

A Report on

Customer Service

for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Submitted June 1, 2004



TEXAS
PARKS &
WILDLIFE

CUSTOMER INVENTORY

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) serves a wide array of customers. We consider the citizens of Texas our most important “customer” group – it is our mission to manage and conserve Texas’ resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

Each TPWD strategy directs an effort to provide or enhance a facility, program, activity or service that benefits our customers directly and all Texans indirectly:

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES	CUSTOMERS SERVED
010101	Wildlife Conservation, Habitat Management and Research (including WMAs); Technical Guidance to private landowners and general public; Enhanced hunting and wildlife-related recreational opportunities	Hunters, Anglers, Non-Consumptive Users, Private Landowners
010201	Coastal and Inland Fisheries management and habitat conservation; hatchery operations, including fish production and stocking; aquatic resource conservation and enhancement; Artificial Reef Program	Anglers, Boaters, Non-Consumptive Users; Commercial Fishermen
020101	Operation of state parks, historic sites and state natural areas.	State Park visitors, Historic Site visitors, State Natural Area visitors, Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, Non-Consumptive Users
020201	Grants and technical assistance to local governments.	Local Governments and their Park visitors, Boaters, Disadvantaged Populations
030101	Law enforcement protection of natural resources and human lives	Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, Private Landowners
030201	Hunter and Boater Education, <i>Texas Parks & Wildlife</i> Magazine, Communication Products and Services, Urban Outreach	Hunters, Anglers, Private Landowners, Boaters, State Park visitors, Historic Site visitors, Non-Consumptive Users, Educators, Youth/ Women/Physically Challenged, with focus on minorities
030301	Issuance of hunting, fishing and other licenses, and the titling and registration of vessels and outboard motors	Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, County Tax Assessor-Collectors, License Deputies, Commercial Fishermen
040101	Capital improvement, major repair, and cultural and natural resource management programs for existing facilities; acquisition of identified priority sites	State Park and Historic Site visitors, Hunters, Anglers, Boaters, Non-Consumptive Users

FY 2003 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Two survey efforts related to customer satisfaction were implemented in FY 2003. A year-long study of Texas state park visitors involved on-site customer surveys at 35 state parks and historic sites to assess the satisfaction of visitors with services, facilities, staff and programs.

The second survey effort in FY 2003 assessed usage patterns, navigation, usability and satisfaction of visitors with the TPWD Web site. This survey was implemented in the fall of 2002 and again in the spring of 2003.

Where applicable, the Standard Customer Service Performance Measures are addressed, and performance is estimated for FY 2003 for each survey effort.

STATE PARK ON-SITE MARKETING AND VISITOR SATISFACTION SURVEY

This is an ongoing study of day and overnight state park visitors to gain useful marketing and customer satisfaction information on state park visitors on a year-round basis. Topics covered in the survey include:

- Visitor satisfaction with park services, programs, facilities, and staff;
- Overall satisfaction with park visit;
- Likelihood to return to the park;
- Visitation patterns (how often they visit state parks; who they come with; what activities do they participate in, etc.);
- Visitor socio-demographics.

Park managers at 25 state parks, natural areas, and historic sites that offer overnight camping to park users elected to participate in the visitor survey. Managers at 10 day-use historic sites also participated in the visitor survey. For purposes of this report, results for the summer season for the 25 state parks with overnight camping are the only results presented. Results from the historic site surveys are not presented because these survey results are available on a site-specific basis only and no aggregate survey results are available.

A. Information Gathering Methods

The visitor surveys were conducted at 35 state parks and historic sites and began in November 2002 and ended in October 2003. The surveys were distributed randomly by park staff on weekdays and weekends and distributed for an entire year to capture data for all four seasons. Park staff asked the visitor to return the survey either by mail or at the entrance gate before leaving the park.

TIMEFRAME

The surveys were distributed from November 2002 through October 2003.

METHODOLOGY

Park staff and volunteers began questionnaire distribution in the parks on November 1, 2002. Park staff were provided detailed information on how to randomly distribute surveys to ensure adequate representation of state park visitors. Visitors were approached in the park, asked to complete the questionnaire and return it either at the park office, survey drop box or by mail to Austin headquarters.

