

[Climbing Survey]

New River Gorge National River



A survey of visitors: Your opinion matters!

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In cooperation with the New River Gorge National River

Survey Directions:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The results of this study will help resource managers better understand visitors like yourself, as well as develop education and interpretive programs for park visitors. This survey is only being given to a select number of visitors, so your participation is very important. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. This survey should take about 20 minutes of your time. Please read the instructions for each question and answer to the best of your ability.

First, we would like to find out a little about *your current visit* to the New River Gorge National River.

Topic Area 2 – Trip/Visit Characteristics (Questions 1-2)

1. Is this your first climbing trip to the New River Gorge (NRG)? *(please check one)*
 Yes No
2. How long is your current climbing trip? *(please check one, and write in number)*
 Less than one day. → If so, how many hours? _____
 More than a day. → If so, how many days? _____

Topic Area 3 – Individual Activities and Uses of Park Resources

3. What activities are you doing today while on the trail? *(check all that apply)*

| | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hiking/walking | <input type="checkbox"/> rock climbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bird watching | <input type="checkbox"/> photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> viewing wildlife (other than birds) | <input type="checkbox"/> viewing the scenery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> visiting historic sites | <input type="checkbox"/> picnicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ | |

→Now, from the activities that you checked **above**, please **write in the one** that was most important to you: _____

Topic Area 2 – Trip/Visit Characteristics

4. How many routes did you climb on this trip in the NRG? *(please write in number)* _____

Topic Area 5 – Individual Perceptions of their Park Experiences – variation (Questions 5-8)

5. How did the number of people you saw during your visit compare with what you expected? *(please check one)*

- A lot less than what you expected
- A little less than what you expected
- About what you expected
- A little more than what you expected
- A lot more than what you expected
- You did not have any expectations

6. How crowded did you feel on your visit to the New River Gorge today? *(circle one number)*

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| <i>Not Crowded at all</i> | <i>Slightly Crowded</i> | <i>Moderately Crowded</i> | | | | <i>Extremely Crowded</i> | | |

7. Did you move to a different crag today because of the number of people you encountered? *(please check one)*

- Yes
- No

8. Would you consider climbing at a different crag based on the number of people you encountered? *(please circle one response)*

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| Not at all | | | | | | Very Much |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Topic Area 6 – Individual Evaluation of Park Services (Questions 9 and 10)

9. How important to you are the following features at NRG climbing areas? *(please circle one response for each question)*

| | Not important | | | | | | Very Important |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------|
| Restrooms at trailheads..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Parking Areas..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Signage at Trail Access Points | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Trail Quality..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Visitor Center..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Ranger presence on trails..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Suitable campsites in park. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

10 How would you rate your satisfaction with the quality of these features at NRG climbing areas? (circle one response for each question)

| | Very Dissatisfied | | | Neutral | | | Very Satisfied |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|---------|---|---|-------------------|
| Restrooms at trailheads..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Parking Areas..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Signage at Trail Access Points..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Trail Quality..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Visitor Center..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Ranger presence on trails. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Suitable campsites in park. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Now, we'd like you to tell us about your climbing background.

Topic Area 1 – Individual Characteristics (Questions 11-23)

11. How many years have you been climbing? (write in number) _____

12. How many years have you been climbing at the New River Gorge? (write in number)

13. When was your first visit to New River Gorge? (write in the month and year)
Month: _____ Year: _____ Don't know/can't remember

14. Approximately how many days a year do you climb outside? (please check one)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <10 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 days/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 days/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> >50 days/year |

15. Approximately how many days a year do you climb **at the New River Gorge**?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <10 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 days/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 days/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> >50 days/year |

16. Approximately how many days a year do you climb **indoors in a gym**?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <10 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 days/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 days/year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 days/year | <input type="checkbox"/> >50 days/year |

17. What category best describes your overall ability as a climber? (check one)

- Novice Intermediate Advanced Expert

18. What is the hardest grade climb you have ever climbed in the NRG for each type of climbing below? (*please write in grade number or check box*)

