME: MORE INFORMATION (n=71 or 4% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Provide better signage (n=45)
  - To TREC (n=31)
  - To parking lots (n=4)
  - Miscellaneous (n=10)
- More advertising (n=17)
 

*“Didn’t know all this was here; maybe make a commercial.”*
- Teaching/Interpretation (n=9)
 

Suggestions include: *“nature talks/seminars,” “more ‘green building’ education,”* and providing *“...tours of the building.”*

**THEME: EXTEND HOURS (n=33 or 3% of responses)**

**Sub-Themes:**

- Keep the Center open longer (n=18)
- Keep the Center open later in the day/into the evening (n=9)
- Miscellaneous (n=6)

## Summary and Conclusions

The results published in this report are a compilation of the data collected across the four seasons at Presque Isle State Park during the period of May 17, 2012 through May 14, 2013 (n = 2,593 completed interviews). A summary of Presque Isle State Park visitor characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, and suggestions for management was provided in the main body of this report. This summary and conclusion section provides a brief highlight of key findings that may be of interest to park managers and partner organizations.

In terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, visitors to Presque Isle State Park were more likely to be white (94%), male (56%) and older (only 24% reported that they were 18-35 years). The average age across all visitors was 48 years with 49% indicating that they were over 50 years old. When combining the household income categories, nearly half (49%) reported incomes between \$50,000 and \$99,999, 28% reported incomes less than \$50,000, and 24% reported incomes of \$100,000 or more.

With regard to trip characteristics, results indicate that Presque Isle State Park was the primary destination for most visitors (92%) and most visitors identified themselves as repeat users (91%). A majority of the visitation involved day trips (80%). Among the 20% who stayed overnight in the region, hotels/motels (43%) or friend/family member's houses (33%) were the most prevalent accommodation types. In general, Presque Isle State Park visitors were more likely than visitors surveyed at other State Parks to indicate that their visit was a day-trip to (or in) the region (80% vs. 64%). Visitation frequency was very high with an average of 33 trips to this park over the last 12 months and only 16% indicating that they visited only once. While a majority of visitors were PA residents (73%), a sizable percentage of visitors (27%) were from out-of-state. However, only 30% of visitors traveled more than 50 miles to get to the park. When comparing this data with studies conducted at other State Parks, Presque Isle State Park visitors were more likely to come from the local region (which can still include out-of-state visitors) and were more likely to visit the park frequently (e.g., 33 visits at Presque Isle State Park vs. 6 visits at other State Parks). The average group size was 3.8 and this was generally lower than the group sizes reported at other State Parks. For example, Presque Isle State Park visitors were more likely than visitors at other State Parks to indicate that they came to the park alone (20% vs. 9%). A majority (71%) also reported that there were no children under 16 in their party.

In terms of recreation activities at the park, relaxing/hanging out (44%), viewing natural features (43%), hiking/walking (39%), driving for pleasure on roads (26%), and swimming/wading (22%) were mentioned with the most frequency. In terms of visitors' primary activity, hiking/walking (17%), relaxing/hanging out (13%), and fishing from shore (12%) were mentioned most often. These activity data were generally consistent with activity data from other State Park visitor studies. Those who indicated boating as an activity (6% of the entire sample) indicated kayaks (44%) and motorboats (38%) as their primary type of watercraft.

This study differed from prior State Park visitor surveys in that it assessed visitor use of specific park amenities over the course of a typical year as well as other, specific regional attractions visited during the park trip. In terms of specific facilities used over a typical year, beaches (81%), paved trails (69%), picnic areas (51%), Perry Monument (49%), and other trails (40%) were mentioned with the most frequency. When asked about visitation to area attractions outside of the park, a slight majority (52%) said that no other attraction was visited. This finding is not surprising as Presque Isle State Park was the primary destination for most and many visitors were locals. However, when considering the out-of-town overnight visitors (17% of the sample), restaurants/bars (55%) shopping areas (33%), Waldameer, Inc. and Waterworld (17%), and the Erie Zoo (11%) were common attractions visited as part of their trip.

Overall visitor satisfaction was extremely high (99% satisfied), and this was consistent with prior studies conducted at other State Parks. Likewise, visitor evaluations of specific Presque Isle State Park amenities, services, and resources were also very favorable with over 80% rating most of these items as good or very good. The most favorably evaluated items included "scenery," "feeling of personal safety," "condition of the natural environment," "condition of trails," and "value for the money invested in the visit." There was some room for improvement with regard to restroom availability and cleanliness. In particular, restroom cleanliness is an area to target for improvement as only half of park visitors reporting its quality as good or very good over the study time period. Summer visitors were less likely than other visitors to rate restroom cleanliness favorably. However, summer visitors reported higher levels of overall park satisfaction than visitors from other use seasons. Finally, spring visitors rated the park's cleanliness and condition of the beaches lower than other visitors. This may be because the park's beach cleaning and renourishment activities occur during the end of spring.

