



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 724,600 visits, and Giant Springs State Park had the highest visitation of all state parks with over 401,000 visits.

# 2017 Annual Visitation Report

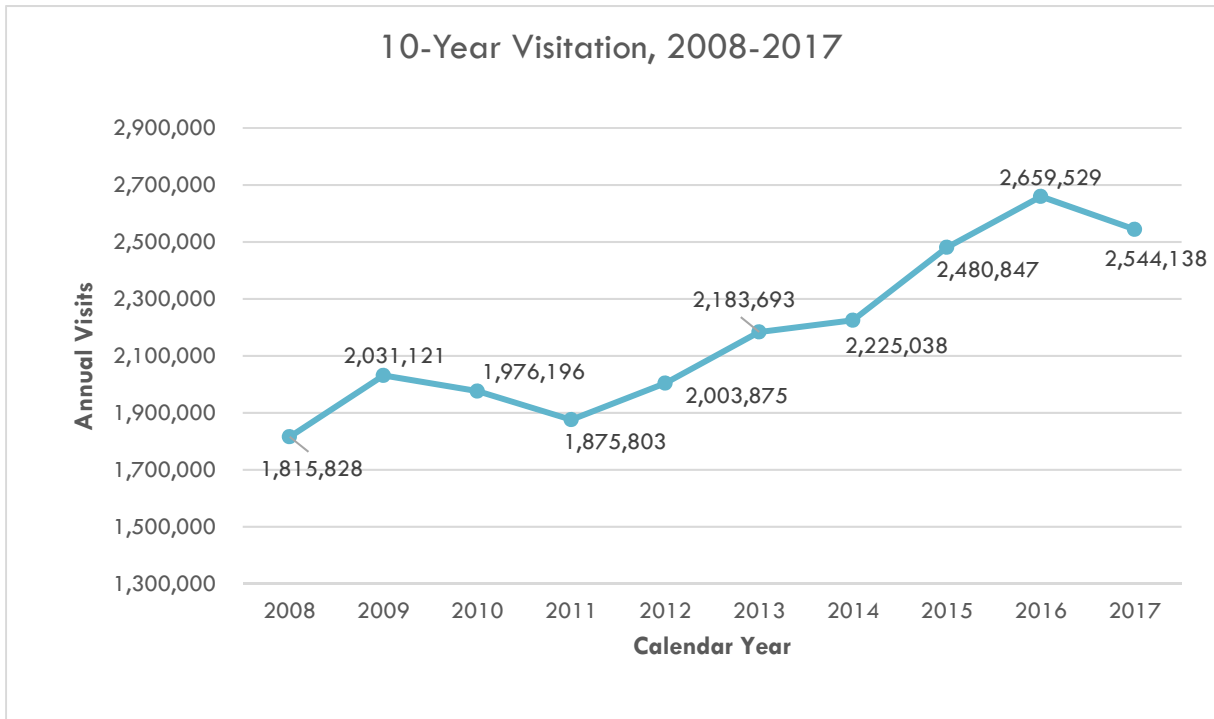
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2017

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 2,659,529 visits, down 4% from 2016.

