

2013 ANNUAL VISITATION REPORT



2013

Montana State Parks

Montana State Parks had over 2.1 million visits in 2013, the highest visitation on record. Statewide visitation is up 5% from 2012 and up 4% from 2009. Visitation is up 28% for the 10-year period. North Central Region (Great Falls) had the highest overall visitation in 2013, and Giant Springs State Park had the highest visitation of all state parks with over 307,000 visits. Visitation is up despite Bannack State Park being closed for 7 weeks in the summer due to a flash flood.

2013 Annual Visitation Report

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2013

The following is a summary of the Montana State Parks 2013 annual visitation, as well as comparisons with 2012 data, and visitation trends.

Total statewide visitation for 2013 is 2,112,045 visits, up 5% from 2012.

3-Year Trend (2011 to 2013): State Parks visitation is up **13%**.

5-Year Trend (2009 to 2013): State Parks visitation is up **4%**.

10-Year Trend (2004 to 2013): State Parks visitation is up **28%**.

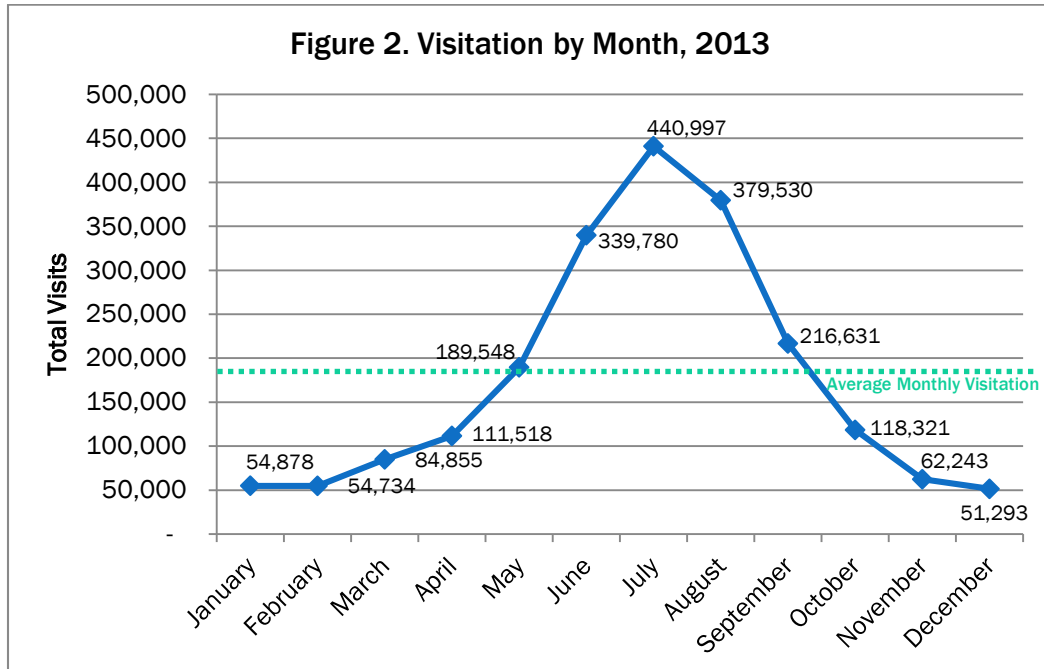
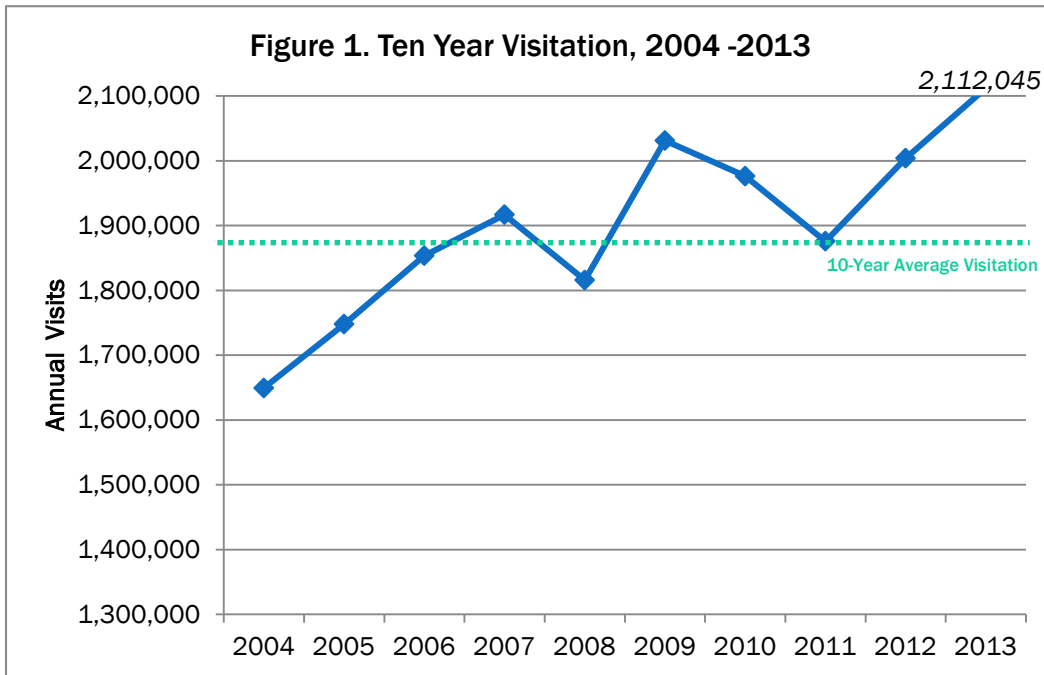
STATEWIDE VISITATION