A new series of questions concerning the beach resource and specific beach management strategies was included in this study. Findings indicate that visitors value lifeguards and prefer Presque Isle beaches over other beaches because of the lifeguards. Visitors also supported beach closures for

safety (90%) and renourishment (78%) purposes. Visitors were less likely to support value-added beach services such as additional food and beverage service, chair/umbrella rentals, and coin-operated indoor shower stalls/changing rooms. However, a slight majority (59%) did support the provision of patio-style seating and dining areas at park concessions.

Park managers and tourism promotion partners were interested in understanding visitors' use of information in planning their trip. This study asked a series of questions about trip information (e.g., what, where, when). Results indicate that a majority of visitors (86%) *do not* obtain information about the park prior to (or during) their trips. Not surprisingly, however, out-of-town overnight visitors were more likely than other park visitors to use trip information (42%). Among those visitors who *did* obtain or use information as part of their trip, park maps (66%), other (29%), and Erie maps (21%) were the most frequently mentioned types of information. Out-of-town overnight visitors were more likely than other park visitors to use the Erie map (28%), Erie Visitors Guide (25%), and PA Visitors Guide (15%). Other types of information used included weather reports, ice reports, fishing information, and beach advisories. Local visitors and winter visitors were more likely to cite these other sources. A majority of visitors (69%) said that they received information before they left home (vs. after leaving home). The internet was far and away the most popular source or origin of trip information (62%) used by park visitors followed distantly by the park office (29%) and "other" (17%). Seasonal comparisons yielded expected, but potentially interesting, results. For example, summer visitors were more likely than others to obtain information as part of their park trip and were more likely to use park maps. Spring and summer users were more likely than winter or fall users to use the Erie Visitors Guide while winter users were more likely than others to cite "other" information types (e.g., ice reports). Finally, summer visitors were more likely than others to obtain information from the internet whereas winter and spring visitors were more likely than others to obtain information from newspapers/magazines or "other" sources.

The economics section of the study asked visitors about their monetary expenditures at and near Presque Isle State Park. Expenditures across the overall sample and between visitors of varying travel distances (less than 50 miles vs. 50 miles or more) were presented in the body of this report. A slight majority of respondents (59%) indicated that they spent some money within 50 miles of the park on their current trip. The most commonly reported expenditure items across the entire sample were restaurants and bars (28%) and gas and oil (23%). The most commonly reported items among those traveling 50 miles or more included these categories plus motel/lodge/cabins/B&B and groceries. The largest expenditure amounts reported (among those spending something in each category) were for

motels/lodge/cabins/B&B, camping, and local transportation. The average total trip expenditure across all visitors was \$80.95. When comparing trip expenditure averages across travel distance, those traveling 50 miles or more spent an average of \$226.09 while those traveling less than 50 miles spent an average of \$15.61. Those who traveled 50 miles or more also spent more on sporting goods and outdoor recreation and entertainment than did those who traveled less than 50 miles to visit the park.

The Tom Ridge Environmental Center was the topic of several survey questions related to use, quality perceptions, and suggestions for improvement. TREC questions were asked of visitors surveyed at the Center and elsewhere in the park. A majority of park users (surveyed elsewhere in the park) said that they had visited TREC and visited an average of 3 times annually. Visitors surveyed at TREC reported an average of 6 visits to the Center annually. Most visitors were satisfied with TREC and did not offer specific suggestions for improvement. TREC visitors evaluated the quality of Center features and services favorably (6 out of 7 survey items were rated as good or excellent by 95% of respondents). Those visitors who did offer suggestions for Center improvement cited strategies such as rotating exhibits/movies, placing the aquatics lab up front, fixing broken exhibits, making exhibits more accessible for children, improving directional signage, and placing a nature trail around the Center.

Finally, there were a series of open-ended questions that asked visitors to suggest activities/services they would like to see made available at the park, ideas for improving park facilities, and what could be done to increase visitation or extend their length of stay. Visitor comments were reviewed, analyzed, and classified into major themes. Responses to these questions indicated that many visitors were satisfied with their Presque Isle experience and did not provide any suggestions for improvement (e.g., all is good, keep up the great work). With respect to *new* activities or services, visitors suggested specific facilities (e.g., park features such as benches, garbage cans, more bathrooms, new campground), programs (e.g., tours and musical events), additional concessions (food/beverage, equipment rentals, beach rentals), and better signage. Visitors' suggestions for improvement focused on maintenance (of the resource, parking lots, trails), bathrooms (open longer, clean them, restock supplies, build new/remodel) and specific facilities (new picnic tables, parking lot upgrades). Visitors' suggestions for getting them to visit more frequently or stay longer generally mirrored comments from the other open-ended questions. Specific responses included: more programming (e.g., night programs, concerts, tours), addition of in-park camping opportunities, improving facilities, keeping restrooms open longer, providing more concessions/rentals, and cleaning up the beaches. A number of visitors responded to this question by saying they hoped the park would stay "free."