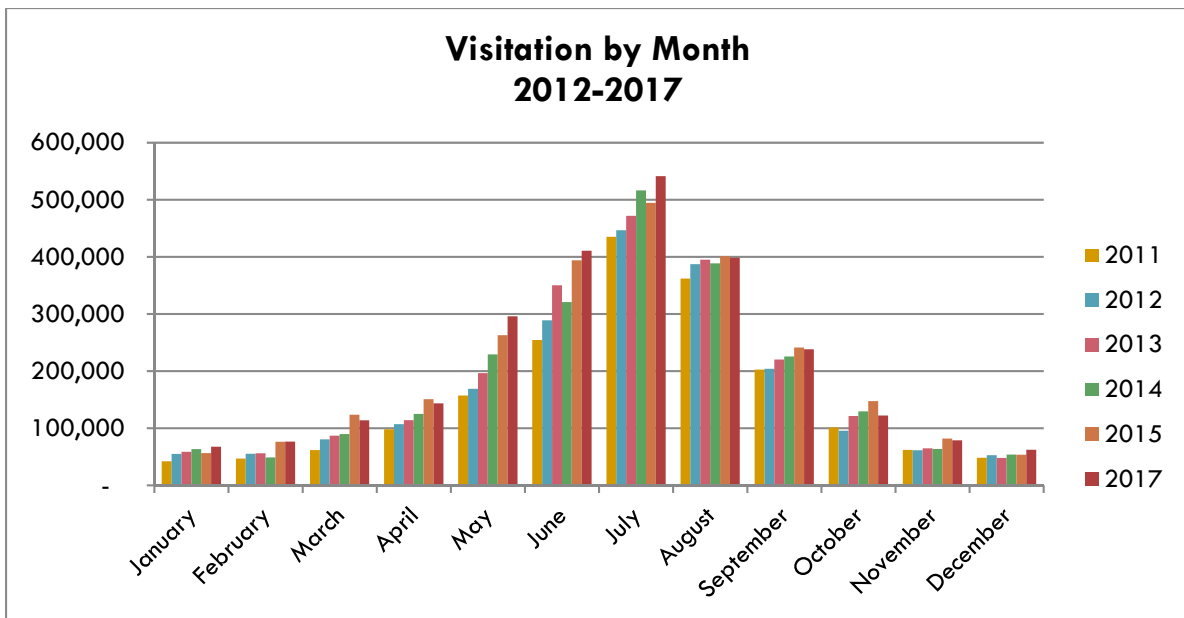
## STATEWIDE VISITATION

In 2017, Montana State Parks visitation was down 4% from the previous year. There were several factors that participated in the decline. Most notably the fires that affected Regions 1 and 2, as well as the classification changes that affected visitation collection.



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)	<b>698,355</b>	<b>724,681</b>	-4%
Eastern (Billings)	462,768	498,588	-7%

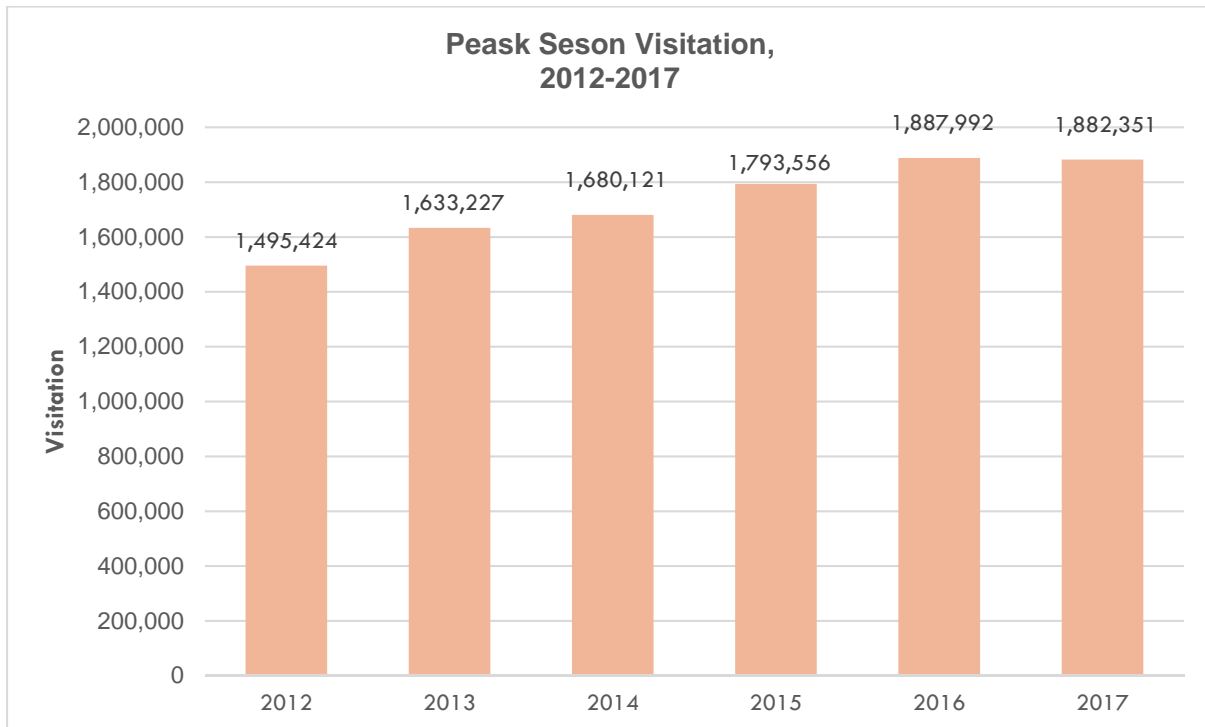
### Shoulder Season

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>	<b>596,327</b>	<b>646,113</b>	<b>579,413</b>

