

Information Exchange, Best Practices Sharing, and Research Support for Sustainable Visitor Management

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NASPD 2023 Conference





@ Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, USA, 2016



@ Greenwich Island, Antarctic Peninsula Region, 2020



Grandfather Mountain State Park, NC



Mount Mitchell State Park, NC



Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, VA/MD



Raven Rock State Park, NC



Galapagos Islands National Park, Ecuador



Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, USA



Sólheimajökull, Iceland

- Multiple values of parks and protected areas
 - Resource protection, ecosystem services (clean air, water, etc), recreation, learning, health and well-being, tourism/economic, science,.....
- U.S. state park system offers these values that are much more accessible to the populations it serves
 - Lower-carbon visitation

North America



Legend Park, Town of Clayton, NC



Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, NC



Grandfather Mountain State Park, NC

East Asia



Songshan Global Geopark, PR China



Country parks in Hong Kong SAR

South America



Galapagos National Park, Ecuador



Iguazu National Park, Argentina

Europe



Torransuo NP, Finland



Sintra-Cascais Natural Park, Portugal

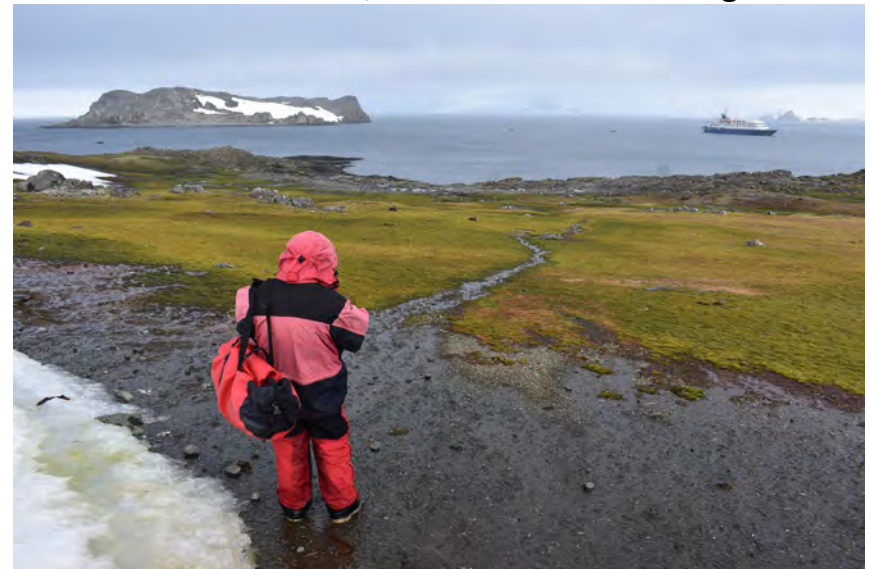
Polar Regions



Kaldoaivi Wilderness Area, Finland



Barrientos Island, Antarctic Peninsula Region



Visitor use challenges reported in the media



stuff

Overcrowding a growing issue in New Zealand's national parks

CHARLIE MITCHELL
Last updated 11:42, August 11 2016

Tourists stream across the busy Foranario Crossing on Easter Sunday, when queues for toilets stretched to the dozen. Waves of tourists are overcrowding New Zealand's national parks – and not just in summer. For the de facto mayor of Mt Cook, there is no respite. Visitors to Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park have increased 25 per cent from last year. Half a million would soon visit the times that were once quiet.

A view of the Hooker Valley and Aoraki/Mt Cook village from the Red Tarns track.
"We used to have a shoulder season. That's effectively gone," chief ranger Mike Davies said.

