



MONTANA **FWP**

2017 ANNUAL VISITATION REPORT



2017

Montana State Parks

Montana State Parks had 2.5 million visits in 2017. Statewide visitation was down 4% from 2016. North Central Region (Great Falls) had the highest overall visitation with over 698,000 visits, and Giant Springs State Park had the highest visitation of all state parks with over 401,000 visits.

2017 Annual Visitation Report

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2017

The following is a summary of the Montana State Parks 2017 annual visitation, as well as comparisons with 2016 data, and visitation trends.

Total statewide visitation is 2,544,138 visits, down 4% from 2016.

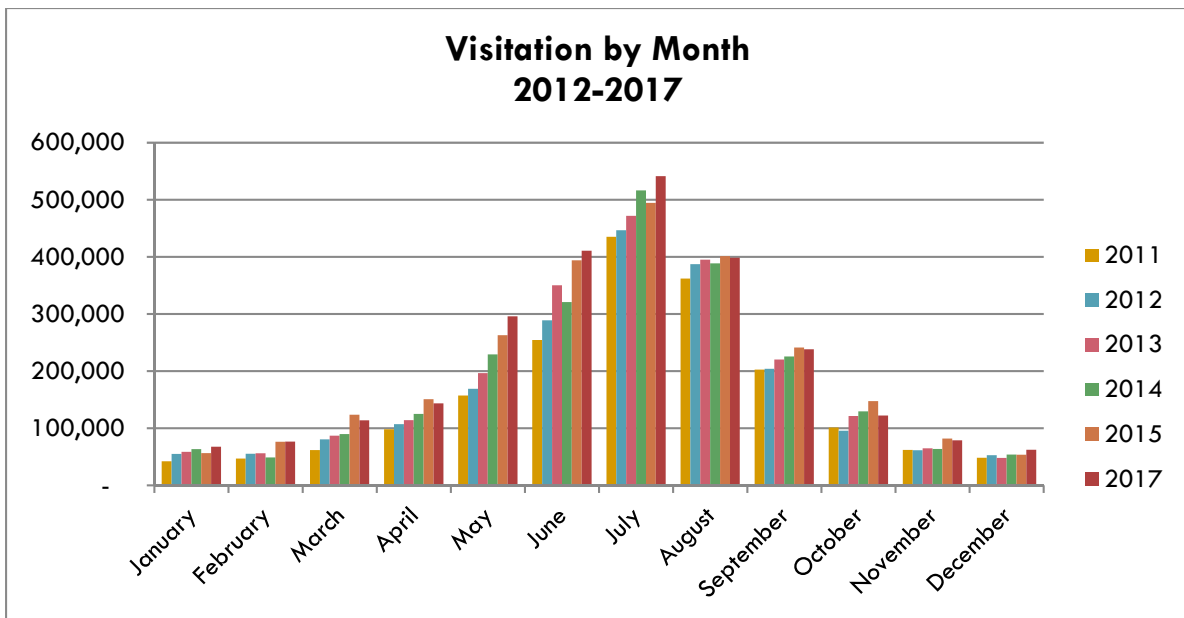
STATEWIDE VISITATION

In 2017, Montana State Parks visitation was down 4% from the previous year. There were several factors that contributed to the decline. Most notably the statewide 2017 fire season.



The top five parks for annual visitation in 2017 are:

1. Giant Springs – 401,062 visits
2. Flathead Lake – 284,713 visits
3. Cooney – 190,279 visits
4. Lake Elmo – 170,770 visits
5. Thompson Chain of Lakes/Logan – 133,702 visits



Annual Visitation by Region, 2017			
Region	Total Visits	2016 Total Visits	% Change 2016-2017
Northwest (Kalispell)	696,372	705,703	-1%
West Central (Missoula)	256,287	290,539	-12%
Southwest (Bozeman)	430,356	440,018	-2%
North Central (Great Falls)	698,355	724,681	-4%
Eastern (Billings)	462,768	498,588	-7%