The goal for each park was to complete 200 surveys per three-month season, or 800 surveys for the year. Based on an estimated 30% response rate, the goal was for park staff to distribute approximately 60 surveys per week at most parks. Parks with low visitation distributed fewer than 60 surveys per week. Questionnaires were distributed based on the proportion of day to overnight visitors at each park reported by the State Parks Division for 2001. Simple random sampling procedures were followed to ensure that the customers who received the questionnaire were representative of the entire population of state park visitors.

Supervised Gary Job Corps students performed data entry at Austin headquarters. Consumer Research staff audited and corrected data entry completed by the students.

Due to various reasons (low visitation, staff shortages, etc.), questionnaire distribution at many parks was below the 60 surveys per week and returns were well below the goal of 200 per season. A total of 7,796 surveys were returned from the 25 parks for the winter, spring and summer seasons.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation of this survey research was the lower than expected distribution of surveys at some sites. Another limitation is that the survey methodology did not allow for a measurement of non-response bias. As names and contact information for those visitors who received surveys was not collected, it was not possible to compare the demographics of respondents and non-respondents to the survey and thus non-response bias could not be measured. A third survey limitation was that an ideal response rate of 50% or greater could not be achieved due to budget considerations.

Another limitation of this survey effort revolves around the representativeness of the survey to the entire state park system. While the survey's primary intent was to collect information on a site-specific basis, a secondary goal was to collect information to provide visitor information on a system-wide basis. This is an ongoing survey effort, and in the first year, 35 sites participated. It is hoped that in the next few years enough sites will have participated in the survey to provide an adequate representation of the visitors for the entire state park system.

RESPONSE RATE

7,796 surveys were returned from the 25 state parks participating in the survey during the winter, spring and summer seasons. This is an overall response rate of 27%. During the summer season, the timeframe for which results are presented below, the total number of surveys distributed is 9,597 and 2,264 surveys were returned. The response rate for the summer season is 24%.

B. Performance Measures

Outcome Measures

The visitor survey measured customer satisfaction with their park visit and likelihood to return to the park. For presentation purposes, the aggregate results for all 25 state parks surveyed are presented below for summer visitors only to target high-use times and garner a high volume of participants. Park visitors were overwhelmingly satisfied with their visit to the state park. Park visitors were also likely to report that they would return to the park, with over two-thirds of visitors being very likely to return. Very few visitors reported being unlikely to return to the park.

Visitors Overall Satisfaction with Park Visit (Summer Visitors Only)

Very Satisfied	61%
Satisfied	33%
Somewhat Satisfied	5%
Dissatisfied	1%
Very Dissatisfied	1%

Likelihood to Return to the State Park (Summer Visitors Only)

Very Likely	68%
Likely	19%
Somewhat Likely	9%
Unlikely	2%
Very Unlikely	1%

Output Measure

NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS SURVEYED (SURVEYS COMPLETED)

Each park was expected to distribute 60 surveys per week for a total of over 3,000 surveys distributed over the course of the year. Not all parks were able to distribute the required number of surveys due to various reasons (low visitation, staff shortages, etc.) For the 25 sites surveyed, a total of 28,874 surveys were distributed and 7,796 were returned during the winter, spring and summer seasons. During the summer season, 9,597 surveys were distributed and 2,264 surveys were returned.

Efficiency Measure

SURVEY COSTS

The out-of-pocket cost of this survey effort is for producing and mailing the surveys to each site for a total of \$1,400. The majority of other costs were associated with park staff time including distribution of the survey. Marketing staff also invested a considerable amount of staff time coordinating the survey effort, monitoring the data entry by Gary Job Corp students and conducting the data analysis and reporting. A rough estimate of staff time contributed by Marketing Services staff is 1,000 hours for a total of \$25,000. The labor provided by Gary Job Corp students was free. A very rough estimate of park staff time to administer the surveys is 100 hours per park per year (at \$10 estimated hourly wage) for a total park staff cost of \$35,000. The total estimated cost for the entire survey effort including staff time is \$61,400, a cost of \$7.88 per customer surveyed.

Explanatory Measures

NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IDENTIFIED

The total number of customers identified is based on the number of surveys returned (7,796 survey returns).