In 2013, Montana State Parks had over 2.1 million visits, the most visits to State Parks in a single year over the past decade—surpassing the previous record in 2009. Visitation increased 5% over 2012 levels, 13% over 2011 levels, and 4% over 2009 levels (*Table 1*). Visitation is 28% higher than it was 10 years ago (*Figure 1*).

The busiest month in 2013 was July with close to 441,000 total visits, down 1% from July 2012. On average, there were about 175,000 visits per month, the highest average on record (*Figure 2*).

In 2013, visitation reached 2.1 million visits, making it the busiest year over the past decade.

Year	Total Visits
2009	2,031,121
2010	1,976,196
2011	1,875,803
2012	2,003,875
2013	2,112,045



REGIONAL VISITATION

Due to administrative re-organization in 2013, regional data from 2013 cannot be compared with regional data from previous years. Comparisons are provided at the park level.

The Montana State Parks administrative regions consist of the following:

- Northwest (Kalispell)
- West Central (Missoula)
- Southwest (Bozeman)
- North Central (Great Falls)
- Eastern (Billings)

North Central Region had the highest visitation with over 602,000 visits, followed by the Eastern Region with over 475,000 visits (**Table 2**).

Northwest Region had the most group, walk-in and bike-in visits, followed by Southwest Region.

North Central Region had the highest visitation by residents at 91%, while Southwest Region had the highest visitation of non-residents at 26%.

On average, about 83% of total visits were day use visits, with North Central Region having the highest percentage of day use at 93%.

West Central Region had the highest percentage of overnight use at 33% of visits.

Table 2. Visitation by Region						
Region	Total Visits	Group Size & Walk-In	Resident %	Non-Res %	Day Use %	Overnight Visit %*
Northwest	471,121	27,583	78%	22%	84%	16%
West Central	226,850	9,546	75%	25%	67%	33%
Southwest	336,540	18,212	74%	26%	87%	13%
North Central	602,276	11,902	91%	9%	93%	7%
Eastern	475,289	9,937	83%	17%	85%	15%
Total/Average	2,112,076	77,180	80%	20%	83%	17%

*Note: Overnight visits in this report are calculated based on a ratio developed through sampling, not based on revenues.

Visitation by State Parks

Northwest Region (Kalispell)

Wayfarers State Park had the highest visitation in the Northwest Region at close to 125,000 visits. From 2012 to 2013, Lone Pine State Park had the largest increase in visitation at 16%. North Shore State Park decreased in visitation by 22%, however the actual number was only 43 fewer visits.