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The Salt Lake Tribune

(/) NOV 3, 2016 | Salt Lake City 57 ° (weather) | Traffic (/traffic) / Stories from last 36 hours (/contents/)

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Zion National Park considers limiting visitors due to increased land erosion, 'overwhelmed' facilities

By COURTNEY TANNER (/staff/courtney-tanner/) | The Salt Lake Tribune [CONNECT](#) (/staff/courtney-tanner/)
First Published Oct 15 2016 11:02PM • Last Updated Oct 16 2016 10:48 pm



(/csp/mediapool/stories/101.common.streams.StreamServer.cfs?STREAMOID=vmAKcqvjp12cb0Wak0Kyc5daE2N3k4Zr0UsatU5y5tE3nz5wLq78z_SwVa6kZYWCjLu88CONTENTTYPE=image/jpeg)

FILE - This Sept. 15, 2015, file photo shows Zion National Park near Springdale, Utah. Officials at Zion National Park have scheduled a series of public meetings to discuss challenges facing the park as it continues to draw record numbers of visitors. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer, File)

Pokémon Go maker taken to court over players on beaches

Case will be heard in the Hague court after mobile-game developer failed to respond to requests to remove Pokémon from protected areas in Kijikduln

Samuel Gibbs and agencies
Thursday 29 September 2016 09:23 EDT



Idyllic Thai island Koh Tachai closed indefinitely due to damage from tourism

By Kocha Olan and Tim Hume, CNN
Updated 13:14 GMT (2:14 HKT) May 17, 2016



Bison attacks woman who was trying to take selfie with it in Yellowstone Park

By Jethro Mullen, CNN
Updated 8:33 AM ET, Thu July 23, 2015



Photos: Yellowstone: Our first national park
Yellowstone: Our first national park - Old Faithful Geyser may be the most-famous "resident" of Yellowstone National Park, but park ranger Dan Hottle says there is much more to see at the 2.2 million-acre park.

1 of 8

Hide Caption ^

Story highlights

(CNN) — Visitors to Yellowstone Park seem to be having trouble taking in the message that it's not a good idea to get too close to the wild bison that roam the wilderness.

- Visitor management challenges exist in almost all kinds of parks and protected areas
 - Many commonalities in issues and concerns
 - Different challenges and different solutions
- Many state parks face similar challenges
 - Lessons learned from each other and from other PA systems
 - Lessons and innovations to share with each other and to other PA systems

To facilitate innovations and collaborative learning towards more sustainable visitor and park management:

- **Information exchange**, for tracking status/progress and comparative analysis
- **Best practices sharing**, for collaborative learning and idea generation
- **Research**, for exploring solutions and evaluating effectiveness

Information Exchange & Best Practices Sharing

NASPD Annual Conference, Webinar Series,
State Park Leadership School,.....



2023 NASPD Annual Conference, Lake Tahoe, Nevada

Global Sharing of Best Practices

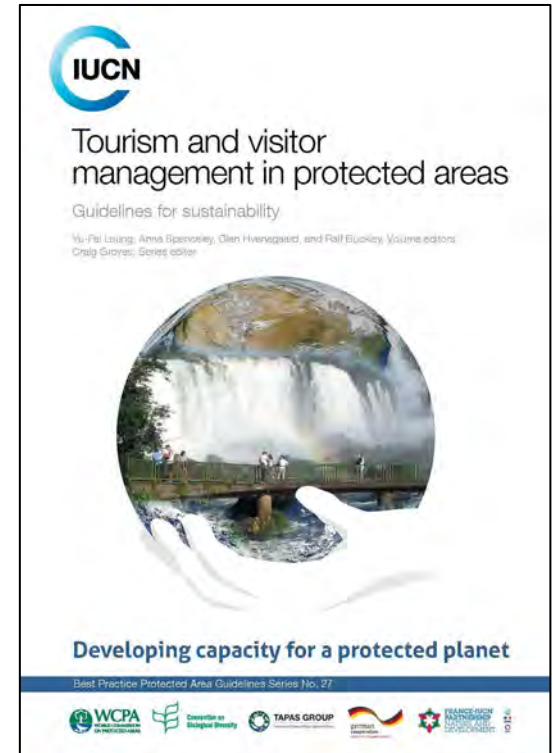
Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Sustainability (IUCN, 2018)

