

# State Park Visitor Use and Satisfaction Study

## Survey Summary Report Golden Gate Canyon State Park 10/28/2020



### Internal team members

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## Background

Each year, millions of people visit Colorado's state parks. However, limited information exists about why people visit them, what they do while they are there, how long they stay, and the degree to which they are satisfied with their experiences. These data are critical to developing programs, communication efforts, and recreation opportunities that resonate with state park users. They also inform management actions for conserving natural and cultural resources and maintaining park infrastructure.

## Goal and objectives

The overarching goal of this effort is to develop and pilot test a new research strategy for measuring state park visitor use, experiences, satisfaction, and overall economic contribution at all 42 state parks. Three specific objectives guided this inquiry but findings presented in this report focus on the first.

1. To provide a detailed description of state park visitors, including their recreation preferences, motivations, experiences, satisfaction and economic contribution, at a subset of state parks during a 12 month period.
2. To understand how motivations, attitudes and expectations of state park visitors influence visitor satisfaction.
3. To compare the overall efficacy of data collection techniques based on response rate and cost, with the overall goal of developing a long-term planning framework to enable CPW staff to collect visitor use and satisfaction data at all state parks over a 5-year period.

The findings presented in this report focus on the first objective.

## Methods

We implemented this study using a mixed methods approach. Specifically, we conducted intercept (on-site) and corresponding online follow-up surveys with visitors at Golden Gate Canyon, Eldorado Canyon, Lory, and Cheyenne Mountain State Parks. We distributed mail surveys to visitors at Roxborough, Ridgway, Stagecoach, and Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area state parks. We also included a unique link on the mail surveys allowing respondents to participate online if they chose.

## Survey design

An internal team of CPW staff developed the online and mail questionnaires. All questionnaires were comprised of seven primary sections spanning a suite of topics including but not limited to: park visitation, visitor costs, visitor motivations, activity and management preferences, and sociodemographic attributes. One section was reserved for individual, park specific questions.

## Survey implementation

CPW staff surveyed visitors at four different locations at Golden Gate Canyon State Park including: (1) the Visitor Center, (2) Reverends Ridge campground, (3) Panorama Point, and (4) various trails. In-person surveys were conducted at different times of the day and different days of the week with the intention of surveying approximately the same number of visitors during the week and on the weekend. Every Monday, CPW staff sent a unique survey link via email to all individuals who wished to participate in the online, follow-up questionnaire.

## Survey Measures

### Motivations

Internal and external motivations represent the reasons why individuals engage in a particular behavior or activity (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarrant, 1996). Park managers can use information about motivations to better understand visitor expectations and the types of experiences that park visitors' desire. Scholars have identified two types of motivations – push- and pull-motivations – as important to outdoor recreationists. The former represent internal psychological desires (e.g., relaxation, adventure, social interaction) while the latter represent specific attributes of a place, setting, or location (e.g., a beach, picturesque mountain views, wilderness areas, etc.) that are of interest to tourists or visitors (Crompton 1979; Grim & Needham, 2012; Uysal and Hagan 1993; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). We assessed recreationists' motivations by exploring how important nine push- and five pull-motivations were using a 4-point scale. Based on input from CPW staff, we also included two exploratory motivations hypothesized to be important among state park visitors in Colorado (i.e., “to exercise my pet” and “to enjoy the activity they were most excited about doing”).

### Activity participation and primary activity of interest

We assessed recreationists' activity participation by asking which activities they enjoyed at Golden Gate Canyon during their last visit. We included 26 activities and used a dichotomous (yes/no) response option. The activities were based on previous research and organized into one of six categories (e.g., trail activities, water-based activities, wildlife-related activities, etc.) (Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 2019). We also included an option for respondents to write-in activities not listed. While it is important to understand the breadth of recreation activities that visitors enjoy, it is equally important to identify which activity they were most excited about doing as it has the potential to serve as a pull-motivation. To this end, we asked respondents

“what was the one activity you were the most excited about doing during your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon State Park?”

### Perspectives on park management

We used a modified importance-performance framework to measure visitors’ perceptions about the following park management attributes: park maintenance, potential concerns, park facilities, and personnel and information (Azzopardi & Nash, 2013), using a 5-point agreement scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Specifically, we measured the extent to which respondents agreed with statements about park maintenance using 7 items (e.g., “The park was clean and well maintained”). We examined agreement about potential concerns using 4 items (e.g., “the park was not crowded”). Seven items each were used to measure visitors’ agreement about various park facilities (e.g., “there was adequate parking”) and park personnel and information (e.g., “park staff were helpful”).

### Behavioral intention

We used one question to examine recreationists’ future behavior. Specifically, we asked respondents “how unlikely or likely they would be to visit Golden Gate Canyon in the next 12 months” using a 5-point, likelihood scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely).

### Satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction is “the principal measure of the quality of a visitor’s experience” (Crilley, Weber, & Taplin, 2012, p. 217) and is influenced by a suite of variables (Howat & Crilley, 2007). We asked how dissatisfied or satisfied respondents were with their last visit to Golden Gate Canyon using a 5-point satisfaction scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

### Park specific questions

Park staff were interested in understanding which trails visitors used while at the park and what additional amenities they prefer CPW staff prioritize in the next 10 years. The first question

asked “which, if any, of the following amenities should staff at Golden Gate State Park prioritize in the next 10 years (e.g., additional picnic areas, additional trails, etc.)?” Respondents were asked to check all that apply. The second question asked: “during your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon State Park, which trail(s) did you use?” We provided respondents with a map and asked them to check all that apply.

## Results

### Summary of key findings

#### *Intercept survey responses*

- The vast majority (92%) of visitors who were asked to participate in the intercept surveys (in-person) did so (n = 741 people).
- Of those who participated in the intercept survey, most (79%) were from Colorado and about 90% indicated having between one and four people in their vehicle while visiting the park.
  - Over half (60%) had between one and two people in their vehicle.
- Hiking, camping, and “other” activities (i.e., those not listed in the question), were the most frequently identified activities that interviewees intended to do (or had done) during their visit.
  - Walking, fishing, and picnicking rounded out the top five activities.
- Approximately three-quarters (77%) of individuals who participated in the intercept surveys (n = 571), provided a valid email address and received a link for the online questionnaire.