State Park	2013 Visits	% Change over 2012
Big Arm	34,172	-5%
Finley Point	20,083	2%
Lake Mary Ronan	27,683	1%
Les Mason	12,973	13%
Logan	19,986	-4%
Lone Pine	77,591	16%
North Shore	155	-22%
Thompson Falls	13,179	11%
Wayfarers	124,949	11%
West Shore	36,173	14%
Whitefish	62,003	-3%
Wild Horse Island	19,380	14%
Yellow Bay	22,795	-6%

West Central Region (Missoula)

Salmon Lake State Park had the highest visitation in the West Central Region at 54,631 visits. From 2012 to 2013, Beavertail Hill State Park had the largest increase in visitation at 23%. Fort Owen State Park decreased in visitation by 25%. Placid State Park summer visitation was not fully recorded due to a malfunction in the visitation counter.

State Park	2013 Visits	% Change over 2012
Beavertail Hill	18,773	23%
Council Grove	35,248	6%
Fish Creek	5,485	0%
Fort Owen	3,081	-25%
Frenchtown Pond	35,970	3%
Painted Rocks	13,144	-2%
Placid Lake*	34,740	-24%
Salmon Lake	54,631	19%
Travelers' Rest	25,778	3%

Southwest Region (Bozeman)

Cooney State Park had the highest visitation in the Southwest Region at 157,198 visits. From 2012 to 2013, Madison Buffalo Jump State Park more than doubled in visitation from 4,501 visits to 11,588 visits. At the beginning of 2013, a public process to discuss the future of Madison Buffalo Jump State Park was conducted, which helped raise the awareness of the park regionally. Additionally, a car counter was installed, which helped improve the accuracy of visitation collected at the park. Bannack State Park decreased in visitation by 39%, due to the flash flood in July and subsequent park closure for 7 weeks, which included the cancellation of Bannack Days, Bannack State Park's largest event.

State Park	2013 Visits	% Change over 2012
Anaconda Smoke Stack	9,453	-1%
Bannack*	20,147	-39%
Clark's Lookout	7,917	-6%
Cooney	157,198	17%
Lewis & Clark Caverns	70,197	9%
Lost Creek	10,658	1%
Madison Buffalo Jump*	11,588	157%
Missouri Headwaters	29,455	16%
Prairie Dog Town	19,109	73%

North Central Region (Great Falls)

Giant Springs State Park had the highest visitation in the North Central Region at close to 308,000 visits. From 2012 to 2013, Spring Meadow Lake State Park had the largest increase in visitation at 55%, jumping from 102,000 to close to 160,000 visits. Tower Rock State Park decreased in visitation by 24%. Smith River State Park also decreased in visitation by 3% due to a 6-day river closure in early July.

State Park	2013 Visits	% Change over 2012
Ackley Lake	34,102	30%
Black Sandy	55,103	-1%
Elkhorn	1,538	1%
First Peoples Buffalo Jump	15,366	0%
Giant Springs	307,666	5%
Sluice Boxes	16,356	7%
Smith River*	4,399	-3%
Spring Meadow Lake	158,842	55%
Tower Rock	8,995	-24%

Eastern Region (Billings)

Lake Elmo State Park had the highest in the Eastern Region at over 172,000 visits. From 2012 to 2013, Medicine Rocks State Park doubled in visitation from 11,473 visits to 24,711 visits. Pirogue Island State Park visitation decreased by 51%. Makoshika State Park visitation was not fully recorded due to summer construction in the area that inadvertently damaged the visitation counter. Rosebud Battlefield State Park was under an emergency closure for 10 days during August, due to a lightning-caused fire that burned approximately 150 acres in the state park, which is 5% of the total park acreage.

State Park	2013 Visits	% Change over 2012
Brush Lake	5,563	-38%
Chief Plenty Coups	25,168	-30%
Hell Creek	34,009	5%
Lake Elmo	172,357	-20%
Makoshika*	59,724	-18%
Medicine Rocks	24,711	115%
Pictograph Cave	60,072	17%
Pirogue Island	6,453	-51%
Rosebud Battlefield*	3,697	-31%
Tongue River Reservoir	76,297	36%
Yellowstone River	7,239	-11%

For complete data on individual park visitation, see the Appendix.