NUMBER OF CUSTOMER GROUPS SURVEYED

Three customer groups were surveyed:

- State Park Day Visitors
- State Park Overnight Visitors
- Historic Site Day Visitors

The survey also identified the quality of facilities, services and staff at each state park. Below are tables detailing a summary of results rating the quality of facilities for all 25 state parks during the summer season only.

Ratings of Park Facilities (Summer State Park Visitors Only)

	% of Park Visitors Rating Factors Excellent/Very Good/Good
Showers	81%
Bathrooms	91%
Interpretive Programs	95%
Trails	96%
Campsites	97%
Knowledge of Staff	97%
Park Grounds	98%
Overall Upkeep of Park	98%
Check-in Process	98%
Friendliness of Staff	99%

C. Analysis of Findings

One of the objectives of this park visitor survey was to provide an assessment of service quality and customer satisfaction on a site-specific basis. The survey findings illustrate that TPWD is providing quality service to its state park customers and that they are satisfied with the programs, services, and facilities offered at state parks. In FY 2003, TPWD conducted the first wave of on-site customer surveys at 35 state parks and historic sites. On-site surveys will continue at additional sites in the future to measure service quality and customer satisfaction and to provide site managers with an individual assessment of their facilities, services and programs. The site managers can then use this information to better provide services and facilities to meet the needs of their customers.

In FY 2004/2005, an additional 38 state parks and historic sites will participate in the second wave of the visitor surveys. The goal of the survey effort is to complete visitor surveys at all state parks and historic sites by FY 2006. At that time, TPWD will be able to identify needs and opportunities for change that may be necessary in response to the survey results.

An important change that will improve the survey process in FY 2004/2005 is the implementation of a non-response test, which will be conducted to ascertain whether non-respondents differ from respondents. A non-response test to measure if there is survey bias imposed by those persons who do not participate in the survey is important to ensure that the survey is representative of the population visiting state parks and historic sites.

TPWD WEB SITE VISITOR SURVEY

This is a study of TPWD Web site visitors conducted in 2002 and 2003 to assess:

- User satisfaction with the TPWD Web site;
- Usage patterns (how often they visit the site; what areas of the site are of interest to them; what information they primarily seek, how they learned about the site, etc.);
- Navigability issues (how easy is the Web site to use);
- Visitor socio-demographics.

A. Information Gathering Methods

The survey of Web visitors was conducted in 2002 and 2003 during the fall/winter season and again in the spring/summer season. The goal was to collect at least 1,000 responses per season. The survey was posted on the TPWD Web site in highly visible areas and on various Web pages. The survey was conducted as a convenience sample where Web visitors had the option to click on the survey button and complete the survey online. It is recognized that a convenience sample poses a risk of non-response bias; therefore these results are presented as an initial indicator of use patterns of Web site visitors. A future study with a random sample would be necessary to completely and accurately understand patterns of Web site visitors.

TIMEFRAME

The survey was implemented twice during the year to target high use times when users are most attracted to the Web site. The survey was conducted in the fall/winter of 2002 and 2003 (mid-October through end of December) and again in the spring/summer season in 2003 (early April through mid-July).

METHODOLOGY

Information gathering methods were described above. The survey data was automatically entered electronically into a spreadsheet and analysis of the data and a final report was completed by Marketing staff.

LIMITATIONS

The major limitation of this research was that the survey was conducted as a convenience sample where Web visitors had the option to complete the survey while visiting the TPWD Web site. A convenience sample poses risks as it may not fully represent the population of Web visitors and there was no way to follow up with respondents to verify if respondents differed from non-respondents. Due to the nature of this sample, this study is considered exploratory and an initial indicator of use patterns of Web visitors.

Another limitation of this study was that the survey was conducted during two high-use times on the Web site; therefore, this research did not capture all types of Web users (i.e. the survey was not conducted on Web users during the months of Jan/Feb/March and August/September).

B. Performance Measures

Outcome Measures

The Web survey measured items related to the quality of the Web site. An overall Web site rating revealed that over 60% of Web site visitors rated the site excellent or very good. Less than 10% rated the site as fair or poor.

Overall Web Site Rating

	Fall/Winter Visitors	Spring/Summer Visitors
Excellent	23%	25%
Very Good	45%	38%
Good	24%	27%
Fair	7%	8%
Poor	2%	2%

Output Measure

NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS SURVEYED (COMPLETED)

1,008 surveys were completed in the fall/winter season and 1,025 were completed during the spring/summer season.