This report provides a representative snapshot of recreational use at Presque Isle State Park. It provides basic data concerning visitor characteristics; their park activities and behaviors, use of other area attractions, level of satisfaction, support for management activities, and trip expenditures. It was one of the first studies to examine (in depth) four season visitation at a single Pennsylvania State Park. This study also provided specific insights into visitors' use, evaluation, and suggestions for the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. Data on trip expenditures identified key park-related spending opportunities and supports the notion that Presque Isle State Park provides economic value to the region. In total, survey results provide a baseline from which to confirm on-going management and promotional activities and/or to suggest new directions for park managers and partner organizations. In particular, study findings may be useful in acquiring specific capital and operational resources for the park. Study authors will also provide park managers with additional material not included in this report (such as detailed tables comparing study variables across the four seasons as well as transcripts of selected open-ended responses). Collectively, this information should give Presque Isle State Park stakeholders further insights that will help them to sustain and improve the quality of park resources as well as their use among local and non-local residents.

## References:

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications, Incorporated.
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## **Appendix A.**

### **Survey Sampling Schedule Matrices**

**(by location, season, time of day, and day of week)**



**Survey Sampling Matrix #1 (by time of day, park zone, and day of week)**

TIME			DAY						TOTAL	
			MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT		SUN
AM	ZONE	1	2	1	1	1	1	5	5	16
		2	3	2	3	2	2	12	10	34
		3	2	2	3	2	3	11	10	33
		4	3	2	3	2	2	12	10	34
		5	2	3	2	2	3	11	10	33
	Total		12	10	12	9	11	51	45	150
PM	ZONE	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	6	16
		2	3	2	3	2	3	11	9	33
		3	3	2	2	3	2	12	10	34
		4	2	3	2	3	2	11	10	33
		5	3	2	3	2	2	12	10	34
	Total		12	10	11	11	10	51	45	150
Total	ZONE	1	3	2	2	2	2	10	11	32
		2	6	4	6	4	5	23	19	67
		3	5	4	5	5	5	23	20	67
		4	5	5	5	5	4	23	20	67
		5	5	5	5	4	5	23	20	67
	Total		24	20	23	20	21	102	90	300

\* Values in the table denote the number of assigned sampling work shifts.

## Survey Sampling Matrix #2 (by season, park zone, and day of week)

Count

SEASON		DAY							TOTAL
		MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	
WINTER	ZONE 1	0	0	1	1	0	3	3	8
	2	3	1	1	0	1	6	2	14
	3	2	0	0	2	1	4	3	12
	4	1	1	1	1	1	7	3	15
	5	0	2	2	0	1	4	2	11
	Total		6	4	5	4	4	24	13
SPRING	ZONE 1	2	0	0	1	0	3	3	9
	2	0	1	2	2	1	5	5	16
	3	0	2	2	1	1	7	5	18
	4	2	2	1	1	1	5	6	18
	5	2	1	0	1	3	6	6	19
	Total		6	6	5	6	6	26	25
SUMMER	ZONE 1	0	1	0	0	1	2	3	7
	2	2	1	2	1	1	6	6	19
	3	1	1	2	1	2	6	6	19
	4	0	1	2	2	1	5	5	16
	5	2	1	2	1	0	7	6	19
	Total		5	5	8	5	5	26	26
FALL	ZONE 1	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	8
	2	1	1	1	1	2	6	6	18
	3	2	1	1	1	1	6	6	18
	4	2	1	1	1	1	6	6	18
	5	1	1	1	2	1	6	6	18
	Total		7	5	5	5	6	26	26
TOTAL	ZONE 1	3	2	2	2	2	10	11	32
	2	6	4	6	4	5	23	19	67
	3	5	4	5	5	5	23	20	67
	4	5	5	5	5	4	23	20	67
	5	5	5	5	4	5	23	20	67
	Total		24	20	23	20	21	102	90

## **APPENDIX B.**

### **Survey Instruments**

**(All 3 Versions: Experience, Open-ended/Economic, & TREC)**

## 2012-13 PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK VISITOR SURVEY – EXPERIENCE VERSION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time (military) \_\_\_\_\_ ID NUM \_\_\_\_\_ (PSU-UP to complete)

Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Site Number (see site list) \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I'm from Penn State and we are doing a survey of Presque Isle State Park visitors. The information collected will help Presque Isle State Park better serve its visitors. Your participation is voluntary and all information will be kept confidential. May I have about fifteen minutes of your time to complete this survey?

### The first series of questions are about your use of Presque Isle State Park...

1. Was Presque Isle State Park your primary destination for this recreation trip?  Yes  No (if no, complete question 1a.)

1a. If no, what was your primary destination for this recreation trip? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How far did you travel from home to this park? \_\_\_\_\_ miles traveled (ask respondent for their best estimate if they are unsure)

3. Is your visit to Presque Isle State Park today **part of an overnight trip away from home** or is it a Day Trip only? (check only one)

Day Trip (Go to Question 4)

Part of an Overnight Trip (Complete Question 3a and 3b below, then Go to Question 4)

3a. How many nights will you spend away from home on this trip **within 50 miles of this park**?