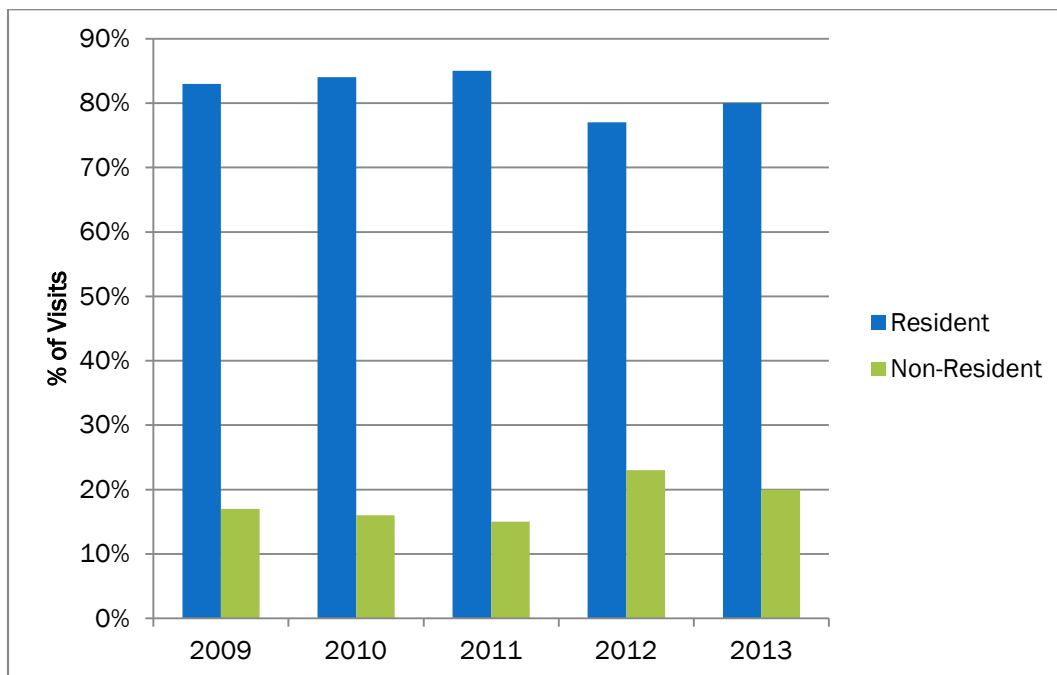
Residency Trends

Resident and non-resident visitation is estimated based on a ratio of the total visits, which was established for each park through field sampling.

From 2012 to 2013, resident visitation slightly increased from 77% of visits to 80% of visits.

Over the past 5 years from 2009 to 2013, the resident-to-non-resident ratio statewide has been shifting, with an increase in the percent of non-resident visits that comprise the total visitation (**Figure 3**). From 2009 to 2013, non-resident visits have increased from 17% of visits to 20% of visits. The estimated count of resident visits is approximately 1.6 million resident visits annually. The estimated count of non-resident visits has increased from 345,000 visits in 2009 to over 422,000 visits in 2013.

Figure 3. Resident vs. Non-Resident Visitation, 2009 to 2013.



APPENDIX. PARKS VISITATION TABLES

- Appendix A. State Park Visitation by Region
- Appendix B. State Park Visitation by Total Visits
- Appendix C. State Park Visitation by Percent Change