#### *Online survey responses*

- Response rate
  - In total, 225 visitors participated in the online survey resulting in a 39% response rate.
- Sociodemographic data
  - On average, respondents were 46 years old (mean) and slightly more than half (55%) were female.
  - In total, 180 respondents self-identified as White, non-Hispanic/Latino; 13 self-identified as Hispanic/Latino; and 4 self-identified as Asian.
  - The number of years respondents have lived in Colorado ranged from less than 1 year to 74 years (mean = 22 years).

- Recreation activities
  - Overall, the top five recreation activities that visitors enjoyed at Golden Gate Canyon State Park were: (1) hiking/backpacking (61%), (2) walking/dog walking (32%), (3) photography (26%), (4) wildlife watching (21%), (5) camping (14%) and bird watching (14%).
    - When asked what was the *one activity* respondents were *most* excited about, hiking/backpacking (61%), camping (7%) and fishing (6%) were the top three.
  
- Motivations (*moderate-to-very important responses combined and indicated below*)
  - Nearly all respondents identified enjoying scenic views (98%) and enjoying/spending time in nature (98%) as the most important reasons why they recreated at Golden Gate Canyon State Park.
  - Doing the #1 activity that brought them to the park was also important to about 97% of respondents.
  - Relaxing and exercising/improving physical health rounded out the top five at 91 and 88%, respectively.
  
- Management preferences (*strongly agree responses indicated below unless otherwise indicated*)
  - *Park maintenance*: More respondents agreed with statements about the park being well maintained (83%) and free of vandalism (81%) than they did with statements about the water for fishing, boating, etc. being free of litter/trash (47%) and about amenities (e.g., restrooms, picnic tables) being clean and in good condition (55%).
  - *Potential concerns*: About two-thirds of respondents were *not* bothered by other visitors' pets (68%) or other visitors themselves (66%).
    - Slightly more than half (55%) agreed that the park was *not* crowded. However, another 28% *somewhat* agreed with this statement.
  - *Park facilities*: Two-thirds (66%) of respondents agreed that the park had well designed and maintained trails and slightly more than half agreed that trash containers were readily available (53%), there was adequate parking (53%), and that the park had adequate places to rest (52%).
    - More than one-quarter (28%) agreed that the park had enough water fountains/faucets and fewer (26%) agreed that recycling containers were readily available.
  - *Park personnel/information*: Most (83%) respondents agreed that park staff were courteous/friendly and about 78% agreed that staff were helpful.
    - About 57% agreed that the park had adequate signage though another 32% somewhat agreed with this statement.

- Satisfaction
  - The vast majority (97%) of visitors were satisfied with their most recent experience at Golden Gate Canyon State Park and 75% are very likely to visit again in the next 12 months. About 17% of respondents were somewhat likely to visit again during the same period.
  
- Park-specific questions
  - About half (49%) would prefer that staff at Golden Gate Canyon State Park leave the park as is (i.e., prioritize doing nothing), in the next 10 years.
    - Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) would prefer staff prioritize additional recreation trails and about 10% would like staff to prioritize additional (developed) camping areas.
  
  - Overall, the top five trails respondents used during their last visit to the park were: Raccoon (64%), Mule deer (30%), Horseshoe (12%), Mountain lion (10%), and Burro (9%).
    - However, about 16% of respondents were not sure which trail they used.
    - It is also important to note that about 12% of respondents suggested that staff prioritize “other” aspects of the park, many of which included additional (or improved) signage and maps.

### Practical implications

The third objective of this inquiry was to identify which data collection technique resonated with state park visitors. To determine this, we compared survey response rates and costs from parks that used the intercept and online survey approach versus those who provided visitors with a hard-copy questionnaire on-site. The latter were either returned to CPW staff the same day or by mail. Overall, the intercept method yielded a better response rate (average across parks = 39% versus 31% across mail-back parks). However, it was more costly. The higher costs associated with this approach were due, primarily, to paying staff salaries and travel expenditures. When this study resumes, we intend to implement it using the intercept method but with several modifications to offset costs and increase response rates. For example, visitors will continue to be interviewed on-site and asked to participate in the larger questionnaire via email but they will also be provided with a postcard further describing the study. Each postcard will include images of potential raffle items that visitors’ could receive by participating in the study



and they will also contain a unique identification number which will be used to conduct non-response bias checks. Lastly, the postcards will contain the unique survey link as well as a QR code to further encourage participation.

Findings from the park specific questions revealed several important insights about the connection between visitors' preferences and trail use. When asked what amenities visitors would prefer at Golden Gate Canyon State Park, about half indicated that they would prefer staff to do nothing over the next 10 years essentially indicating support for no new amenities. Only about one-quarter of respondents would prefer staff prioritize the addition of new hiking trails. However, it is important to situate these results in the larger context of other findings. Specifically, we learned from open-ended comments that some visitors also wanted staff to prioritize "other" aspects of the park many of which included an improved map or trail signage. While most respondents used the Raccoon, Mule deer, and Horseshoe trails, another 16% were not sure which trail they used. The latter may provide support for respondents' desires for more clearly marked signs or an enhanced map of the park.

#### [Response rate and intercept survey responses](#)

In total, 805 individuals were approached at Golden Gate Canyon State Park and asked if they would be willing to participate in the intercept survey. About 92% (741 individuals) said "yes" and responded to the next five questions. Nearly 79% of interviewees were Colorado residents. Overall, the vast majority (90%) of individuals had between one and four people in their vehicle but more than half (60%) had between one and two people in their vehicle during their visit to the park. Only 1% did not arrive in a vehicle at all. When asked which activities they did (or intended to do), almost three-quarters (71% or 528 visitors) indicated "hiking" (Table 1). About 16% (123 visitors) indicated "camping" and "other" activities not listed in the questionnaire. Approximately 8% of interviewees indicated "walking" and "fishing" (59 and 56

visitors, respectively) and about 7% identified picnicking (55 visitors) as activities they did or intended to do while visiting Golden Gate Canyon State Park (Table 1). Additionally, 5% (34 visitors) indicated biking and about 4% (31 visitors) identified wildlife watching. Overall, 77% of individuals who participated in the intercept surveys (n = 571), provided a valid email address and received a link for the online questionnaire.