Efficiency Measure

COST PER CUSTOMER SURVEYED (SURVEYS COMPLETED)

There were no out-of-pocket costs for conducting this survey. All costs were for staff time in designing the survey instrument, defining the methodology, and analyzing and reporting survey results. Staff time costs are estimated at \$4,000 (160 hours).

Explanatory Measures

NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IDENTIFIED

This survey was implemented to a sample of Web users during the time of year when Web usage was the highest. A total of 2,033 Web users were surveyed.

NUMBER OF CUSTOMER GROUPS SURVEYED

Many TPWD customer groups were surveyed. Web users include persons interested in TPWD services and programs and include the following customer groups:

- State Park Visitors
- Anglers
- Hunters
- Boaters
- Landowners
- Birders
- Bikers
- Wildlife Watchers
- Climbers
- Outdoor enthusiasts

The Web survey also identified the quality of customer service provided to Web users. This included ratings on the navigation and organization of the home page and Web site, appearance of the Web site, accuracy of site content, usefulness of site content and ease of understanding Web content. Over half of visitors rated all of these aspects as Excellent or Very Good.

Ratings of TPWD Home Page

	% of Visitors Rating Excellent/Very Good	
	Fall/Winter	Spring/Summer
Home Page navigation	59%	57%
Home Page organization	57%	56%

Ratings of TPWD Web Site

	% of Visitors Rating Excellent/Very Good	
	Fall/Winter	Spring/Summer
Web site navigation	54%	52%
Web site organization	54%	54%
Web site appearance	64%	62%
Accuracy of site content	67%	66%
Usefulness of site content	67%	67%
Up-to-date site content	58%	59%
Ease of understanding content	66%	65%

D. Analysis of Findings

The Web site ratings provided by this survey are useful to the Web team as an initial measure of the quality of the TPWD Web site. To assist in deciphering areas in need of improvement the following summarizes the fair and poor rating for the Web site. The areas with the highest fair/poor ratings were navigation, organization and up-to-date content. The Web team can use these ratings to prioritize areas in need of improvement.

Fair/Poor Ratings of TPWD Web Site

	% of Visitors Rating Fair/Poor	
	Fall/Winter	Spring/Summer
Web Site Navigation	13%	16%
Home Page Navigation	13%	15%
Web Site Organization	14%	15%
Up-to-Date Content of Web Site	15%	14%
Home Page Organization	10%	13%
Web Site Appearance	8%	11%
Home Page Appearance	9%	12%
Ease of Understanding Site Content	8%	9%
Usefulness of Site Content	8%	8%
Accuracy of Site Content	8%	7%

In order to address these issues, an internal study was performed, including user accessibility, site navigation and hierarchy. Creative Services garnered approval from the Executive Office to begin a complete overhaul of the TPWD Web site. The group is currently in Phase III of the Web site navigation and hierarchy redesign, developing new information architecture for the complete Web site. This is a time-intensive process that will last well into the next fiscal year.

FY 2004 ESTIMATED PERFORMANCE

For FY 2004/2005, TPWD is continuing the on-site State Park Visitor Surveys. Thirty-eight state parks and historic sites are expected to participate and the survey will begin in the summer of 2004 and end in the spring of 2005.

Output Measure

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS SURVEYED (SURVEYS COMPLETED)

Each park is expected to distribute between 20 and 60 surveys per week for a total of 1,000 to 3,000 surveys distributed over the course of the year. For the 38 sites participating in FY 2004/2005, it is expected that at least 38,000 surveys will be distributed during the year. An estimated response rate of 30% is expected, yielding approximately 11,000 surveys completed.

Efficiency Measure

ESTIMATED SURVEY COSTS

The out-of-pocket cost of this survey effort is for photocopying the surveys and mailing the surveys to each site for a total of \$2,000. The remainder of the costs are associated with park staff time in distributing the surveys and Marketing Services Branch staff time in coordinating the survey effort, data analysis and reporting. A rough estimate of staff time contributed by Marketing Services staff is 1,500 hours for a total estimated cost of \$25,000. A very rough estimate of park staff time to administer the surveys is 100 hours per park per year for a total park staff cost of \$38,000. Total park staff and marketing staff costs is estimated at \$63,000.