2013 Montana State Parks Visitation Estimates by Park

Calendar year, by Region

Region	Park	Total Visits	Resident %	Non-Res %	Day Use %	Overnight Visit %	2012 Total Visits	2012-2013 % Change
1	Big Arm	34,172	67%	33%	58%	42%	35,876	-5%
1	Finley Point	20,083	77%	23%	72%	28%	19,611	2%
1	Lake Mary Ronan	27,683	86%	14%	72%	28%	27,435	1%
1	Les Mason	12,973	95%	5%	100%	0%	11,518	13%
1	Logan	19,986	82%	18%	60%	40%	20,783	-4%
1	Lone Pine	77,591	89%	11%	100%	0%	66,671	16%
1	North Shore	155	100%	0%	100%	0%	198	-22%
1	Thompson Falls	13,179	61%	39%	66%	34%	11,856	11%
1	Wayfarers	124,949	77%	23%	86%	14%	112,149	11%
1	West Shore	36,173	72%	28%	88%	12%	31,613	14%
1	Whitefish	62,003	78%	22%	86%	14%	63,630	-3%
1	Wild Horse Island	19,380	61%	39%	100%	0%	17,029	14%
1	Yellow Bay	22,795	81%	19%	97%	3%	24,258	-6%
2	Beavertail Hill	18,773	69%	31%	22%	78%	15,301	23%
2	Council Grove	35,248	79%	21%	100%	0%	33,394	6%
2	Fish Creek	5,485	94%	6%	100%	0%	5,485	0%
2	Fort Owen	3,081	71%	29%	100%	0%	4,100	-25%
2	Frenchtown Pond	35,970	91%	9%	100%	0%	34,937	3%
2	Painted Rocks	13,144	75%	25%	68%	32%	13,396	-2%
2	Placid Lake	34,740	66%	34%	29%	71%	45,446	-24%
2	Salmon Lake	54,631	72%	28%	48%	52%	45,996	19%
2	Travelers' Rest	25,778	68%	32%	100%	0%	24,936	3%
3	Anaconda Smoke Stack	9,453	54%	46%	100%	0%	9,544	-1%
3	Bannack	20,147	73%	27%	91%	9%	32,957	-39%
3	Clark's Lookout	7,917	81%	19%	100%	0%	8,382	-6%
3	Cooney	157,198	90%	10%	88%	12%	134,556	17%
3	Lewis & Clark Caverns	70,617	50%	50%	81%	19%	64,765	9%
3	Lost Creek	10,658	57%	43%	68%	32%	10,571	1%
3	Madison Buffalo Jump	11,588	89%	11%	100%	0%	4,501	157%
3	Missouri Headwaters	29,455	75%	25%	80%	20%	25,364	16%
3	Prairie Dog Town	19,109	40%	60%	100%	0%	11,055	73%
4	Ackley Lake	34,012	95%	5%	85%	15%	26,160	30%
4	Black Sandy	55,103	96%	4%	53%	47%	55,809	-1%
4	Elkhorn	1,538	90%	10%	100%	0%	1,520	1%
4	First Peoples Buffalo Jump	15,366	65%	35%	100%	0%	15,291	0%
4	Giant Springs	307,666	90%	10%	100%	0%	292,725	5%
4	Sluice Boxes	16,356	96%	4%	99%	1%	15,231	7%
4	Smith River	4,399	76%	24%	0%	100%	4,515	-3%
4	Spring Meadow	158,842	95%	5%	100%	0%	102,525	55%
4	Tower Rock	8,995	66%	34%	100%	0%	11,810	-24%
5	Brush Lake	5,563	49%	51%	67%	33%	9,001	-38%
5	Chief Plenty Coups	25,168	80%	20%	100%	0%	36,195	-30%
5	Hell Creek	34,009	69%	31%	26%	74%	32,370	5%
5	Lake Elmo	172,357	97%	3%	100%	0%	215,041	-20%
5	Makoshika	59,724	91%	9%	97%	3%	72,962	-18%
5	Medicine Rocks	24,711	97%	3%	99%	1%	11,473	115%
5	Pictograph Cave	60,072	76%	24%	100%	0%	51,283	17%
5	Pirogue Island	6,453	99%	1%	100%	0%	13,238	-51%
5	Rosebud Battlefield	3,697	24%	76%	100%	0%	5,396	-31%
5	Tongue River Reservoir	76,297	59%	41%	45%	55%	55,909	36%
5	Yellowstone River	7,239	82%	18%	100%	0%	8,110	-11%

2013 Montana State Parks Visitation Estimates by Park

Calendar year, organized by Total Visits

Region	Park	Total Visits	Resident %	Non-Res %	Day Use %	Overnight Visit %	2012 Total Visits	2012-2013 % Change
4	Giant Springs	307,666	90%	10%	100%	0%	292,725	5%
5	Lake Elmo	172,357	97%	3%	100%	0%	215,041	-20%
4	Spring Meadow	158,842	95%	5%	100%	0%	102,525	55%
3	Cooney	157,198	90%	10%	88%	12%	134,556	17%
1	Wayfarers	124,949	77%	23%	86%	14%	112,149	11%
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2	Frenchtown Pond	35,970	91%	9%	100%	0%	34,937	3%
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2	Placid Lake	34,740	66%	34%	29%	71%	45,446	-24%
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1	Wild Horse Island	19,380	61%	39%	100%	0%	17,029	14%
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2	Fort Owen	3,081	71%	29%	100%	0%	4,100	-25%
4	Elkhorn	1,538	90%	10%	100%	0%	1,520	1%
1	North Shore	155	100%	0%	100%	0%	198	-22%

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