Table 1. Intercept interviewee activity participation.

Activity	% participating in activity* (frequency in parentheses)
Hiking	71 (528)
Camping	16 (123)
“Other” (e.g., )	16 (123)
Walking	8 (59)
Fishing	8 (56)
Picnicking	7 (55)
Biking	5 (34)
Wildlife watching ( <i>not including bird watching</i> )	4 (31)

\*Percent rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Online survey results (*statistical summary*)

### Background Information

Percentages indicated throughout unless otherwise noted  
[n = number of respondents; SD = standard deviation;  $\bar{X}$  = mean]

- When was your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park? (*Please check one.*) (n = 223)
  - 70.0 May, June, July, or August (2019)
  - 30.0 September (2019) – March (2020)
  
2. Was your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park during the week, on the weekend, or both? (*Please check one.*) (n = 221;  $\bar{X}$  = 1.69)
  - 42.5 During the week (Monday – Friday)
  - 45.7 During the weekend (Saturday, Sunday)
  - 11.8 Both during the week and weekend (e.g., Thursday – Sunday)

3. During your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park, how did you enter the Park?  
 (Please check one.) (n = 225;  $\bar{X}$  = 2.92)
- 0.4 On foot (Please **SKIP** to question 5)
  - 1.3 By bike (Please **SKIP** to question 5)
  - 96.4 In a vehicle (other than a bus) (Please **CONTINUE** to question 4)
  - 1.8 Other (Please **CONTINUE** to question 4) (e.g., motorcycle [x2], motorhome, etc.)
4. Approximately how many people were in your vehicle including yourself?  
 (Please **write in** the number of people below.) (n = 221;  $\bar{X}$  = 2.37; Median = 2.00)

Response	Frequency	%
1	33	14.9
2	117	52.9
3	38	17.2
4	26	11.8
5	4	1.8
6	2	0.9
12	1	0.5

5. Approximately how many miles (one way) is Golden Gate Canyon state park from your home? (Please check one.) (n = 223;  $\bar{X}$  = 4.76; Median = 5.00)
- 0.4 Less than one mile
  - 2.7 Between 1 – 5 miles
  - 2.2 Between 6 – 10 miles
  - 30.0 Between 11 – 25 miles
  - 43.9 Between 26 – 50 miles
  - 20.6 Greater than 50 miles

### Visitor Costs

6. During your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park, did you stay overnight in or within 50 miles of the Park? (Please check one.) (Question removed due to data inconsistencies)
- No (If **NO**, please **SKIP** to question #8)
  - Yes (If **YES**, please **CONTINUE** to question #7)
- ↳ 7. Approximately, how many nights did you stay in each of the following in or within 50 miles of the Park? (Please write in your responses.)

Cabin (n = 6;  $\bar{X}$  = 2.33; Range = 1-5)

Number of nights	Frequency
1	1
2	4
5	1

Yurt ( $n = 3$ ;  $\bar{X} = 2.33$ ; Range = 1-3)

Number of nights	Frequency
2	2
3	1

Tent ( $n = 10$ ;  $\bar{X} = 1.80$ ; Range = 1-3)

Number of nights	Frequency
1	3
2	6
3	1

RV (Camper Trailer, etc.) ( $n = 22$ ;  $\bar{X} = 3.09$ ; Range = 1-8)

Number of nights	Frequency
1	3
2	5
3	8
4	3
5	1
6	1
8	1

Hotel/motel ( $n = 7$ ;  $\bar{X} = 2.14$ ; Range = 1-4)

Number of nights	Frequency
1	2
2	3
3	1
4	1

Friend or relative's home ( $n = 3$ ;  $\bar{X} = 5.33$ ; Range = 2-11)

Number of nights	Frequency
2	1
3	1
11	1

Other (please specify) (e.g., boat): (n = 3;  $\bar{X}$  = 6.00; Range = 1-13)  
*(Examples include: AirBnB, personal vehicle, etc.)*

Number of nights	Frequency
1	1
4	1
13	1

8. Not including your final departure, approximately how many times did you leave the park during your visit? *Think about leaving to buy things like groceries, to meet people, to sight see, etc. (Please **write in** the number of times.)* (n = 169;  $\bar{X}$  = N/A; Range = 0-4)

Response	Frequency	%
0	156	78.8
1	28	14.1
2	8	4.0
3	2	1.0
4	1	0.5
6	1	0.5
7	1	0.5
8	1	0.5

9. What type of State Parks pass did you use during your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park? *(Please check one.)* (n = 215; SD = 2.73)

- 46.5 Paid daily entrance fee (*1-day pass*) to gate attendant
- 26.0 Annual State Parks pass
- 11.2 Daily pass from self-service dispenser
- 4.7 I did not purchase a SP pass
- 4.2 Aspen Leaf Parks pass
- 2.8 Annual “Hang Tag” Parks pass
- 2.3 Volunteer Parks pass
- 0.9 I’m not sure
- 0.9 Active duty/Veteran’s pass
- 0.9 Disabled Veteran’s license plate
- 0.5 Columbine Parks pass
- 0.0 Centennial Parks pass

10. Approximately how much money did you and everyone in your vehicle spend during your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park? (Please count only money spent for **this trip** and only money that was spent **within 50 miles** of the Park.) ( $\bar{X}$  indicated below; zeros included)
- \$ 22.59 Gas and vehicle expenses outside the park  
(n = 187; Median = 10.00; range = 0-400)
  - \$ 40.48 Lodging outside the park (n = 142; Median = 0; range = 0-1,550)
  - \$ 23.26 Food at restaurants outside the park (n = 152; Median = 0; range = 0-500)
  - \$ 25.93 Supplies and groceries outside the park (n = 161; Median = 0; range 0-784)
  - \$ 7.34 All other types of expenditures outside the park  
(n = 133; Median 0; range = 0-300)
  - \$ 12.64 All expenditures inside the park except for entrance fees (e.g., camping, reservations, concessions, and all other expenses)  
(n = 152; Median = 0; range 0-310)

### Recreation Activities and Interests

11. During your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon, which of the following activities did you enjoy within the Park? (Please check all that apply.) **Note:** not all of these activities are offered at every State Park.