Top roping: _____

I do not Top Rope Don't know

Trad: _____

I do not Trad climb Don't know

Sport: _____

I do not Sport climb Don't know

19. What type of climbing did you do **on this trip**? (*check all that apply*)

Top roping

Bouldering

Sport climbing

Other _____

Traditional climbing

20. What type of climber are you predominately? (*check one*)

Top roper Gym climber (indoors)

Traditional Both sport & traditional equally

Sport (outdoors) Boulderer

Other: _____

21. Where did you learn to climb? (*check one*)

Mostly inside at a rock gym

Pretty evenly split, both inside at a gym, as well as outside

Mostly outside

22. Who taught you to climb? (*check all that apply*)

Family members (informally)

Friends (informally)

Climbing club (informally)

Took a course from University/College (formal instruction)

Took a course from outfitter/guide (formal instruction)

Other: _____

22a. If you selected more than one option above, which one has had the most influence on your climbing knowledge and practices? (*please write in your answer*)

23. Where do you most prefer to climb? (*check one*)

Gyms

Front country (road-side crags, easy/short approaches)

Back country (i.e. remote areas, long approaches)

Topic Area 2 – Trip Planning (Questions 24 and 25)

24. From your home, how many hours did you travel to reach the New River Gorge? *(please check one box)*

- Less than 1 1 to 2 3 to 4 5 to 6 7 to 8 more than 8

25. Please indicate which climbing areas you typically use at the NRG: *(check all that apply)*

- Bridge Buttress Bubba City Kaymoor
 Endless Wall Beauty Mtn. South Nuttall
 Junkyard Wall Fern Creek
 Don't Know Name of Site/Crag

26. What would you be most interested in learning about, in regards to the cliffs and their ecosystems at the NRG? *(please write in your answer)*

Topic Area 6 – Preferences, Motives and Attitudes - variation (Questions 27-31)

The following questions deal with the cliffs at the NRG and your opinion of their importance. Please place a check under the column that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *(check one box for each question)*

| 27. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------------|
| a. The cliffs in the NRG are the same as cliffs anywhere else. | | | | | | |
| b. Cliffs are a fundamental resource to the NRG National River, and essential to its national significance. | | | | | | |
| c. The cliffs in the NRG provide habitat for rare plants. | | | | | | |
| d. The cliffs in the NRG provide habitat for rare animals. | | | | | | |
| e. The cliffs in the NRG support unique habitats and ecosystems. | | | | | | |
| f. The views of natural landscape from the cliffs in the NRG are worth protecting from human development. | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| g. The views from the cliffs in the NRG are one of the Park's most important and unique resources. | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

This next section has questions about your behaviors and opinions regarding climbing practices. Please place a check under the column that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (check one box for each question)

Definitions:

*Fixed Anchor: Presence of fixed bolts/webbing/pitons on cliff, used for anchor/rappel stations.

*Bolts: Permanent bolts used on sport routes, and as anchor points.

| 28. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------------|
| a. I always pack out my trash. | | | | | | |
| b. I always use official access trails. | | | | | | |
| c. I respect revegetation efforts. | | | | | | |
| d. I avoid trails that have been closed. | | | | | | |
| e. I practice Leave No Trace when I climb. | | | | | | |
| f. Fixed anchors (permanent) should be used to help preserve the environment. | | | | | | |
| g. I comply with local climbing regulations. | | | | | | |
| h. I try to keep my noise level down. | | | | | | |
| i. Old gear should be removed from belay and rappel sites. | | | | | | |
| j. Permanent anchors provide easy access to routes. | | | | | | |
| k. I park my vehicle in designated areas. | | | | | | |
| l. I always consider the local area ethics when I climb. | | | | | | |
| m. Permanent bolted anchors should be used at the top of climbs. | | | | | | |
| n. It is OK to remove/clean lichens. | | | | | | |
| o. It is OK to remove/clean mosses and other vegetation. | | | | | | |
| p. Chiseling holds is an acceptable practice. | | | | | | |
| q. It is OK to secure top ropes to trees. | | | | | | |
| r. Permanent anchors increase the use of routes too much. | | | | | | |
| s. Soils & plants along the Park trails are hardy and not easily damaged. | | | | | | |
| t. I respect seasonal closures at certain | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| craggs for wildlife needs. | | | | | | |
| u. The park provides clear indications about which trails should not be used. | | | | | | |
| v. Compared to other people I saw on this visit, I am causing less damage to the soils & vegetation. | | | | | | |
| w. Permanent anchors are not needed. | | | | | | |
| x. I feel a responsibility to help protect the plants and ecosystems in the Park. | | | | | | |
| y. The continued use of unofficial visitor created trails is a serious threat to plants and soils along the Park trails. | | | | | | |
| z. It is OK to walk off the official trails, if I stay on unofficial trails already created by visitors. | | | | | | |