## 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
<b>Flathead Lake</b>	<b>258,743</b>	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%
<b>Giant Springs</b>	<b>224,607</b>	230,438	239,344	179,894	174,452	156,685	-4%
<b>Cooney</b>	<b>145,436</b>	133,148	138,836	122,102	125,107	98,836	-4%
<b>Lake Elmo</b>	<b>127,585</b>	122,266	117,051	108,992	119,704	169,540	4%
<b>TCL/Logan</b>	<b>101,857</b>	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%
<b>Whitefish/Les Mason</b>	<b>96,836</b>	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%
<b>Spring Meadow Lake</b>	<b>82,635</b>	80,807	123,841	104,362	124,868	88,091	2%
<b>Lewis &amp; Clark Caverns</b>	<b>72,359</b>	73,954	69,330	61,046	64,228	59,861	-2%
<b>Lone Pine</b>	<b>59,076</b>	68,119	52,886	58,806	47,174	40,457	-13%
<b>Makoshika</b>	<b>58,558</b>	66,923	50,860	53,987	33,760	42,265	5%
<b>Black Sandy</b>	<b>55,937</b>	52,897	17,614	47,349	48,236	50,910	6%
<b>Tongue River Reservoir</b>	<b>55,402</b>	57,871	44,868	57,057	65,296	47,464	-4%
<b>Placid Lake</b>	<b>47,828</b>	53,863	40,875	52,495	33,208	43,660	-11%
<b>Salmon Lake</b>	<b>46,346</b>	49,152	52,021	57,230	53,220	44,607	-6%
<b>Pictograph Cave</b>	<b>39,330</b>	33,263	44,486	43,367	39,700	28,633	18%
<b>Frenchtown Pond</b>	<b>37,724</b>	45,749	36,040	45,173	25,878	25,669	-18%
<b>Bannack</b>	<b>36,622</b>	51,396	35,665	27,498	13,475	27,362	-29%
<b>Ackley Lake</b>	<b>34,205</b>	32,848	24,058	23,065	27,531	19,442	4%
<b>Missouri Headwaters</b>	<b>32,048</b>	28,804	24,250	23,145	23,359	19,914	11%
<b>Hell Creek</b>	<b>22,838</b>	20,828	25,093	25,162	28,025	25,063	10%
<b>Travelers' Rest</b>	<b>21,145</b>	23,712	20,034	19,181	17,214	15,854	-11%
<b>Lake Mary Ronan</b>	<b>20,188</b>	19,670	8,424	22,778	22,817	22,870	3%
<b>First Peoples Buffalo Jump</b>	<b>19,761</b>	15,774	11,923	13,606	11,209	10,782	-2%
<b>Beavertail Hill</b>	<b>18,018</b>	20,427	17,702	21,056	17,807	15,228	-12%
<b>Council Grove</b>	<b>18,812</b>	20,320	18,564	17,905	19,546	18,635	-7%
<b>Sluice Boxes</b>	<b>18,175</b>	16,098	15,550	13,015	13,470	12,134	13%
<b>Thompson Falls</b>	<b>16,543</b>	12,869	11,523	10,733	11,609	10,515	29%
<b>Chief Plenty Coups</b>	<b>12,331</b>	8,778	13,077	23,576	18,654	27,932	40%
<b>Prairie Dog Town</b>	<b>12,187</b>	12,186	12,592	8,296	15,114	8,061	39%
<b>Lost Creek</b>	<b>11,026</b>	10,672	13,842	9,868	9,512	9,487	3%
<b>Anaconda Smoke Stack</b>	<b>10,433</b>	11,622	8,404	7,545	7,119	7,220	-10%
<b>Painted Rocks</b>	<b>9,717</b>	9,227	8,183	11,183	11,538	11,862	5%
<b>Medicine Rocks</b>	<b>8,639</b>	11,600	11,909	7,457	19,108	7,663	-26%
<b>Madison Buffalo Jump</b>	<b>8,208</b>	8,626	6,516	8,405	7,375	2,158	-5%
<b>Brush Lake</b>	<b>7,716</b>	6,724	8,843	6,843	5,255	8,478	-21%
<b>Tower Rock</b>	<b>6,828</b>	4,126	6,441	7,881	5,902	7,057	65%
<b>Clarks Lookout</b>	<b>6,061</b>	4,437	5,069	3,624	4,710	5,091	37%
<b>Smith River</b>	<b>4,844</b>	3,902	3,739	4,924	4,061	4,128	24%
<b>Fish Creek</b>	<b>3,276</b>	3,276	2,050	3,283	3,283	3,283	0%
<b>Rosebud Battlefield</b>	<b>3,123</b>	3,102	2,798	2,466	2,525	3,616	1%
<b>Pirogue Island</b>	<b>2,873</b>	3,299	3,336	3,038	2,956	9,094	-40%
<b>Yellowstone River*</b>	-	2,474	1,454	1,999	2,887	3,210	-

\*no longer collecting visitation data due to classification changes.

# 2017 Annual Visitation Estimates by Region

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

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

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