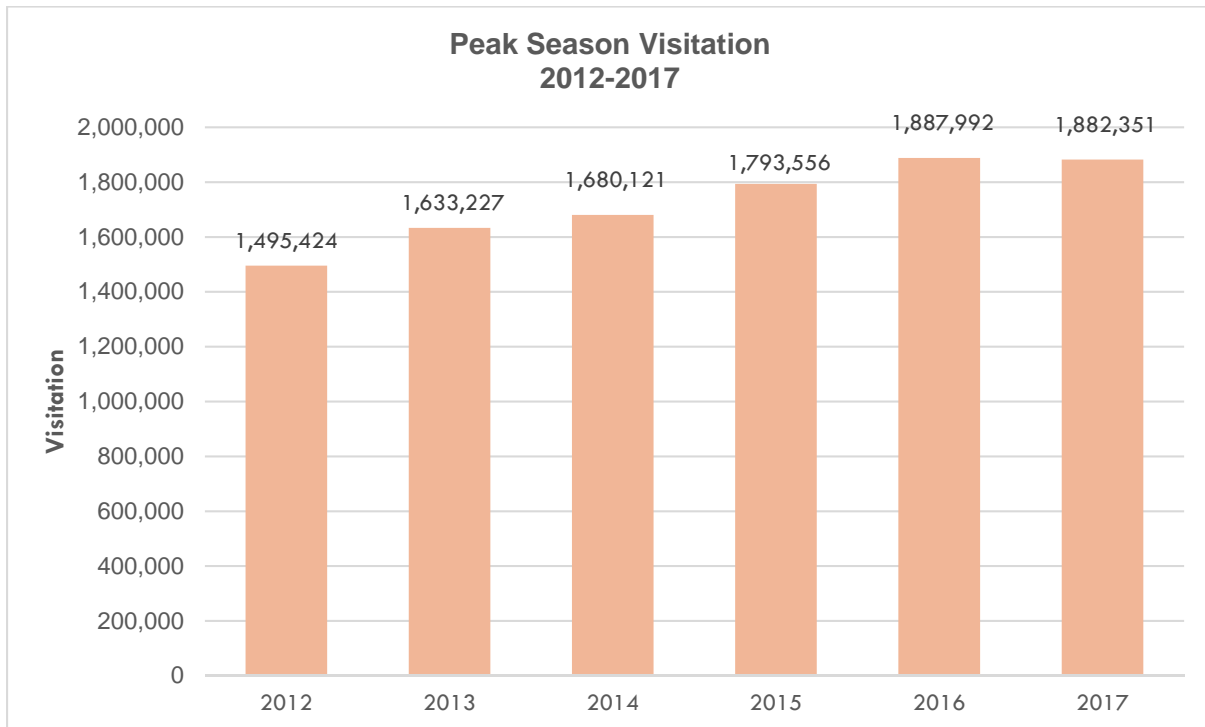
Shoulder Season

The 2017 shoulder season saw a 7% decrease from the 2016 season. The decrease was mostly due to a late spring, an extreme fire danger, poor air quality due to forest fires and an early snow fall. Also, due to funding shortages, some parks were not able to plow snow as they have in the past.

Shoulder Season Visitation			
Shoulder Season	2017	2016	2015
February – April	333,530	429,066	350,295
October - November	262,797	217,047	229,118
<i>Total Shoulder Season</i>	596,327	646,113	579,413

Peak Season Visitation

Peak season for Montana State Parks is from May to September. The 2017 peak season saw a total of **1,882,351 visits**.



The top five parks for **peak season** visitation in 2017 were:

1. Flathead Lake – 258,743 visits (+3% from 2016)
2. Giant Springs – 224,607 visits (-3% form 2016)
3. Cooney – 145,436 visits (+3% from 2016)
4. Lake Elmo – 127,585 visits (+4% from 2016)
5. Spring Meadow Lake – 82,635 visits (+2% from 2016)