#### Water-based Activities

	%	Frequency	
A	0.4	1	Swimming
B	0	0	Motorized (e.g., water/jet skiing, power boating)
C	0.4	1	Non-motorized (e.g., canoeing, kayaking, rafting, paddle boarding, etc.)

#### Trail Activities

	%	Frequency	
D	7.2	16	Biking (mountain/road)
E	32.3	72	Walking/dog walking
F	6.3	14	Trail running/jogging
G	70.9	158	Hiking/backpacking
H	0.4	1	Horseback riding
I	0.9	2	Off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding

### Winter Activities

	%	Frequency	
J	0.4	1	Snowshoeing/cross country skiing
K	0	0	Snowmobiling
L	0.4	1	Ice fishing

### Wildlife-related Activities

	%	Frequency	
M	13.9	31	Bird watching
N	21.1	47	Wildlife watching (excluding bird watching)
O	11.7	26	Fishing
P	0.4	1	Hunting

### Education/Volunteering Activities

	%	Frequency	
Q	4.5	10	Educational programs
R	3.1	7	Historic site visitation/interpretation
S	1.8	4	Volunteer activities

### Other Outdoor Activities

	%	Frequency	
T	14.3	32	Camping (tent, RV, cabin/yurt)
U	0.9	2	Rock climbing
V	26.0	58	Photography
X	0	0	Archery/shooting sports
Y	10.3	23	Picnicking/group picnic sites

**Other activity not listed above** (please ***write in*** your response below.)

Z n = 13 (saved as Word file) Ex: Visitor center (x2), nature journaling, plant identification/wildflower viewing (x3), planning for future trips, wedding planning, napping, etc.

Table 2. Top 10 activities organized by percentage (question 11).

Top 10	Activity	% (rounded; frequencies in parentheses)
1	Hiking/backpacking	71 (158)
2	Walking/dog walking	32 (72)
3	Photography	26 (58)
4	Wildlife watching (excluding bird watching)	21 (47)
5	Camping	14 (32)
6	Bird watching	14 (31)
7	Fishing	12 (26)
8	Picnicking	10 (23)
9	Biking	7 (16)
10	Trail running/jogging	6 (14)

12. Based on your responses to question 11 (above), what was the one activity you were the most excited about doing during your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon State Park? (Please ***write in*** the letter corresponding with this activity.)

Activity	Frequency	%
Hiking/backpacking	125	61.0
Camping	14	6.8
Fishing	13	6.3
Biking	10	4.9
Walking/dog walking	9	4.4
Photography	9	4.4
Other (e.g., viewing wild flowers)	8	3.9
Wildlife watching (excluding bird watching)	6	2.9
Trail running/jogging	4	2.0
8 different activities*	1	0.5

\*Seven respondents were most excited about the following activities: hunting, ice fishing, picnicking, OHV riding, snowshoeing/skiing, swimming, and volunteer activities.



## Reasons to Visit Golden Gate Canyon State Park

There are a variety of reasons why people visit State Parks. These reasons help park staff make decisions about how to effectively manage parks based on visitor expectations. The next two questions ask how important certain aspects were to you when deciding to visit Golden Gate Canyon.

13. How important to you are each of the following reasons to visit Golden Gate Canyon?  
 (Please check **one** response for **each** reason.)

<i>Reasons to recreate at Golden Gate Canyon...</i>	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Very important
To meet new people (n = 206; $\bar{X}$ = 1.30; SD = .628)	78.6	14.1	6.3	1.0
To spend time with family/friends (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 3.44; SD = .929)	7.2	9.1	16.3	67.5
To feel like I accomplished something (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 2.69; SD = 1.023)	16.8	22.1	36.5	24.5
To relax (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 3.54; SD = .672)	0.5	8.7	26.9	63.9
To enjoy scenic views (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 3.83; SD = .455)	0.5	1.9	11.5	86.1
For solitude/self-reflection (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 3.11; SD = .914)	5.3	21.1	31.6	42.1
To do the #1 activity that brought you to the park (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 3.73; SD = .535)	0.5	2.9	20.1	76.6
For spiritual or cultural purposes (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 2.02; SD = 1.072)	42.6	25.8	18.2	13.4
To learn about wildlife, plants, etc. (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 2.38; SD = .976)	19.7	38.0	26.4	15.9
To enjoy or spend time in nature (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 3.83 SD = .426)	0	1.9	13.4	84.7
To exercise/improve physical health (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 3.45; SD = .778)	2.9	9.1	27.8	60.3
To have access to great facilities (camping, picnicking, etc.) (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 2.71; SD = .966)	11.5	30.8	33.2	24.5
To exercise my pet (n = 207; $\bar{X}$ = 1.84; SD = 1.165)	60.9	10.1	13.0	15.9
To do something fun, exciting, or thrilling (n = 210; $\bar{X}$ = 3.10; SD = .918)	7.1	16.2	36.7	40.0
To avoid traffic (e.g., on I-70 or I-25) (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 2.27; SD = 1.148)	35.1	23.6	20.7	20.7

## Your Enjoyment of Golden Gate Canyon

In order to help CPW manage State Parks for the types of recreation experiences you enjoy, we need to know a little more information about what characteristics you expect when visiting State Parks.

The next question examines your perspectives about 4 different aspects of park management including: **park maintenance, potential concerns, park facilities, personnel and information.**

14. Please indicate whether you disagree or agree with each of the following statements during your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park. (*Please check **one** response for **each** statement.*)

**Note:** not all of these amenities are offered at every State Park. In these cases, please **SKIP** those items.

<i><b>Park Maintenance</b></i>	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The park was clean and well maintained (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 4.66; SD = .944)	5.3	0.5	0	11.1	83.2
Picnic tables and grills were convenient and in good condition (n = 192; $\bar{X}$ = 4.19; SD = 1.026)	2.6	0.5	27.6	14.1	55.2
The park did not show signs of vandalism (n = 207; $\bar{X}$ = 4.60; SD = .994)	5.3	1.0	2.4	10.6	80.7
Restrooms were clean and in proper working order (n = 206; $\bar{X}$ = 4.27; SD = 1.014)	2.9	3.9	12.1	25.2	55.8
The natural environment of the park was being protected (n = 209; $\bar{X}$ = 4.60; SD = .855)	3.3	1.0	1.4	20.6	73.7
The water for fishing, boating, and swimming was free of litter/trash (n = 173; $\bar{X}$ = 3.99; SD = 1.086)	3.5	0.6	36.4	12.1	47.4