58 contributors from 24 countries

57 countries featured

Diversity of examples

- PA categories
- Governance types
- Ecosystem types



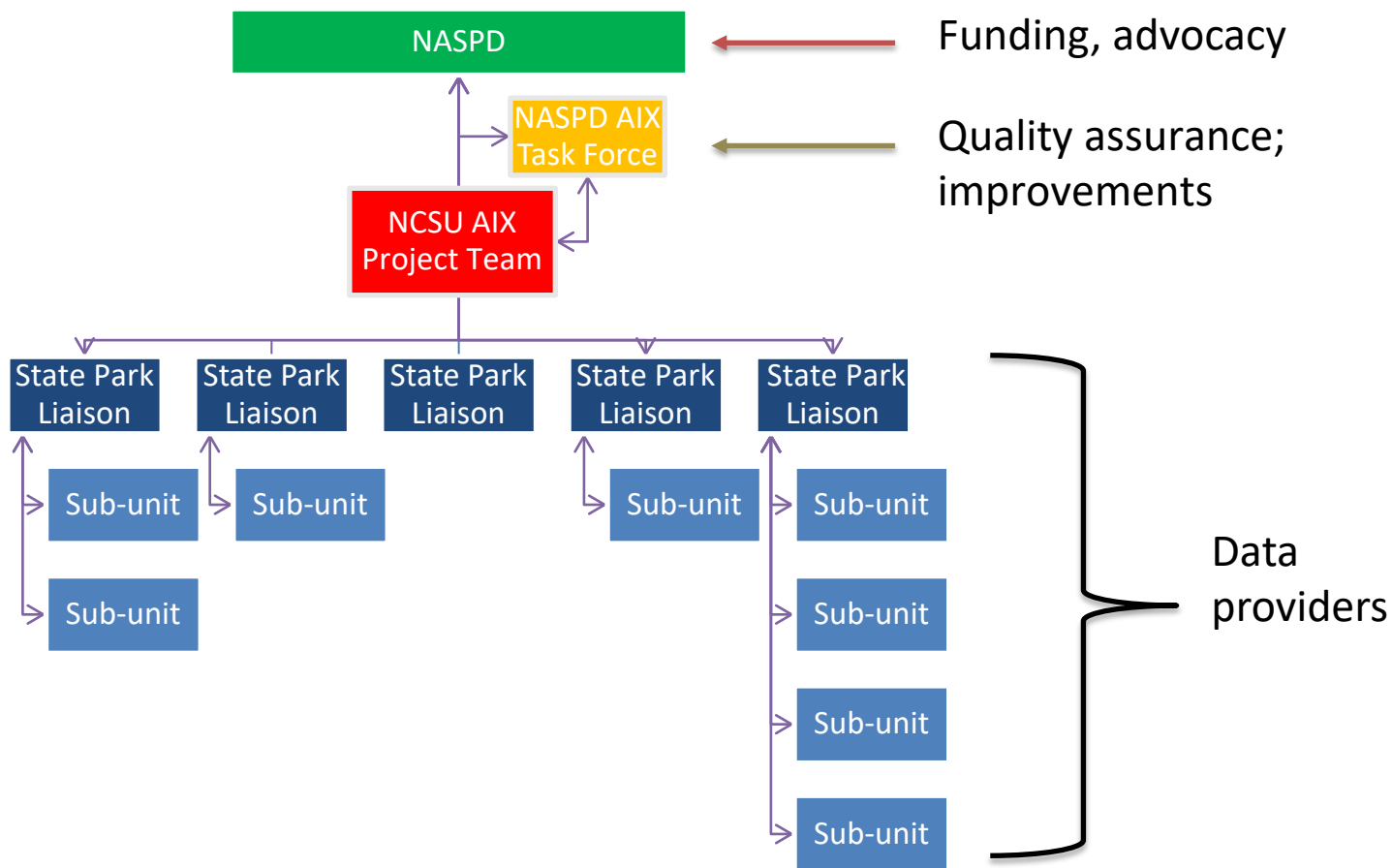
<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/47918>

NASPD Annual Information Exchange (AIX) Project

- Started in 1979
- More systematic survey since 1992 with better definitions
- Indiana State/Indiana until 2006
- NCSU since 2006
- One of the longest-standing protecting area operations survey/monitoring program in the world!