The next section deals with potential resource impacts at climbing areas in the New River Gorge, and if you perceive them to be a problem. Please place a check under the column that best describes to what extent each of the following is a problem for you when climbing at the New River Gorge. (check one box for each question)

| 29. | Not a problem | Minor problem | Neutral | Moderate problem | Serious problem | Don't know |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| a. Bare soil at the top or base of cliffs. | | | | | | |
| b. Trampled vegetation at the top or base of the cliff. | | | | | | |
| c. Dead or damaged trees at the top or base of the cliff due to use as an anchor, or rappel site. | | | | | | |
| d. Erosion at/near the cliffs due to multiple trails. | | | | | | |
| e. Vegetation damaged or being removed from cliff face. | | | | | | |
| f. Pieces of litter/trash at the cliff. | | | | | | |
| g. Human waste visible along cliff lines or trails. | | | | | | |
| h. Chalk tick marks on routes. | | | | | | |
| i. Vandalism at NRG. | | | | | | |
| j. People that do not control their dogs adequately. | | | | | | |

This series of questions ask you to think about your opinions about management preferences, as well as how climbing is currently managed at the New River Gorge. Please place a check under the column that best describes how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (check one box for each question)

30.

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Don't know |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| a. The impact of bolts & anchors on the natural resource is minimal. | | | | | | |
| b. There should be official regulations concerning where, when, and how bolts and fixed anchors should be used. | | | | | | |
| c. The presence of numerous bolts & anchors negatively affects my climbing experience. | | | | | | |
| d. The National Park Service managers at the NRG share my values. | | | | | | |
| e. All climbing guide services should be required to be certified or accredited. | | | | | | |
| f. I am familiar with the climbing regulations at the NRG. | | | | | | |
| g. Climbing is not treated fairly in the management process when compared to other recreation activities at the NRG. | | | | | | |
| h. Climbing group sizes should be limited at NRG. | | | | | | |
| i. Other recreational groups are not offended by seeing climbing bolts or anchors. | | | | | | |
| j. I trust that the National Park Service managers at the NRG will do what is right for the Park. | | | | | | |
| k. Climbers need to be educated concerning their role in the management process. | | | | | | |
| l. Large groups of climbers detracted from my experience at NRG. | | | | | | |
| m. Most climbing areas need an official management plan in order to provide sustained use. | | | | | | |
| n. The National Park Service managers at the NRG have the same goals as me. | | | | | | |
| o. Park managers do not have adequate knowledge of climbing to properly manage it at the NRG. | | | | | | |
| p. Climber's practice of land stewardship is not adequate. | | | | | | |
| q. Poor communication of rules & regulations is a problem at NRG. | | | | | | |
| r. Climbers have a negative attitude toward management at the NRG. | | | | | | |

31. These questions ask you to indicate how important the NRG is you. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements about the New River Gorge area. *(Please check one box for each question)*

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|------------|
| a. This place means a lot to me. | | | | | | |
| b. I feel like this place is a part of me. | | | | | | |
| c. I feel no commitment to this place. | | | | | | |
| d. I get more satisfaction out of climbing at the New River Gorge than anywhere else. | | | | | | |
| e. The New River Gorge is the best place for doing the kind of climbing I do. | | | | | | |
| f. There is NO substitute for the type and quality of climbing at the New River Gorge. | | | | | | |