<b><i>Potential Concerns</i></b>	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I was not bothered by pets that other visitors bring to the Park (n = 206; $\bar{X}$ = 4.47; SD = .914)	0.5	5.8	8.7	16.5	68.4
I was <u>not</u> bothered by inconsiderate people (e.g., rowdy, noisy) (n = 205; $\bar{X}$ = 4.41; SD = .984)	2.0	5.4	8.3	18.5	65.9
The park was <u>not</u> crowded (n = 204; $\bar{X}$ = 4.28; SD = .991)	1.5	7.4	7.8	27.9	55.4
I received adequate services for the cost I paid to enter the park (n = 205; $\bar{X}$ = 4.61; SD = .644)	0	1.0	5.9	23.9	69.3

<b><i>Park Facilities</i></b>	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
There was adequate parking (n = 208; $\bar{X}$ = 4.27; SD = .981)	1.9	7.2	4.8	33.7	52.4
The park had enough water fountains/faucets (n = 186; $\bar{X}$ = 3.74; SD = .976)	0.5	7.5	38.2	25.3	28.5
The park had enough picnic areas/shelters (n = 187; $\bar{X}$ = 4.06; SD = .911)	0.5	1.1	32.1	24.6	41.7
The trash containers were readily available (n = 196; $\bar{X}$ = 4.24; SD = .912)	0.5	2.6	21.4	23.0	52.6
The park had well-designed and maintained trails (n = 201; $\bar{X}$ = 4.51; SD = .801)	0.5	3.5	6.0	24.4	65.7
Recycling containers were readily available (n = 179; $\bar{X}$ = 3.60; SD = 1.025)	2.2	7.3	45.3	19.0	26.3
The park had adequate places to sit and rest (n = 198; $\bar{X}$ = 4.30; SD = .835)	0	2.0	18.2	27.8	52.0

<b><i>Park Personnel and Information</i></b>	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Park staff were helpful (n = 197; $\bar{X}$ = 4.69; SD = .655)	0	1.5	6.1	14.2	78.2
The park had informative interpretive signs (n = 193; $\bar{X}$ = 4.43; SD = .795)	0	3.1	9.8	28.0	59.1
Park staff were courteous and friendly (n = 196; $\bar{X}$ = 4.74; SD = .621)	0	1.5	5.1	10.7	82.7
The park had adequate direction signs (e.g., parking, restrooms, trail locations, picnic) (n = 203; $\bar{X}$ = 4.38; SD = .868)	0.5	5.9	4.9	32.0	56.7
Park staff were knowledgeable (n = 191; $\bar{X}$ = 4.63; SD = .691)	0	0.5	10.5	14.7	74.3
There was enough available information about the park (e.g., brochures, maps, etc.) (n = 202; $\bar{X}$ = 4.56; SD = .804)	0.5	3.0	7.9	17.3	71.3
Park staff were available (n = 194; $\bar{X}$ = 4.53; SD = .796)	0.5	1.0	12.9	16.0	69.6

15. Overall, how dissatisfied or satisfied were you with your most recent visit to Golden Gate Canyon state park? (Please check one.) (n = 206;  $\bar{X}$  = 4.80; SD = .694)

Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
2.4	0.5	0	8.7	88.3

16. How unlikely or likely are you to visit Golden Gate Canyon state park in the next 12 months? (Please check one.) (n = 205;  $\bar{X}$  = 4.57; SD = .940)

Very unlikely	Somewhat unlikely	Neither unlikely nor likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
3.9	2.0	2.4	16.6	75.1

## Golden Gate Canyon State Park

17. Which, if any, of the following amenities should staff at Golden Gate State Park prioritize in the next 10 years? *(Please check all that apply.)*

49.0 Nothing (leave the Park as is) (n = 100)

26.5 Additional recreation trails (n = 54)

11.9 Other (please specify): (n = 24)

*(e.g., Improved/increased trail signage; more parking; more camping/trails; improved map to specify trail distance/elevation, etc.; more roads to access trails; playground for children;)*

9.8 Additional (developed) camping areas (e.g., tent camping, RV camping) (n = 20)

2.9 Additional picnic areas (n = 6)

18. During your last visit to Golden Gate Canyon State Park, which trail(s) did you use?

*(see map below) (Please check all that apply.)*

64.0 Raccoon (Moderate) 🐾 (n = 81)

30.2 Mule Deer (Moderate) 🐇 (n = 68)

16.4 I'm not sure (n = 37)

12.0 Horseshoe (Moderate) 🐾 (n = 27)

9.8 Mountain Lion (Difficult) 🐾 (n = 22)

8.9 Burro (Difficult) 🐾 (n = 20)

7.6 Blue Grouse (Moderate) 🐔 (n = 17)

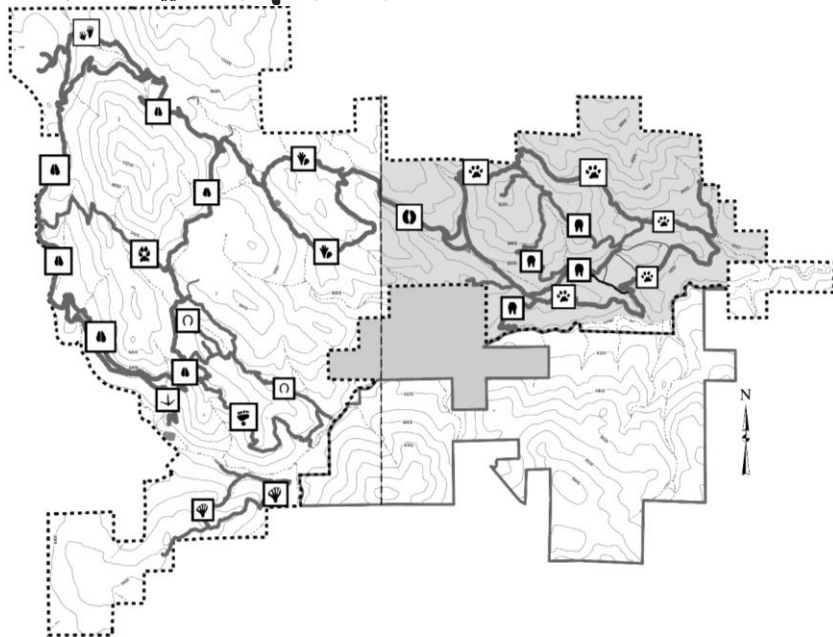
6.7 Black Bear (Most difficult) 🐻 (n = 15)