AIX Implementation Structure



Data Collected in AIX Survey

Table (Category)

Examples

Inventory

Total No. of Areas, Types of Park Units, Total Acreage, Trail Mileage

Facilities

No. of Campsites, Cabins, Group Facilities, Lodges, Restaurants, Golf Courses

Attendance

Day Use, Overnight Use (both fee and Non-fee areas), Facility Use, Reservation System

Land Protection & Infrastructure Costs

Fee Simple Purchase, Conservation Easements, Rehabilitation Costs, New Construction Costs

Operating Expenditures

Source of Funds, Parks' Share of State Expenditures, User Fees, Revenues

Personnel ~~and Salaries~~

No. of Different Positions, **Salaries**, Benefits

Public Engagement

Program Participation, Volunteerism, No. of Support Groups, Endowment Funds

Data Entry via Customized Google Sheets or Excel Spreadsheets

The screenshot shows a Google Sheet interface with the following data table:

	Parks			Recreation Areas			Natural Areas			
STATE	Number	Number Operating	Acreage	Number	Number Operating	Acreage	Number	Number Operating	Acreage	STATE
Oregon (2018-19, Last Survey)	55	53	66,139	71	65	6,653	33	26	15,198	Oregon
Oregon (2019-20, Current Survey)	55	54	73,715	71	66	8,560	34	26	16,327	Oregon

READ THESE FIRST (Instructions):

- 1) The reporting period for the current AIX survey is from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020
- 2) Please enter your data in the yellow-highlighted row on each of the 7 worksheets (Table 1 to Table 7, see below)
- 3) Some tables (e.g., Table 5) have many columns. Please make sure you scroll to the far right to ensure that you don't miss any column
- 4) Gray-out cells on each otherwise yellow-highlighted row are auto-calculated totals based on the data entered in preceding cells. Please DO NOT enter or alter values in these
- 5) Please DO NOT put commas in your numbers. Comma separators will be automatically added after you've entered your values
- 6) Last year's data are shown in the preceding row for your reference/convenience only. Please don't alter any number in that row. Should you identify any error in last-year's data