Explanatory Measures

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IDENTIFIED

The total number of customers identified is based on the number of surveys returned (11,000 surveys completed).

NUMBER OF CUSTOMER GROUPS TO BE SURVEYED

Three customer groups will be surveyed:

- State Park Day Visitors
- State Park Overnight Visitors
- Historic Site Day Visitors

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT'S CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPLAINT-HANDLING PROCESS

As prescribed by Section VI, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Personnel Manual and Employee Handbook, formal complaints received in the divisions must be submitted to the Office of Internal Affairs for review, tracking and determination of proper follow-up action. Information on the complaint-handling process, as well as instructions on how to file a complaint can be found at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/internal/complaint/index.htm

Correspondence containing non-formal complaints received at the department through the Executive Office are logged into the Department Mail Tracking System and assigned to the appropriate division director for a timely response that appropriately addresses the concerns raised.

Correspondence containing non-formal complaints received at the department through individual divisions are logged into division tracking systems and assigned to the appropriate division personnel for a timely response that appropriately addresses the concerns raised.

COMPACT WITH TEXANS

A Customer Compact is an agreement made with the customers of an institution to provide services that follow a predetermined set of guiding principles. Simply stated, it defines the standards that customers should expect. The following compact is provided to the many diverse customers of the department.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provides outdoor recreational opportunities, manages state parks, historic sites, wildlife management areas and fish hatcheries, protects fish, wildlife and historical and cultural resources for present and future generations.

Over the years it has inherited the functions of many state entities created to protect Texas' natural and cultural resources. More information about the history of TPWD can be found at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/about_us/descrip.htm

TPWD has 10 internal divisions: Wildlife, Coastal Fisheries, Inland Fisheries, Law Enforcement, State Parks, Infrastructure, Communications, Administrative Resources, Legal and Human Resources. Intergovernmental Affairs and Internal Audit and Investigations are administered through the Executive Office. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department headquarters is located at 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744. State parks, wildlife management areas, fish hatcheries, and field offices are located across the state.

TPWD is largely user-funded. As a result, the department works diligently to listen to our current customers, anticipate future customers' needs and adjust TPWD programs and services to deliver the greatest benefit to Texans, while protecting natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Our Customer Service Philosophy is:

We affirm that excellent customer service is essential to our mission of managing and conserving natural and cultural resources and providing hunting, fishing and outdoor recreational opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Our goal is to provide highly responsive service to our customers. We will achieve exemplary customer service through:

- Listening to our internal and external customers, to better understand them and providing opportunities for our customers to submit comments,
- Courtesy,
- Personal responsibility,
- Professionalism,
- Problem solving,
- Respect,
- Being open, friendly, flexible and caring,
- Being responsive, and
- Working to resolve conflicts with different user groups.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT'S SERVICE STANDARDS

In serving our customers, TPWD employees will strive to do the following:

1. Answer correspondence (including faxes and e-mails) quickly and clearly.
2. See people as promptly as possible in all our offices.
3. Provide current information about services on the Internet and at field offices across the state. TPWD's home page is at www.tpwd.state.tx.us. Frequently asked questions can be found at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/howdoi/
4. Answer telephone calls quickly and helpfully. Our toll free number is (800) 792-1112. More information on specific TPWD telephone numbers can be found at www.tpwd.state.tx.us/admin/about_us/tele.htm
5. Respond to inquiries typically within 10 working days of receipt.
6. Do everything reasonably possible to make services available to everyone, including those with disabilities.
7. Provide information about TPWD sites and programs to Texans statewide.

Concerns about TPWD's customer service, should be sent to:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Communications Division
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

e-mail: customer.feedback@tpwd.state.tx.us

Please include specific information, including the location, date, time and name of TPWD employee(s) if applicable.

The agency's customer service representative is Lydia Saldaña, Director of Communications. She can be reached at (512) 389-4557 or (512) 389-4448 (fax).

WHAT IS A CUSTOMER?

Customers are the most important people in this office.

Customers are not dependent on us...
...we are dependent on them.

Customers are not an interruption of our work...
...they are the purpose of it.

Customers are not doing us a favor by our serving them...
*...they are doing us a favor by giving us the
opportunity to do so.*



4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

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