4.9 Snowshoe Hare (Difficult) 🐾 (n = 11)

4.9 Coyote (Most difficult) 🐾 (n = 11)

2.7 Buffalo (Moderate) 🐾 (n = 6)

1.8 Beaver (Most difficult) 🐾 (n = 4)



## About You

19. How old are you? (Please **write in** your response.)

(n = 195;  $\bar{X}$  = 46.4 years old; Median = 45.00 years old; SD = 15.13; range = 18-77)

Age Groups	Frequency	%
18-34 years old	57	29.2
35-51 years old	63	32.3
52-68 years old	57	29.6
Greater than 68 years old	18	9.2

20. With what gender do you identify? (Please check one.) (n = 198)

44.4 Male

55.1 Female

0.5 Prefer not to say

0 Other (Please specify)

21. What is your current (residence) zip code? (Please **write in** the five-digit number.)

(see Appendix A)

22. Approximately how many years have you lived in Colorado? (Please **write in** your response. (If currently **not a resident**, please write “not applicable” or “N/A.”)

\_\_\_\_\_ Years (n = 165;  $\bar{X}$  = 22.3; Out of state and “0” removed)

Years Lived in CO	Frequency
<1 year	13
1	13
2	7
3	10
4	4
5	7
6	2
7	5
8	3
9	1
10	3
13	2
14	4
15	2
19	3
20	5
21	3
22	3
23	1
24	1
25	4
26	2
27	2
28	1

29	2
30	4
31	1
32	3
34	1
35	1
36	1
37	4
38	3
39	3
40	9
42	2
43	5
45	6
46	2
47	3
49	1
50	1
54	1
55	2
57	1
59	1
60	2
63	1
64	1
67	1
70	1
74	1

23. How would you describe your racial or ethnic background? (*Please check one.*)

(Frequencies indicated below)

- 180 White, non-Hispanic/Latino
- 13 Hispanic/Latino
- 4 Asian
- 4 American Indian or Native Alaskan
- 2 Black or African American
- 0 Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 1 Other (Please specify): *i.e.*, “Native Mexican”

24. Please use the space provided below to share any additional thoughts you have about Colorado State Parks. (See Appendix B)

In total, we received 111 comments. Comments were analyzed using a two-step process. First, we developed broad themes or codes (e.g., “Satisfaction”) based on respondent statements. These often included statements that broadly described a particular phenomena. For example, within the Satisfaction code, we included both positive and negative aspects of a visitors’ experience. Second, we “identified patterns across statements within each emergent code” (Quartuch, Siemer, Decker, & Stedman, 2020, p. 6) to identify sub-themes. For example, the sub-theme labeled “Compliments” included positive statements about the park, which contributed to visitors’ satisfaction.

The vast majority (91) of statements we received were positive or complimentary in nature (Table 3). Similarly, 12 comments described the general aesthetic of the park as clean or in good condition and another seven expressed positive sentiments about park staff. We received nine comments about visitors’ desire for improved (or new) amenities (e.g., additional trash receptacles). Another six comments described issues with crowds or feeling crowded while recreating at Golden Gate State Park. However, three of these comments represented positive experiences despite feeling crowded. Another six comments noted that Golden Gate State Park did not feel crowded, or provided the ability to find solitude. Seven comments summarized issues with signage, park maps or trail markings.



Table 3. Open-ended comments organized via theme and sub-theme.

<b>Themes (bold) and subthemes</b>	<b>Number of comments*</b>	<b>Example comments</b>
<b>Satisfaction</b>		
Compliments	91	<i>“Thanks for doing so much to protect our natural environment”</i>
Issues (e.g., with dogs/pets, pricing, etc.)	3	<i>“I often wish dogs were not allowed- they are annoying plus they discourage the wildlife.”</i>
<b>Park conditions</b>		
Cleanliness (e.g., satisfactory condition)	12	<i>“Thank you for all the hard work you do to keep our parks beautiful!”</i>
Poor condition (e.g., trail maintenance)	1	<i>“Golden Gate could use more trail maintenance...Always been a weak spot there. Too much brush and trees encroaching on the trail.”</i>
<b>Crowding</b>		
Crowded/parking issues	3	<i>“I love visiting the state parks...My struggle has been that they get so crowded on the weekends that many times I opt just not to go hiking, or try to get there very early.”</i>
Not crowded/solitude	6	<i>“It has always been beautiful, not all that crowded and the people I encounter hiking have been very nice.”</i>
Positive experience despite crowds	3	<i>“Great place considering all the use!”</i>
Challenges with camping reservation availability	3	<i>“There are not enough camp spots. We can never get a camping spot on the weekend without planning months in advance.”</i>
<b>Signage, maps, trail markings</b>		
Useful/clear communication	1	<i>“I have hiked almost all of them [trails] and enjoy all of them...well maintained. Trails marked well”</i>
Unclear communication	7	<i>“the map is very bad and hard to follow - the footprint trail names are hard to read and hard to figure out, and there is not mileage for each segment of the trail.”</i>
<b>CPW staff</b>		
Positive experiences	7	<i>“The Rangers are knowledgeable and passionate about the Park.”</i>
Negative experiences	1	<i>“When the park rangers do come to check for fishing licenses...They are very nice, once in a while you get one that’s new and is not very nice.”</i>

<b>Amenities</b>		
Desire for improved/new amenities	9	<i>“The one major concern I had during our family hike was the lack of trash cans to dispose of pet waste...it would be convenient to have places to get rid of the trash, rather than needing to carry it for the duration of the hike.”</i>
Desire for no new amenities/development	2	<i>“Please do not overdevelop. Add more land if...owners are willing to donate. Do not make trails bikers only...[They]...already scare the heck out of walkers and wildlife.”</i>