Data Quality Assurance

Data Input Instructions

Initial Data Error Checks

Data Review Period

Final Data Checks

NASPD Review



National Association of State Park Directors

*Statistical Report of
State Park Operations: 2019-2020*

Annual Information Exchange

for the Period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020

Prepared for the National Association of State Park Directors by

AIX-Project Team
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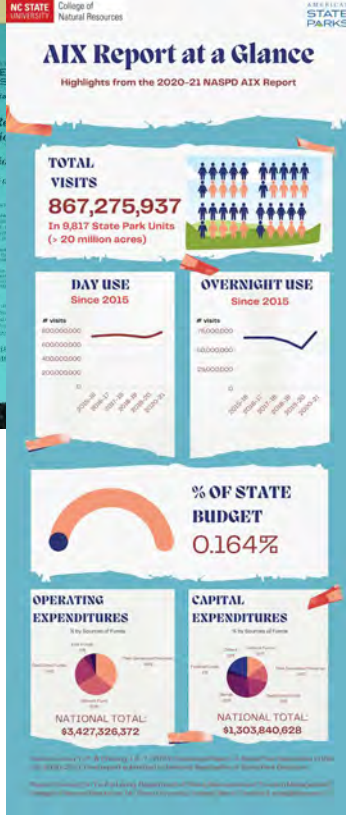
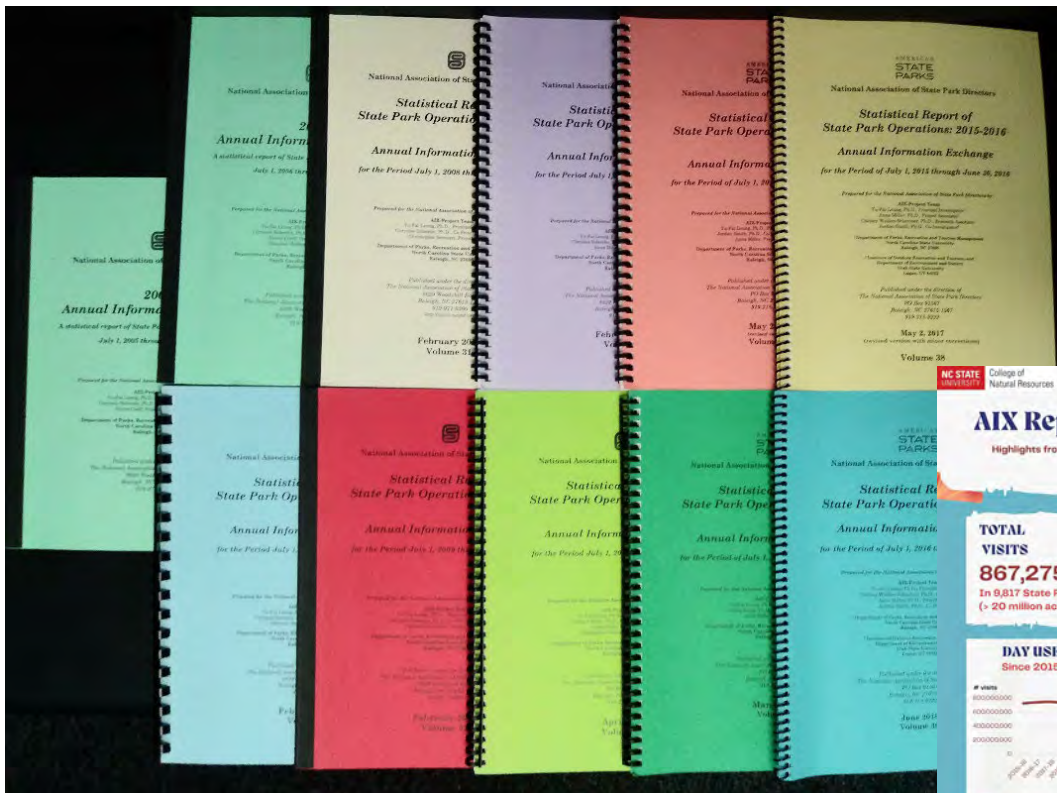
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*Published under the direction of
The National Association of State Park Directors
PO Box 91567
Raleigh, NC 27675-1567
919-218-9222*