2017 Peak Season Visitation Estimates by Total Visits

May - September: 1,882,351 visits

Park	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2016-2017 % Change
Flathead Lake	258,743	251,002	225,357	226,472	212,380	200,118	3%
<i>Wayfarers</i>	135,433	123,985	103,942	108,610	99,942	90,643	9%
<i>Big Arm</i>	36,483	34,688	31,933	30,229	28,769	30,189	5%
<i>Finley Point</i>	23,110	27,088	24,786	19,976	18,736	18,722	-15%
<i>West Shore</i>	23,870	25,114	28,208	25,995	28,175	24,321	-5%
<i>Yellow Bay</i>	17,059	20,181	17,988	22,554	17,921	19,723	-15%
<i>Wild Horse Island</i>	22,788	19,946	18,501	19,108	18,838	16,519	14%
Giant Springs	224,607	230,438	239,344	179,894	174,452	156,685	-4%
Cooney	145,436	133,148	138,836	122,102	125,107	98,836	-4%
Lake Elmo	127,585	122,266	117,051	108,992	119,704	169,540	4%
TCL/Logan	101,857	107,282	93,760	73,765	70,592	-	-5%
<i>Thompson Chain of Lakes</i>	81,803	82,348	71,528	53,567	55,124	-	-1%
<i>Logan</i>	20,054	24,934	22,232	20,198	15,468	15,578	-20%
Whitefish/Les Mason	96,836	92,699	95,142	58,799	62,154	62,350	4%
<i>Whitefish Lake</i>	66,115	64,004	64,431	46,874	50,166	51,747	-1%
<i>Les Mason</i>	30,721	28,698	30,711	11,925	11,988	10,603	7%
Spring Meadow Lake	82,635	80,807	123,841	104,362	124,868	88,091	2%
Lewis & Clark Caverns	72,359	73,954	69,330	61,046	64,228	59,861	-2%
Lone Pine	59,076	68,119	52,886	58,806	47,174	40,457	-13%
Makoshika	58,558	66,923	50,860	53,987	33,760	42,265	5%
Black Sandy	55,937	52,897	17,614	47,349	48,236	50,910	6%
Tongue River Reservoir	55,402	57,871	44,868	57,057	65,296	47,464	-4%
Placid Lake	47,828	53,863	40,875	52,495	33,208	43,660	-11%
Salmon Lake	46,346	49,152	52,021	57,230	53,220	44,607	-6%
Pictograph Cave	39,330	33,263	44,486	43,367	39,700	28,633	18%
Frenchtown Pond	37,724	45,749	36,040	45,173	25,878	25,669	-18%
Bannack	36,622	51,396	35,665	27,498	13,475	27,362	-29%
Ackley Lake	34,205	32,848	24,058	23,065	27,531	19,442	4%
Missouri Headwaters	32,048	28,804	24,250	23,145	23,359	19,914	11%
Hell Creek	22,838	20,828	25,093	25,162	28,025	25,063	10%
Travelers' Rest	21,145	23,712	20,034	19,181	17,214	15,854	-11%
Lake Mary Ronan	20,188	19,670	8,424	22,778	22,817	22,870	3%
First Peoples Buffalo Jump	19,761	20,108	11,923	13,606	11,209	10,782	-2%
Beavertail Hill	18,018	20,427	17,702	21,056	17,807	15,228	-12%
Council Grove	18,812	20,320	18,564	17,905	19,546	18,635	-7%
Sluice Boxes	18,175	16,098	15,550	13,015	13,470	12,134	13%
Thompson Falls	16,543	12,869	11,523	10,733	11,609	10,515	29%
Chief Plenty Coups	12,331	8,778	13,077	23,576	18,654	27,932	40%
Prairie Dog Town	12,187	12,186	12,592	8,296	15,114	8,061	39%
Lost Creek	11,026	10,672	13,842	9,868	9,512	9,487	3%
Anaconda Smoke Stack	10,433	11,622	8,404	7,545	7,119	7,220	-10%
Painted Rocks	9,717	9,227	8,183	11,183	11,538	11,862	5%
Medicine Rocks	8,639	11,600	11,909	7,457	19,108	7,663	-26%
Madison Buffalo Jump	8,208	8,626	6,516	8,405	7,375	2,158	-5%
Brush Lake	7,716	6,724	8,843	6,843	5,255	8,478	-21%
Tower Rock	6,828	4,126	6,441	7,881	5,902	7,057	65%
Clarks Lookout	6,061	4,437	5,069	3,624	4,710	5,091	37%
Smith River	4,844	3,902	3,739	4,924	4,061	4,128	24%
Fish Creek	3,276	3,276	2,050	3,283	3,283	3,283	0%
Rosebud Battlefield	3,123	3,102	2,798	2,466	2,525	3,616	1%
Pirogue Island	2,873	3,299	3,336	3,038	2,956	9,094	-40%
Yellowstone River*	-	2,474	1,454	1,999	2,887	3,210	-