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter number of nights)

3b. What type of accommodations are you (or will you be) using as part of this overnight trip **within 50 miles of this park**?

Hotel Motel

Private Campground

Private Cottage/Camp

Bed & Breakfast

Friends or Family House (FREE)

Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many total hours will you be spending at Presque Isle State Park during today's visit?

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours

5. In what year did you make your first visit to Presque Isle State Park? (If it is their first visit, mark the second box)

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter year) **OR**  This is my first visit

6. Including today's visit, how many different trips have you made to Presque Isle State Park over the last 12 months?

\_\_\_\_\_ Trips to this State Park (If it is their first trip or visit, put in a "1")

7a. Including yourself, how many people are visiting this park with you today? Number \_\_\_\_\_

7b. How many of these people are children less than 18 years old? Number \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which of the following best describes the composition of your group? (Check only one)

I am visiting Alone  Friends  Family  Both Family and Friends

Commercial Group (group who pays a fee to participate in trip)  Organized Group (e.g., club, school, team)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What activities on this list did you participate in during this visit to this State Park? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)	Which of these is your <u>primary recreation activity</u> for this visit to this State Park? (CHECK ONLY ONE)
Q 9 Answer	Q 10 Answer
<b>Beach Activities</b>	
Swimming or Wading	
Surfing or windsurfing	
Playing volleyball	
Using a metal detector	
Sunbathing	
Parasailing	
Kite flying	
Collecting shells, beach glass, etc.	
Other beach activities (list):	
<b>Fishing and Hunting</b>	
Fishing from shore	
Fishing from boats	
Ice fishing	
Hunting waterfowl	
<b>Viewing &amp; Learning Nature &amp; Culture</b>	
Bird watching	
Viewing natural features such as scenery, wildlife, flowers, fish, etc.	
Visiting historic and pre-historic sites/areas	
Viewing wayside exhibits, interpretive kiosks, monuments	
Visiting the Tom Ridge Environmental Center	
Visiting the Stull Interpretive Center	
Scuba diving	
Photography	
<b>Non-motorized Activities</b>	
Hiking or walking	
Running for exercise	
Bicycling	
In-line skating	
Ice skating	
Ice hockey	
Non-motorized boating (canoeing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, etc.) (If yes, Complete Question 11)	
Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing	
<b>Motorized Activities</b>	
Driving for pleasure on roads	
Motorized boating (If yes, Complete Question 11)	
Taking a boat tour of the park	
Waterskiing, wakeboarding, or tubing	
<b>Other Activities</b>	
Picnicking and family gatherings	
Relaxing, hanging out	
Attending a program offered at the park (environmental, historic, outdoor recreation)	
Visiting a special event or festival	
Other Activity (List):	

11. If boating at Presque Isle State Park on this trip, what type(s) of boat(s) are you using? (Check all that apply)

Motorboat       Canoe       Kayak       Rowboat       Raft  
 PWC (Jet Ski)       Houseboat       Sailboat       Tour Boat       Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. What areas, facilities, or services at Presque Isle State Park do you visit or use in a **typical year**? (check all that apply)

Beaches       Paved multi-purpose trail       Other trails  
 Fishing piers       Picnic areas       Tom Ridge Environmental Center  
 Food concessions       Marina       Gull Point Natural Area  
 Bike rental office       Boat rental office       Ponds  
 Boat launches       Perry Monument       Presque Isle Light House  
 Boat tours of Lake Erie       Lake Erie or Presque Isle Bay (excluding beaches)

13. Have you obtained any information about this region **during this trip or in preparation** for it?

**Yes** (If yes, complete Questions 13a through 13c)  
 **No** (If no, skip to Question 14)

13a. What type of information did you obtain? (Check all that apply)

Park map       Pennsylvania visitors guide  
 Erie map       Erie visitors guide       Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13b. When did you receive information?

Before leaving home       After leaving home

13c. Where did you obtain the information (check all that apply)?

Park office       Erie visitor center       PA visitor center  
 Internet source       Smartphone App.       Newspaper or magazine article  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. What area attractions **outside of the park** did or will you visit on this trip to Presque Isle State Park? (check all that apply)

Museums       Sporting events       Splash Lagoon Waterpark       Shopping areas  
 Historic sites       Golf courses       Waldameer Inc. and Waterworld       Other (list): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Music venues       Local Wineries       Presque Isle Downs and Casino      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Theatres/Arts Centers       Restaurants/Bars       Erie Zoo       None

15. Have you ever visited the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?

**Yes** (complete questions 15b and 15c)

15b. How many times do you visit the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in a typical year? \_\_\_\_\_ Times per year

15c. What could managers do, if anything, to increase your visitation at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?

\_\_\_\_\_

**No** (Complete questions 15d)

15d. Is there anything that could be done to get you to visit the TREC?