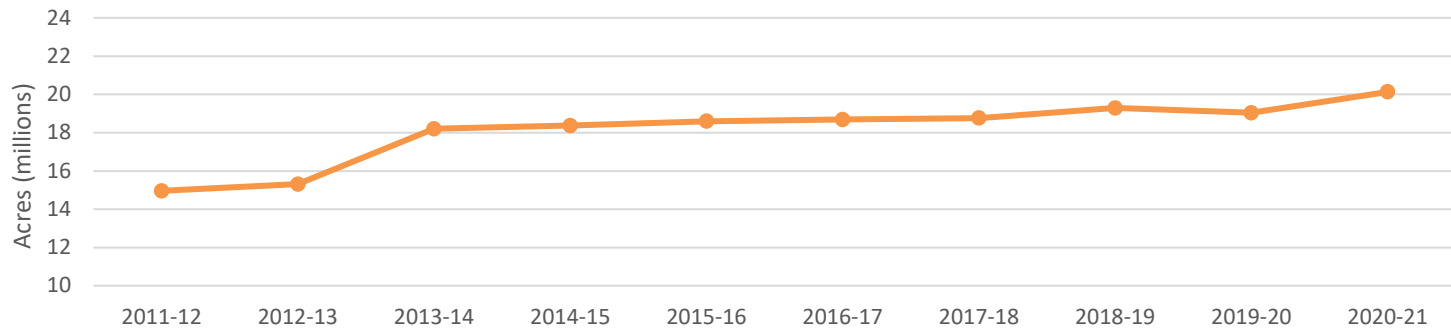
**September 2021
Volume 42**

AIX Project Outputs

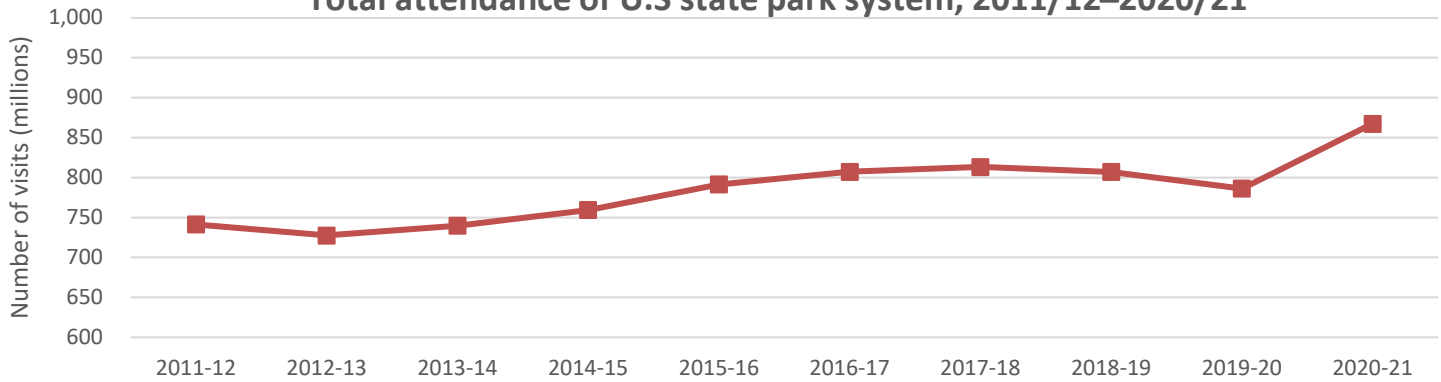


AIX Data Examples

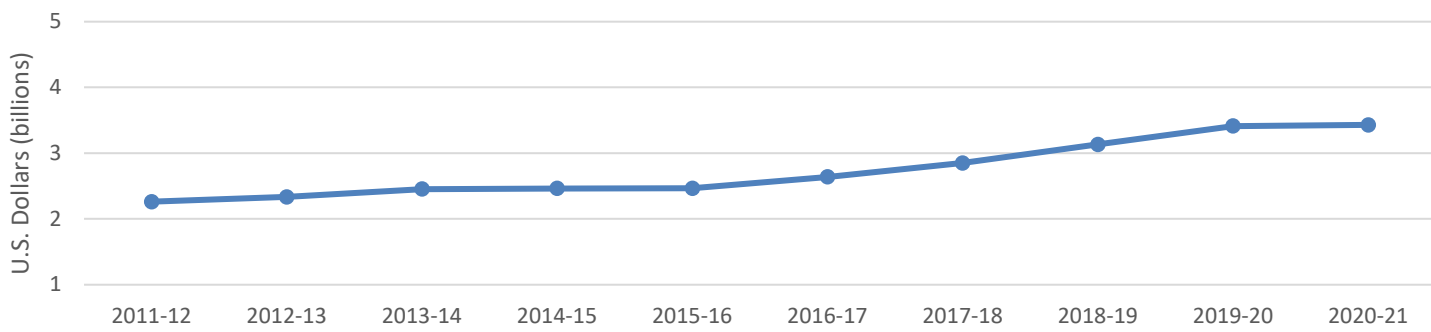
Total acreage of U.S. state park system, 2011/12–2020/21



