

Results of *Regional Outdoors Survey*

The Survey

The survey was self administered and addressed the following questions:

How do you rate the organisation of the event?
How do you rate the interpretation/guiding at the event?
How do you rate the environment/setting at the event?
How do you rate the facilities (tracks/bridges etc.) at the Park?

Respondents rated each of these factors on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor (or unsatisfactory) and 5 was excellent (or very satisfied). They were also invited to explain the reasons for their answers to identify the positive and negative influences on their experience.

Participants were asked to specify how they heard about the event, the area where they resided, whether they had visited the Park before, and their gender and age. This information gives us a demographic profile of the people participating in the events to compare with other visitor surveys.

Limitations of the Survey

The survey is not very useful for accurate statistical analysis because of variable sample numbers returned (no surveys were returned from Belmont events, while other events had high survey returns), some responses were from an individual perspective while others were on behalf of a group, and not all participants filled in survey forms.

However, the survey results show useful indicative information such as which promotional methods were most successful, the demographics of participants, average scores of levels of satisfaction, and the percentage of newcomers to the parks due to the Regional Outdoors programme.

Participants' Comments

This sample of the range of comments from participants indicates that they enjoyed their experience - but also highlights areas where we can improve:

- *Exciting and fun.*
- *Great joint effort with 4WD Club and Regional Council Park Ranger - Splendid.*
- *Great information about the park and its history - clear information. Tea and biscuits to finish would be great. [4WD Sunset Tour, Battle Hill]*
- *Excellent Ranger/guide - whole group participation. A good-sized group. [Battle Hill History]*
- *Enjoyed the walk. Insufficient track markers/signs. [Kilmister Track, Belmont]*
- *I didn't pick up from my conversations (with organiser) that I might finish up taking a number of people quite some distance down a country road in my car. In particular I might have to be dependent on complete strangers to take me back along the same road. [Cannons Creek, Belmont]*
- *Excellent knowledge of vegetation and surroundings - much appreciated. [Rainforest, Kaitoke]*
- *Great event - well run. [Treasure Hunt, Kaitoke]*

- *Due to size of group I had trouble hearing - but found the speaker had done great research.* [Archaeology QEP]
- *Hope there are more of these planned for the future - extend to schools, also more time needed and smaller groups.* [Archaeology QEP]
- *It has opened up the park for me and instead of passing by; I'll call in with the kids.* [Remnant Bush QEP]
- *Didn't know this park was here! Lovely outing.* [Tane's Track KiwiWalk]
- *It was great to have a "reason" to get out and "do it" - Thank you.* [Tane's Track KiwiWalk]
- *Educational and the children certainly didn't notice how far they were walking.* [Nikau Nature Walk, Wainuiomata]

Survey Results

The survey indicates that most people heard of the events from the Regional Outdoors Programme. The Evening Post and Contact appear to be most effective for newspaper advertising - although the Upper Hutt Leader worked well for local events at Kaitoke and Tunnel Gully. Other popular sources of information included local newspapers (press releases), libraries and visitor information centres.

High visitor numbers came from Wellington (28%) and Kapiti (29.3%). Wellington visitors are consistently high in nearly all parks; however, high numbers of survey returns for Queen Elizabeth Park events affected the overall results. *Individual parks generally had good attendance from local residents.*

Some 36 percent of participants' (475) were newcomers to the park or forest.

The survey results reflect good general satisfaction in all areas (4.67 out of a maximum of 5). The average satisfaction rating for interpretation/guiding is a little lower (4.49) reflecting the variable quality of leaders' commentaries and need for improved interpretative signs in some areas.

The survey shows a reasonably even gender spread in most areas with 45 percent of participants male and 55 percent female, similar proportions to other surveys.

The survey shows a fairly even age range of participants overall, with low numbers in the 15-19 and 20-29 age groups. The high number of under 15 age group (23 percent) is due to "power pramming" walks and other events targeted at children and families. In previous park surveys, the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups accounted for around 45 percent of visitors. However, in the Regional Outdoors survey these age groups comprised 29 percent of visitors and the 50-59 and 60+ age groups made up 41 percent. *We have increased visitors in the under 15 age group and the 50-59 and 60+ age groups.*