No

Yes (what would that be?) \_\_\_\_\_

31. The following items assess your satisfaction with the recreation services and facilities at Presque Isle State Park. Please rate the following attributes on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good).

State Park Feature/Attribute	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very Good	N/A
Scenery	1	2	3	4	5	9
Restroom cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	9
Condition of the natural environment	1	2	3	4	5	9
Condition of the beaches	1	2	3	4	5	9
Condition of developed recreation facilities	1	2	3	4	5	9
Condition of trails in this State Park	1	2	3	4	5	9
Adequacy of signage	1	2	3	4	5	9
Helpfulness of employees	1	2	3	4	5	9
Maintenance of facilities (roads, shelters, buildings)	1	2	3	4	5	9
Cleanliness of this park	1	2	3	4	5	9
Feeling of personal safety	1	2	3	4	5	9
Restroom availability	1	2	3	4	5	9
Quality of park programs	1	2	3	4	5	9
Value for the money invested in this State Park visit	1	2	3	4	5	9

32. The following statements assess your preferences and perceptions regarding beach recreation at Presque Isle State Park. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	DK
I would support temporarily closing sections of the beach for safety purposes.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I would support temporarily closing sections of the beach for beach replenishment purposes (e.g., for adding sand).	1	2	3	4	5	9
Restroom facilities at Presque Isle State Park are adequate.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Beach house facilities at Presque Isle State Park are adequate.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Beach parking areas are adequate at Presque Isle.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I wish that food and beverage vendors at Presque Isle provided patio-style seating and dining areas.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I wish there were chair and umbrella rentals available at Presque Isle State Park.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I wish there were coin-operated indoor shower stalls and changing rooms available at Presque Isle beach areas.	1	2	3	4	5	9
There are <b>not</b> enough places to get food and beverages at Presque Isle State Park.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Outdoor foot showers are adequate for rinsing off at Presque Isle beach areas.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I value the lifeguards that are provided at Presque Isle beaches.	1	2	3	4	5	9
I prefer swimming at Presque Isle beaches to swimming at other beaches because of the lifeguards.	1	2	3	4	5	9

25. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this visit to Presque Isle State Park? (circle one)

**Very Dissatisfied**      **Dissatisfied**                      **Neither Dissatisfied  
nor Satisfied**                                      **Satisfied**                      **Very Satisfied**

**Finally, In order to serve all of its constituents, Presque Isle managers would like to know a little bit about its visitors...**

26. What is your home Zip Code \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_

27. Into which income group would you say your total household falls?

\_\_\_ Under \$25,000                                      \_\_\_ \$75,000-\$99,999                                      \_\_\_ Don't Know  
\_\_\_ \$25,000-\$49,999                                      \_\_\_ \$100,000-\$149,999                                      \_\_\_ Refused to Answer  
\_\_\_ \$50,000-\$74,999                                      \_\_\_ \$150,000 or over

28. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Which of the following categories best describes your race and/or ethnic background? (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ White                                      \_\_\_ American Indian or Alaskan Native                                      \_\_\_ Asian  
\_\_\_ Black or African American                                      \_\_\_ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander                                      \_\_\_ Refused  
\_\_\_ Hispanic/Chicano/Latino                                      \_\_\_ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

30. INTERVIEWER – Record Sex/Gender (check one)

\_\_\_ Male      \_\_\_ Female

**That is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your participation!**



# 2012-13 PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK VISITOR SURVEY – OPEN-ENDED/ECONOMIC VERSION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time (military) \_\_\_\_\_ ID NUM \_\_\_\_\_ (PSU-UP to complete)

Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Site Number (see site list) \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I'm from Penn State and we are doing a survey of Presque Isle State Park visitors. The information collected will help Presque Isle State Park better serve its visitors. Your participation is voluntary and all information will be kept confidential. May I have about fifteen minutes of your time to complete this survey?

## The first series of questions are about your use of Presque Isle State Park...

1. Was Presque Isle State Park your primary destination for this recreation trip?  Yes  No (if no, complete question 1a.)

1a. If no, what was your primary destination for this recreation trip? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How far did you travel from home to this park? \_\_\_\_\_ miles traveled (ask respondent for their best estimate if they are unsure)

3. Is your visit to Presque Isle State Park today **part of an overnight trip away from home** or is it a Day Trip only? (check only one)

Day Trip (Go to Question 4)

Part of an Overnight Trip (Complete Question 3a and 3b below, then Go to Question 4)

3a. How many nights will you spend away from home on this trip **within 50 miles of this park**?

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter number of nights)

3b. What type of accommodations are you (or will you be) using as part of this overnight trip **within 50 miles of this park**?

Hotel Motel

Private Campground

Private Cottage/Camp

Bed & Breakfast

Friends or Family House (FREE)

Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many total hours will you be spending at Presque Isle State Park during today's visit?