Topic Area 2 – Trip Planning

32. How do you usually obtain information about climbing in the NRG? *(check all sources that you have used)*

- Local guidebook
- Friends/word of mouth
- Outdoor/climbing stores around the NRG
- National Park Service information (website, brochure, etc.)
- Other: _____
- Climbing websites
- Through personal exploration & discovery

Topic Area 1 – Individual Characteristics

33. Have you ever taken a course on, or been trained in, Leave No Trace (LNT) climbing practices? *(check one)*

- Yes
- No

Topic Area 3 – Trip Behavior

34. Did you encounter any National Park Service rangers on the trails today?

- Yes
- No

Topic Area 6: Trust in the NPS (variation)

35. How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about **climbing management**? (please place a check in the appropriate box)

| | Strongly distrust | Somewhat distrust | Somewhat trust | Strongly trust |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Family & friends | | | | |
| Environmental organizations | | | | |
| Businesses (i.e., outdoor or climbing related) | | | | |
| Climbing related organizations (Access Fund, etc.) | | | | |
| Scientists in general | | | | |
| National Park rangers in general | | | | |
| National Park rangers at the New River Gorge National River | | | | |
| Mainstream news media | | | | |
| <p>Of the sources listed above, which do you most strongly trust, and WHY? <i>List source:</i> _____ <i>Why trust?:</i> _____ _____</p> | | | | |
| <p>Of the sources listed above, which do you most strongly distrust, and WHY? <i>List source:</i> _____ <i>Why distrust?:</i> _____ _____</p> | | | | |

Topic Area 1 – Individual Characteristics

36. Do you currently belong to any of the following organizations affiliated with rock climbing or the environment? (check all that apply)

- Access Fund
- New River Alliance of Climbers
- American Alpine Club
- American Mountain Guides Association
- American Sport Climbing Federation
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Other (please write in _____)
- Alpine Club of Canada
- Leave No Trace
- Nature Conservancy
- Sierra Club
- Wilderness Society

Topic Area 6 – Evaluation of Services and Management (Questions 37-40).

37. Did you know that volunteer climbers undertake maintenance projects at NRG?
(check one)

- Yes No

38. Have you ever volunteered for a climbing area maintenance project at NRG (trail construction, trash clean up, etc.)? (check one)

- Yes No

39. Have you ever volunteered for climbing area maintenance project anywhere else (trail construction, trash clean up, etc.)? (check one)

- Yes No

40. Do you think rock climbers should share responsibility for climbing area maintenance?
(check one)

- Yes No

Finally, we would like to know a bit more about you.

Topic Area 1 – Individual Characteristics (Questions 41-49)

41. What is your gender? (check one)

- Male Female

42. What is the highest grade of school or year of college that you completed? (check one)

- Less than high school Four year college degree
 High school graduate or GED Masters, doctoral, or professional degree
 Some college or associate degree

43. Are you Hispanic or Latino? (check one)

- Yes No

44. Which racial groups do you identify with? (check one or more)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
 Asian
 Black or African American

- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White

45. What is your age? *(please write in number)* _____

46. Are you a permanent resident or citizen of the U.S.? *(check one and fill in)*

- No — What is your country of origin? _____
- Yes — What is your zip code, city and state of residence?

Zip Code _____

City _____

State _____

47. How many people (including yourself) are in your party on this visit?
(write in number) _____

44a. Which of the following best describes the group you are traveling with? *(check one)*

- Myself (alone)
- Myself with family (including spouse/partner and/or other family members/relatives)
- Myself with family and friends
- Myself with friends
- Outfitter guided Specify _____
- Club/organization/school Specify _____
- Other *(Please specify)* _____

48. Do you consider yourself to be a leader or organizer for your group?

- Yes No

49. Are there any children under age 18 in your group? (*check one & write in number as needed*)

No

Yes → How many children are in each of these age categories?

_____ Number of children under 5 years old.

_____ Number of children age 5-12

_____ Number of children age 13-17

Thank you for your help!

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