*\*Several comments were coded in more than one theme/subtheme.*

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Appendix A  
Golden Gate Canyon Zip codes

Zip	Frequency
6824	1
7080	1
8053	1
15026	1
18707	1
19096	1
20904	1
22206	1
22901	1
45040	1
46260	1
48104	1
52806	1
55056	1
56425	1
60050	1
63105	1
64078	1
64083	1
65251	1
68106	1
68123	1
75862	1
78654	1
78664	1
80002	2
80003	4
80004	5
80005	3
80007	1
80010	1
80011	2
80012	1
80013	2
80014	1

80015	2
80018	2
80020	3
80021	2
80022	1
80023	2
80027	1
80030	2
80031	6
80033	3
80109	1
80111	1
80112	1
80120	1
80121	2
80122	4
80123	1
80126	3
80127	4
80128	1
80129	1
80136	1
80203	1
80205	3
80206	1
80209	2
80210	7
80211	4
80212	5
80214	1
80215	1
80218	3
80219	1
80220	5
80221	1
80222	2
80226	1
80227	1
80228	2

80229	2
80230	1
80231	1
80233	1
80237	1
80238	3
80249	1
80301	2
80303	1
80305	3
80401	4
80403	5
80422	6
80439	1
80465	1
80466	1
80476	1
80501	1
80503	3
80514	1
80526	2
80537	1
80542	1
80602	2
80603	4
80631	1
80919	1
81621	1
87501	1
93727	1
95136	1
98115	1
Total	190

Appendix B  
Open-ended Comments

1	A lovely park!
2	Are there any plans to develop the Green Ranch section of the park?
3	Awesome park! Would love to spend more time there and explore further!
4	Awesome!
5	Beautiful
6	Beautiful park with great hiking trails
7	Beautiful; I was there on a weekend. I plan on returning in summer and visiting through the week to avoid some of crowd.
8	bigger camp sites. more detail on sides
9	Colorado and it's parks are my favorite places on earth
10	CPW does a great job maintaining the State Parks.
11	Every state park I have been to has something to cause awe and inspire calm and peace of mind.
12	Gorgeous, close to home but far enough away from Denver to have some privacy .
13	Grateful to have them available. Well kept! Great Staff!
14	Great are nice gem not to far from the house will be back
15	Great job, beautiful parks! Can't wait to explore them more!
16	Great job!
17	Great park!
18	Great place considering all the use!
19	great system i have hiked almost all of them and enjoy all of them well maintained. trails marked well
21	Great time.
22	Great times in the CO state parks
23	Great work already... keep it up.
24	Had a great time. It has snowed some the days before so the trails in the meadow areas were harder to find due to there being less signs than on the more mountain trails. But no complaints it is a lovely place and I hope to see it again soon.
25	Hi, thanks for the survey. It was our first time hiking in Golden Gate Canyon, and we really enjoyed it. Two suggestions noted earlier in the survey, but here as well: there was gunfire coming from nearby on the other part of the park and it was very disruptive to the peace and quiet of the park, it was constant. Second, the map is very bad and hard to follow - the footprint trail names are hard to read and hard to figure out, and there is not mileage for each segment of the trail. While the trails were pretty well marked, the map was bad enough that we weren't sure what we were going to encounter on our hike, nor were we sure of the trails we selected when we headed out. In one case, near the Panorama drive / overlook, we couldn't figure out the map to continue our hike along Mule Deer. Anyway, I'm sure it must be hard to do, but it could be a better map. Thanks so much!
26	I absolutely love the state parks! Keep up the great job! :)

27	I go to GGSP several times a month for recreation. Looking forward to visiting other Parks when the weather warms up.
28	I had never heard of this state park until my 5th year living in Colorado. You should do more to drive awareness among Colorado natives - ex: use Social Media ads, have Denver Post write an article. I would have come more if I knew about how nice it was vs. always going to Summit County that is very well recognized. Cell service is terrible. When visiting from Connecticut our friends were lost driving there because the entrance sign and directions on Google maps didn't line up. FIX THE ADDRESS on Google Maps and in Google for directions. Or at least offer wifi to guests at the visitor centers who are trying to locate and call lost friends.
29	I have been a park visitor for years. I love how well kept the parks are. I wish it was easier to get a camping spot on the weekends. They fill so quickly.
30	I have only visited one or two but love them all!
31	I love CO state parks!
32	I love going to the mountains and the state parks. It is always so beautiful and peaceful. Great job keeping the park clean and safe for visitors.
33	I love Golden Gate Canyon State Park, my goal is to do each of the different hikes. It has always been beautiful, not all that crowded and the people I encounter hiking have been very nice. Park staff has been helpful and the trails are for the most part clearly marked. There might be a few spots that can be difficult to navigate and figure out which direction to go. But I have never been lost.
34	I love Golden Gate park! It is beautiful at every time of the year. I will be back! I also love the little gift shop in the visitors center.
35	I love the Colorado state parks and hope to visit all of them eventually. I like that there are quite a few close to the Denver metro area so it is relatively easy to visit them. They can get a little overcrowded so I try to arrive early. I like that they are open to a variety of activities. I often wish dogs were not allowed- they are annoying plus they discourage the wildlife.
36	I love the park and the solitude I get. Like the self service feeling entering and leaving
37	I love the park system for a variety of uses, particularly hiking and rock climbing but also picnicing with family. Thanks to your dedication to keeping the parks in good condition.
38	I love the parks we visited this year. We have something to be proud of.
39	I love them. They are a huge reason I live here.
40	I love to share the wildlife and views of Golden Gate State Park with friends and family who visit Colorado. The park is convenient to metro Denver and there has never been a visit that was less than exceptional.
41	I love visiting the state parks, they are where I do a lot of my hiking. My struggle has been that they get so crowded on the weekends that many times I opt just not to go hiking, or try to get there very early. I think a lot of people here now are not educated on protecting the resources and trail etiquette, plus I like to hike to get away from the crowds.
42	I love your Ranger Station! A great flower identification book was recommended to me by a ranger, and it's really increased my enjoyment of hiking here. Thanks!