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours

5. In what year did you make your first visit to Presque Isle State Park? (If it is their first visit, mark the second box)

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter year) **OR**  This is my first visit

6. Including today's visit, how many different trips have you made to Presque Isle State Park over the last 12 months?

\_\_\_\_\_ Trips to this State Park (If it is their first trip or visit, put in a "1")

7a. Including yourself, how many people are visiting this park with you today? Number \_\_\_\_\_

7b. How many of these people are children less than 18 years old? Number \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which of the following best describes the composition of your group? (Check only one)

I am visiting Alone

Friends

Family

Both Family and Friends

Commercial Group (group who pays a fee to participate in trip)

Organized Group (e.g., club, school, team)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What activities on this list did you participate in during this visit to this State Park? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)	Which of these is your <u>primary recreation activity</u> for this visit to this State Park? (CHECK ONLY ONE)
Q 9 Answer	Q 10 Answer
<b>Beach Activities</b>	
Swimming or Wading	
Surfing or windsurfing	
Playing volleyball	
Using a metal detector	
Sunbathing	
Parasailing	
Kite flying	
Collecting shells, beach glass, etc.	
Other beach activities (list):	
<b>Fishing and Hunting</b>	
Fishing from shore	
Fishing from boats	
Ice fishing	
Hunting waterfowl	
<b>Viewing &amp; Learning Nature &amp; Culture</b>	
Bird watching	
Viewing natural features such as scenery, wildlife, flowers, fish, etc.	
Visiting historic and pre-historic sites/areas	
Viewing wayside exhibits, interpretive kiosks, monuments	
Visiting the Tom Ridge Environmental Center	
Visiting the Stull Interpretive Center	
Scuba diving	
Photography	
<b>Non-motorized Activities</b>	
Hiking or walking	
Running for exercise	
Bicycling	
In-line skating	
Ice skating	
Ice hockey	
Non-motorized boating (canoeing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, etc.) (If yes, Complete Question 11)	
Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing	
<b>Motorized Activities</b>	
Driving for pleasure on roads	
Motorized boating (If yes, Complete Question 11)	
Taking a boat tour of the park	
Waterskiing, wakeboarding, or tubing	
<b>Other Activities</b>	
Picnicking and family gatherings	
Relaxing, hanging out	
Attending a program offered at the park (environmental, historic, outdoor recreation)	
Visiting a special event or festival	
Other Activity (List):	

11. If boating at Presque Isle State Park on this trip, what type(s) of boat(s) are you using? (Check all that apply)

Motorboat       Canoe       Kayak       Rowboat       Raft  
 PWC (Jet Ski)       Houseboat       Sailboat       Tour Boat       Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. What areas, facilities, or services at Presque Isle State Park do you visit or use in a **typical year**? (check all that apply)

Beaches       Paved multi-purpose trail       Other trails  
 Fishing piers       Picnic areas       Tom Ridge Environmental Center  
 Food concessions       Marina       Gull Point Natural Area  
 Bike rental office       Boat rental office       Ponds  
 Boat launches       Perry Monument       Presque Isle Light House  
 Boat tours of Lake Erie       Lake Erie or Presque Isle Bay (excluding beaches)

13. Have you obtained any information about this region **during this trip or in preparation** for it?

**Yes** (If yes, complete Questions 13a through 13c)

**No** (If no, skip to Question 14)

13a. What type of information did you obtain? (Check all that apply)

Park map       Pennsylvania visitors guide  
 Erie map       Erie visitors guide       Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13b. When did you receive information?

Before leaving home       After leaving home

13c. Where did you obtain the information (check all that apply)?

Park office       Erie visitor center       PA visitor center  
 Internet source       Smartphone App.       Newspaper or magazine article  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. What area attractions **outside of the park** did or will you visit on this trip to Presque Isle State Park? (check all that apply)

Museums       Sporting events       Splash Lagoon Waterpark       Shopping areas  
 Historic sites       Golf courses       Waldameer Inc. and Waterworld       Other (list): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Music venues       Local Wineries       Presque Isle Downs and Casino      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Theatres/Arts Centers       Restaurants/Bars       Erie Zoo       None

15. Have you ever visited the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?

**Yes** (complete questions 15b and 15c)

15b. How many times do you visit the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in a typical year? \_\_\_\_\_ Times per year

15c. What could managers do, if anything, to increase your visitation at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?

\_\_\_\_\_

**No** (Complete questions 15d)

15d. Is there anything that could be done to get you to visit the TREC?