Total attendance of U.S state park system, 2011/12–2020/21



Total operating expenditures of U.S. state park system, 2011/12–2020/21



Based on NASPD AIX survey data

Uses of AIX Outputs

State park agencies and state legislatures

State park advocacy with Federal government and Congress

Public communication & media

Academic research

NGO & commercial requests

Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy, and Environment
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE INTERIOR, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT
 HEARING DATE: APRIL 5, 2017 2:00 PM | 2247 RAYBURN HOB

Improving the Visitor Experience at National Parks

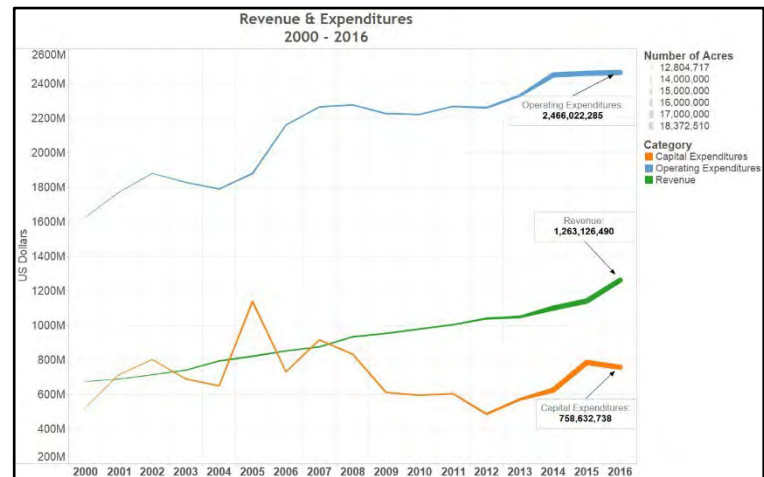
MS. LANTERMAN
Kansas State Parks

MR. EDMOND BOATMAN

36:48 / 1:34:21

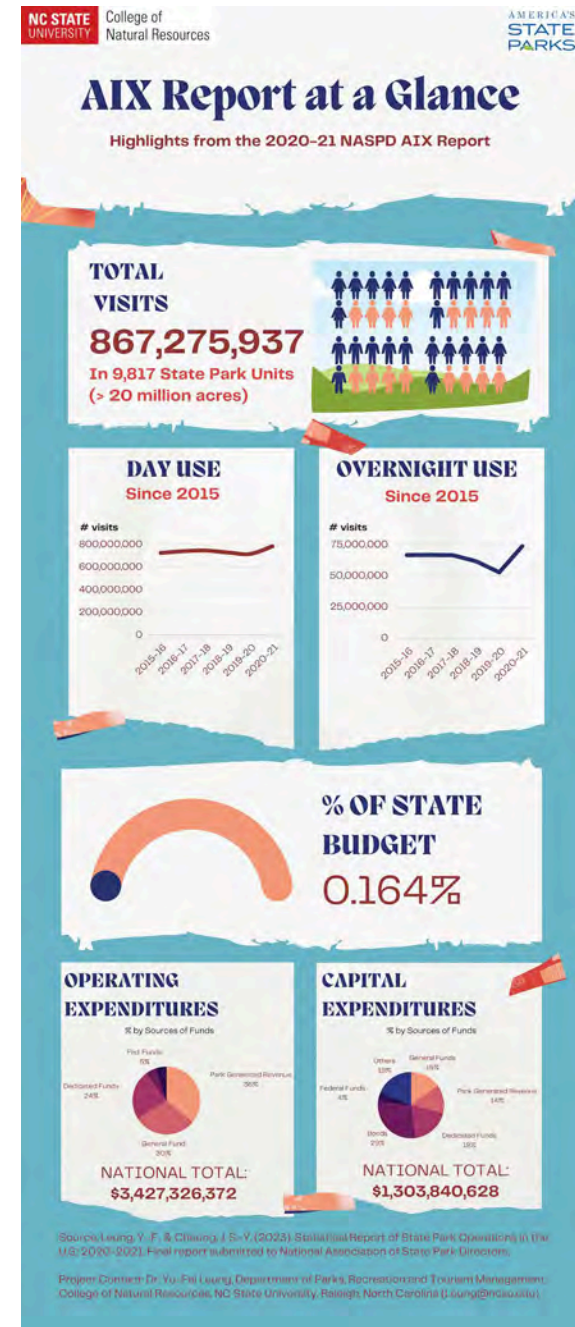
MORE VIDEOS

YouTube



Recent Improvements

- Added reservation system information
- Added a data entry tracking system
- Added online help sessions for AIX liaisons
- Added the “Report at a Glance” infographic page
- New changes in 2021-22 Survey
 - Land acquisition
 - Public Engagement



New in FY2021-22 AIX Survey: Table 4

Table 4A: Capital Expenses - Land Protection
(page 1 of 4)

This table focuses on the means, acreage, and cost of land protection in each state park system. Land protection with full (or fee simple) ownership by the state park system can be accomplished by direct purchases or donations. For direct purchases, please provide the acreage and cost of purchase. For non-purchase means, please provide the acreage and brief description in the explanatory notes. Land protection can also be achieved by easements without full ownership. For lands under easement agreements, please provide the acreage and land value.

STATE	Fee Simple (Full Ownership)			Easements		Total Acreage Protected
	Acreage by Non-Purchase Means	Acreage by Purchase	Purchase Cost	Acreage	Value	
Alabama						
Alaska						
Arizona						
Arkansas						
California						

Table 4B: Capital Expenses – Infrastructure Costs
(page 3 of 4)

This table focuses on the costs spent on rehabilitation/renovation projects and brand new construction projects, respectively.

STATE	Construction Costs		
	Rehabilitation	New Construction	Total Costs
Alabama			
Alaska			
Arizona			
Arkansas			
California			
Colorado			

New in FY2021-22 AIX Survey: Table 7

Table 7A: Public Engagement – Program Participation & Volunteerism (page 1 of 6)