43	I really like Golden Gate Canyon State Park. It is very well maintained, I never see any litter and it doesn't feel crowded when I visit. I have never camped here, but I hope to this summer. I like all the trails and I like how big the park is. This is probably my favorite State Park in Colorado. :)
44	I recommend emphasizing trails and open spaces rather than any additional development. We don't need more roads and maybe not more trails unless they're too crowded.
45	I think some need more parking for hiking
46	I would like to see low-cost single-person cabins made available. Unless you are part of a group, the existing larger cabins are not economical.
47	Impressive
48	It is very pretty
49	It was great! Not really very crowded with very nice and well maintained camping and trails.
50	It's a great park and close to home. Just need the hiking to make more sense when you come in the Coal Creek side of the park.
51	keep up the awesome job!
52	Keep up the good work everyone, especially the normal and required maintenance of facilities. Thanks.
53	Lory feels like my home turf. I am rarely on Arthur's, so the park seems largely uncrowded to me. Keep up the good work and thanks!
54	Love em. Your maps can be very confusing though. Consistency of maps would be helpful .
55	Love it
56	Love that this is a much quieter place than most of the surrounding wilderness and trails.
57	Love the park
58	Love the park! I got married there 5 years ago at the red barn will always be a special place for me and my family
59	Love the park! Keep up the great work. It's my "gym," particularly Coyote Trail
60	Love the park. This survey is too long
61	Love the passport program!
62	Love them!
63	Love them! Clear camping availability online and late check in online are always things I would like improvement on.
64	Love them!! Thank you!
65	Love this park
66	Love this park and appreciate the work and effort it takes to keep it awesome.
67	Loved it!
68	Loved the park. Visitor Center was very informative
69	More circular paths instead of one way paths so that you can get back to where you started without backtracking.
70	Nice place, thank you!
71	Overall a great system. Golden Gate could use more trail maintenance however. Always been a week spot there. Too much brush n trees encroaching on the trail.

72	Parking at the visitors center can be crowded.
73	pleasant and relaxing to visit
74	Please do not overdevelop. Add more land if outside boundary owners are willing to donate. Do not make trails bikers only. They have Floyd Hill, White Ranch, Cone and already scare the heck out of walkers and wildlife.
75	Prices keep going up compared to other states Stake Park Passes. Its almost cheaper to go our of state.
76	Put in a playground!
77	Put in more Yurts
78	Thank you for all the hard work you do to keep our parks beautiful!
79	Thank you for maintaining the parks - they are an incredible gift to all of us.
80	Thanks for all you do! Love it here!
81	Thanks for preserving these parks for recreation!
82	Thanks for the good work you do.
83	Thanks!
84	The 2 I've visited were very nice and enjoyed the walking.
85	The one major concern I had during our family hike was the lack of trash cans to dispose of pet waste. If animals are allowed on a trail, it would be convenient to have places to get rid of the trash, rather than needing to carry it for the duration of the hike. This would also avoid litter on the trails. Beautiful hike, though!
86	The parks are amazing. Thanks for doing so much to protect our natural environment!
87	There are not enough camp spots. We can never get a camping spot on the weekend without planning months in advance.
88	They are important!
	This survey did not work correctly on my iPad when I tried to enter data the keypad didn't come up
89	Thought the staff and park was wonderful like that still trying to preserve nature while giving guests the privilege to view it on well maintained trails.
90	Very pleased with the quality of my experience in the parks.
91	We are so fortunate to have these parks! One suggestion: if you are driving outside the park to get to Panorama Point and Reverends Ridge campground from the south, there is NO signage at Gap Road showing that it's the way. Very confusing for first time visitors.
92	We borrowed the state parks pass through the Public Library and it was a great luxury, Thanks for making that possible! Visiting the parks gives a sense of pride in our state. To quote my husband (about Golden Gate) "this place is like Colorado turned up to eleven!"
93	We camped there years ago and loved it. We have a larger camper now and wanted to check out sites for future visits
94	We enjoy camping in the State Parks, although this last visit to Golden Gate was only to picnic and hike. Additional State Parks in the mountains that are not so oriented toward water recreation would be terrific.
95	We had a great hike. Thank you!

96	We had a great time at the rifleman group camping spot!
97	We had a great time fishing and caught plenty of trout!
98	We had a great time. Thank you
99	We hadn't hiked in the Golden Gate State Park for many years but had a lovely time and were impressed with, particularly, the hiking only trails. Neat. TX
100	We hope to visit several state parks this year.
101	We love camping, hiking and fishing here every summer with our family. The park is beautifully maintained and the Rangers are knowledgeable and passionate about the Park.
102	We love hiking the state parks, they are usually well maintained and pet friendly!
103	We love our State Parks and so appreciate the hard work and dedication our State Park employees provide. Thank you!
104	We love the state parks and will do anything to support them! Always willing to participate in surveys to improve everyone's experience!
105	We LOVE them!
106	We loved Golden Gate Canyon State Park! Staff was very friendly. Would have been more convenient to have the park office open later than 5 on the weekdays. Also, the shower heads were very pressurized, actually painful to use, and couldn't get them adjusted to not be so strong.
107	We purchased a parks pass for the first time this year and are excited to see as many parks as we can in 2020. This is exciting and gives us a reason to see new things.
108	We really enjoy having such a beautiful park with lovely trails near home to camp in. We usually camp at RMNP or other forest service campgrounds and we surprised at all the nice amenities here.
109	We've (a group of 5-8 families) been coming to Reverend's Ridge campground loop A and Yurt #1 over Memorial Day Weekend for about 8 years in a row! We love it up there. We like to mountain bike, hike and hang out with our friends. Wish I was up there right now!
110	When the park rangers do come to check for fishing licenses, i noticed they are picking up trash that people leave. They are very nice, one in a while you get one thats new and is not very nice. But overall good experience at golden gate , Have been to several state parks always buy annual passes. Love camping fishing
111	Yeah! Wahoo!
112	You have wonderful and amazing park. My 7 year old son completed the Jr. Ranger program, which is a great program. We plan to return several times a year. Thank you!
113	Overall a great system. Golden Gate could use more trail maintenance however. Always been a week spot there. Too much brush n trees encroaching on the trail.
114	Parking at the visitors center can be crowded.