No

Yes (what would that be?) \_\_\_\_\_

**Thinking about all the opportunities offered at PISP... respond to the following questions...**

19. What activities or services would you like to see available at Presque Isle State Park that currently do not exist?

19a. Would you be willing to pay a small fee for these services? \_\_\_\_ **Yes** \_\_\_\_ **No**

20. If you could ask managers to improve the facilities at Presque Isle State Park, what would you ask them to do?

21. What could managers do to increase your visitation **or** extend your length of stay at Presque Isle State Park?

**The next questions will ask about your expenses on this trip...**

22. Did you or other members of your party spend any money on this trip **within 50 miles of this park?**

**Yes** (complete Questions 23 and 24)       **No** (skip to Question 25)

23. For the following categories, how much will you and others within your group spend **within 50 miles of here on this trip?**

Motel, Lodge, Cabin, B&B, etc.	Restaurants & Bars	Groceries	Outfitter Related Expenses (guide fees & equipment rentals)	Sporting Goods
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Camping	Local Transportation (bus, shuttles, etc.)	Gasoline & Oil	Outdoor Recreation or Entertainment (park fees, movies, mini-golf, etc.)	Souvenirs, Clothing, Other Misc.
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

24. How many people do these trip expenditures cover?  group members

25. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this visit to Presque Isle State Park? (circle one)

**Very Dissatisfied**      **Dissatisfied**      **Neither Dissatisfied  
nor Satisfied**      **Satisfied**      **Very Satisfied**

**Finally, In order to serve all of its constituents, Presque Isle managers would like to know a little bit about its visitors...**

26. What is your home Zip Code

27. Into which income group would you say your household falls?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under \$25,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000-\$99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000-\$49,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000-\$149,999	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused to Answer
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000-\$74,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150,000 or over	

28. In what year were you born?

29. Which of the following categories best describes your race and/or ethnic background? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> White	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Chicano/Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify <input type="text"/>	

30. INTERVIEWER – Record Sex/Gender (check one)

Male     Female

**That is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your participation!**

## 2012-13 PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK VISITOR SURVEY – TREC VERSION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time (military) \_\_\_\_\_ ID NUM \_\_\_\_\_ (PSU-UP to complete)

Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Site Number (see site list) \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I'm from Penn State and we are doing a survey of Presque Isle State Park visitors. The information collected in this research will help Presque Isle State Park better serve its visitors. Your participation is voluntary and all information will be kept confidential. May I have about fifteen minutes of your time to complete this survey?

### The first series of questions are about your use of Presque Isle State Park...

1. Was Presque Isle State Park your primary destination for this recreation trip?  Yes  No (if no, complete question 1a.)

1a. If no, what was your primary destination for this recreation trip? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How far did you travel from home to this park? \_\_\_\_\_ miles traveled (ask respondent for their best estimate if they are unsure)

3. Is your visit to Presque Isle State Park today **part of an overnight trip away from home** or is it a Day Trip only? (check only one)

Day Trip (Go to Question 4)

Part of an Overnight Trip (Complete Question 3a and 3b below, then Go to Question 4)

3a. How many nights will you spend away from home on this trip **within 50 miles of this park**?

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter number of nights)

3b. What type of accommodations are you (or will you be) using as part of this overnight trip **within 50 miles of this park**?

Hotel Motel

Private Campground

Private Cottage/Camp

Bed & Breakfast

Friends or Family House (FREE)

Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many total hours will you be spending at Presque Isle State Park during today's visit?

\_\_\_\_\_ Hours

5. In what year did you make your first visit to Presque Isle State Park? (If it is their first visit, mark the second box)

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter year) **OR**  This is my first visit

6. Including today's visit, how many different trips have you made to Presque Isle State Park over the last 12 months?

\_\_\_\_\_ Trips to this State Park (If it is their first trip or visit, put in a "1")

7a. Including yourself, how many people are visiting this park with you today? Number \_\_\_\_\_

7b. How many of these people are children less than 18 years old? Number \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which of the following best describes the composition of your group? (Check only one)

I am visiting Alone

Friends

Family

Both Family and Friends

Commercial Group (group who pays a fee to participate in trip)

Organized Group (e.g., club, school, team)

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What activities on this list did you participate in during this visit to this State Park?  
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Which of these is your primary recreation activity for this visit to this State Park?  
(CHECK ONLY ONE)

Q 9 Answer

Q 10 Answer

Q 9 Answer	Q 10 Answer
<b>Beach Activities</b>	
Swimming or Wading	
Surfing or windsurfing	
Playing volleyball	
Using a metal detector	
Sunbathing	
Parasailing	
Kite flying	
Collecting shells, beach glass, etc.	
Other beach activities (list):	
<b>Fishing and Hunting</b>	
Fishing from shore	
Fishing from boats	
Ice fishing	
Hunting waterfowl	
<b>Viewing &amp; Learning Nature &amp; Culture</b>	
Bird watching	
Viewing natural features such as scenery, wildlife, flowers, fish, etc.	
Visiting historic and pre-historic sites/areas	
Viewing wayside exhibits, interpretive kiosks, monuments	
Visiting the Tom Ridge Environmental Center	
Visiting the Stull Interpretive Center	
Scuba diving	
Photography	
<b>Non-motorized Activities</b>	
Hiking or walking	
Running for exercise	
Bicycling	
In-line skating	
Ice skating	
Ice hockey	
Non-motorized boating (canoeing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, etc.) (If yes, Complete Question 11)	
Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing	
<b>Motorized Activities</b>	
Driving for pleasure on roads	
Motorized boating (If yes, Complete Question 11)	
Taking a boat tour of the park	
Waterskiing, wakeboarding, or tubing	
<b>Other Activities</b>	
Picnicking and family gatherings	
Relaxing, hanging out	
Attending a program offered at the park (environmental, historic, outdoor recreation)	
Visiting a special event or festival	
Other Activity (List):	