This table focuses on the extent of public engagement in state parks in forms of participation in on and off site state park education/interpretive programs (all types and formats) and volunteer programs, respectively.

STATE	Participation in Education/Interpretive Programs		Volunteerism	Total volunteer hours
	Number of events	Number of participants	Number of volunteers	
Alabama				
Alaska				

Table 7B: Public Engagement – Social Media Platforms (page 3 of 6)

This table reports the availability of social media platforms officially administered by the state park agency to communicate with the public. If other platforms are used, please specify their names in the “Others” column. Provide any details you wish about the platforms you use in the explanatory notes.

STATE	Availability of Social Media Platforms			
	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Others (separate by comma)
Alabama	Yes	Yes	No	Flicker, TikTok, Park Mobile App
Alaska				
Arizona				
Arkansas				
California				

Example only

Table 7C: Public Engagement – Supporting Groups (page 5 of 6)

This table reports the presence and number of support groups and endowment funds for (1) a state park system and (2) individual state parks.

STATE	Support Groups			Endowment Funds		
	System Wide	Individual Park	How Many?	System Wide	Individual Park	How Many?
Alabama						
Alaska						
Arizona						
Arkansas						
California						
Colorado						

Challenges & Limitations

- Delays in survey schedule since the COVID19
- Turnover of AIX state liaisons
- Differences in definitions
- Data needs after the new year
- Inherent limitations with the data

Moving Forward

- Returning to pre-COVID19 survey schedule
- Exploring an end-of-year quick survey option
- Continuing improvements on the survey instrument
- Making project outputs more useful
- Exploring research opportunities



AIX Project website <https://go.ncsu.edu/aix>



A scenic view of a rocky trail with people and a dog. The trail is paved and runs along a large, layered rock formation. Several people are walking on the trail, and a white dog is in the foreground. The background shows trees with green and yellow leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The sky is blue with some clouds.

AMERICA'S
STATE
PARKS

NC STATE
UNIVERSITY

Department of Parks,
Recreation & Tourism Management

NASPD AIX Project

Thanks for Your
Continued Support!!

Questions & Comments