*no longer collecting visitation data due to classification changes.

2017 Annual Visitation by Region

January - December: **2,544,138** Visits

Region	Park	2017 Total Visits	2016 Total Visits	% Change
Northwest Region (Kalispell)		696,372	705,703	-1%
	Flathead Lake	284,713	313,033	
	<i>Big Arm</i>	43,522	42,783	2%
	<i>Finley Point</i>	23,863	29,171	-18%
	<i>Wayfarers</i>	163,085	158,961	3%
	<i>West Shore</i>	32,798	35,456	-8%
	<i>Wild Horse Island</i>	82,538	20,316	3%
	<i>Yellow Bay</i>	22,045	26,346	-16%
	Lake Mary Ronan	27,919	25,309	10%
	Lone Pine	94,121	103,998	-9%
	TCL/Logan	133,702	137,507	
	<i>Thompson Chain of Lakes</i>	106,933	107,484	-1%
	<i>Logan</i>	26,769	30,023	-11%
	Thompson Falls	17,233	14,453	19%
	Whitefish Lake/Les Mason	114,821	111,403	
	<i>Whitefish Lake</i>	82,538	80,338	3%
	<i>Les Mason</i>	32,283	31,065	4%
West Central Region (Missoula)		256,287	290,539	-12%
	Beavertail Hill	19,148	21,411	-11%
	Council Grove	33,431	34,611	-4%
	Fish Creek	5,481	5,481	0%
	Fort Owen	2,549	2,608	-3%
	Frenchtown Pond	51,297	68,904	-25%
	Painted Rocks	10,560	11,384	-7%
	Placid Lake	50,413	57,119	-12%
	Salmon Lake	48,248	51,631	-7%
	Travelers' Rest	35,160	37,390	-6%
Southwest Region (Bozeman)		430,356	440,018	-4%
	Anaconda Smoke Stack	12,652	14,121	-10%
	Bannack	48,918	63,852	-23%
	Clark's Lookout	9,611	8,271	16%
	Cooney	190,279	190,715	-5%
	Lewis & Clark Caverns	81,518	82,415	-1%
	Lost Creek	12,522	12,426	1%
	Madison Buffalo Jump	14,705	15,770	-7%
	Missouri Headwaters	42,365	38,401	10%
	Prairie Dog Town	17,786	14,047	27%
North Central Region (Great Falls)		698,355	724,681	-4%
	Ackley Lake	41,470	41,829	-1
	Black Sandy	62,895	57,265	10
	First Peoples Buffalo Jump	23,956	20,280	-3
	Giant Springs	401,062	428,930	-6
	Sluice Boxes	22,592	22,971	-2
	Smith River	5,497	4,607	19
	Spring Meadow Lake	131,733	137,303	-4
	Tower Rock	9,150	11,496	-20
Southeast Region (Billings)		462,768	498,588	-7%
	Brush Lake	8,799	7,417	-16%
	Chief Plenty Coups	16,057	13,982	-10%
	Hell Creek	30,093	26,355	14%
	Lake Elmo	170,770	183,287	-1%
	Makoshika	94,308	100,623	5%
	Medicine Rocks	13,893	19,664	-29%
	Pictograph Cave	51,985	54,057	-4%
	Pirogue Island	5,848	7,954	-38%
	Rosebud Battlefield	4,151	4,801	-14%
	Tongue River Reservoir	66,864	74,790	-11%

Visitation is not reported for Elkhorn, Granite, Beaverhead Rock, Marias River, North Shore or Yellowstone River.