11. If boating at Presque Isle State Park on this trip, what type(s) of boat(s) are you using? (Check all that apply)

- Motorboat       Canoe       Kayak       Rowboat       Raft  
 PWC (Jet Ski)       Houseboat       Sailboat       Tour Boat       Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. What areas, facilities, or services at Presque Isle State Park do you visit or use in a **typical year**? (check all that apply)

- Beaches       Paved multi-purpose trail       Other trails  
 Fishing piers       Picnic areas       Tom Ridge Environmental Center  
 Food concessions       Marina       Gull Point Natural Area  
 Bike rental office       Boat rental office       Ponds  
 Boat launches       Perry Monument       Presque Isle Light House  
 Boat tours of Lake Erie       Lake Erie or Presque Isle Bay (excluding beaches)

13. Have you obtained any information about this region **during this trip or in preparation** for it?

**Yes** (If yes, complete Questions 13a through 13c)

**No** (If no, skip to Question 14)

13a. What type of information did you obtain? (Check all that apply)

- Park map       Pennsylvania visitors guide  
 Erie map       Erie visitors guide       Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

13b. When did you receive information?

- Before leaving home       After leaving home

13c. Where did you obtain the information (check all that apply)?

- Park office       Erie visitor center       PA visitor center  
 Internet source       Smartphone App.       Newspaper or magazine article  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. What area attractions **outside of the park** did or will you visit on this trip to Presque Isle State Park? (check all that apply)

- Museums       Sporting events       Splash Lagoon Waterpark       Shopping areas  
 Historic sites       Golf courses       Waldameer Inc. and Waterworld       Other (list):  
 Music venues       Local Wineries       Presque Isle Downs and Casino      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Theatres/Arts Centers       Restaurants/Bars       Erie Zoo       None

**Please answer the following statements about your use of the Tom Ridge Environmental Center...**

15a. Is this your first visit to TREC?  Yes (skip to question 15c)  No (go to question 15b)

15b. How many times do you visit the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in a typical year? \_\_\_\_\_ Times per year

15c. What could managers do, if anything, to increase your visitation at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center?

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16. The following items assess your level of satisfaction with features of the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. Please rate the following features by circling your response on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good).

TREC Feature/Attribute	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Very Good	N/A
Interpretive and interactive displays	1	2	3	4	5	9
TREC tower	1	2	3	4	5	9
Educational and recreational programs	1	2	3	4	5	9
Movies on the Big Green Screen	1	2	3	4	5	9
Gift shop	1	2	3	4	5	9
Restaurant / Café	1	2	3	4	5	9
Aquaculture labs	1	2	3	4	5	9

17. Is there anything that TREC could do to improve the quality of your experiences at the Center?  
 No  Yes (please explain what that would be) \_\_\_\_\_

18. Are there any facilities or exhibits that are missing from the Tom Ridge Environmental Center that may interest you?  
 No  Yes (please explain what facilities/exhibits that would be) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Did you or other members of your party spend any money on this trip **within 50 miles of this park?**  
 Yes (complete Questions 23 and 24)  No (skip to Question 25)

23. For the following categories, how much will you and others within your group spend **within 50 miles of here on this trip?**

Motel, Lodge, Cabin, B&B, etc. \$ _____	Restaurants & Bars \$ _____	Groceries \$ _____	Outfitter Related Expenses (guide fees & equipment rentals) \$ _____	Sporting Goods \$ _____
Camping \$ _____	Local Transportation (bus, shuttles, etc.) \$ _____	Gasoline & Oil \$ _____	Outdoor Recreation or Entertainment (park fees, movies, mini-golf, etc.) \$ _____	Souvenirs, Clothing, Other Misc. \$ _____

24. How many people do these trip expenditures cover?  group members

25. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this visit to Presque Isle State Park? (circle one)

Very Dissatisfied      Dissatisfied      Neither Dissatisfied  
nor Satisfied      Satisfied      Very Satisfied

26. What is your home Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

27. Into which income group would you say your household falls?

- Under \$25,000                       \$75,000-\$99,999                       Don't Know
- \$25,000-\$49,999                       \$100,000-\$149,999                       Refused to Answer
- \$50,000-\$74,999                       \$150,000 or over

28. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

29. Which of the following categories best describes your race and/or ethnic background? (check all that apply)

- White                       American Indian or Alaskan Native                       Asian
- Black or African American                       Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander                       Refused
- Hispanic/Chicano/Latino                       Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

30. INTERVIEWER – Record Sex/Gender (check one)

Male     Female

**That is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your participation!**