

National Park Units with Current Carrying Capacities

Out of the 51 park units with current General Management Plans (GMPs), only set a broad carrying capacity (Santa Monica) and six others had carrying capacities for specified park areas or facilities only.

1. ***Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area*** has a 2002 GMP which states:

“Current carrying capacity of the SMMNRA, based on the experience of the recreation area management agencies and the current knowledge of resource conditions, is estimated to be somewhere in the excess of 33 million recreation visits annually.”

2. ***Channel Islands National Park*** set use limits by alternative in their 2015 GMP. The preferred alternative (alternative 3) lists day use and overnight use limits for the following park areas: East Anacapa Island, Middle Anacapa Island, West Anacapa Island, East Santa Cruz Island including Scorpion Harbor and Smugglers Cove, and Santa Cruz Island’s Prisoners Harbor and Rancho del Norte.
3. ***Dry Tortugas National Park*** set preliminary limits, subject to testing, of 330 people per day in Garden Key and 24-36 per day in Loggerhead Key. The proposed action (alternative C) set the maximum campground capacity to 68 campers overnight on the island, which would be regulated via a reservation system.
4. ***Everglades National Park*** has a GMP which employs indicators and standards to address user capacity. The only standard that could be found in the GMP that limits the number of people in a park area is the number of people on a 15-mile loop road, waiting for a tram, in the parking or restroom area at Shark Valley (400-500 people).
5. ***Golden Gate National Recreation Area*** has a GMP which also employs indicators and standards to address user capacity. On Alcatraz Island, the Golden Gate GMP sets a limit of 0-43 people per view on Michigan Ave. 90% of the time, and 0-74 people at one time on C-D St. 90% of the time. The GMP also sets limits on the encounter rate on trails to “no more than 40 encounters with other visitor groups traveling in the opposite direction, 90% of the time during park operating hours.” The number of visitors in Muir Woods National Monument is restrained by the capacity of the parking lot. In Muir Woods, no more than 18 people per view per 50-meter trail section along valley primary trails 90% of the time during park operating hours, and no more than 30 people at one time at the Pinchot Tree and Redwood Crosscut 90% of the time during park operating hours.

6. ***Saguaro National Park*** utilizes indicators and standards to address user capacity. Only one standard that limits the number of people in an area could be found in their 2008 GMP: “no more than 90 people in any given month for at least 11 out of the 12 months of the year” in the Madrona Pools area.

7. ***Zion National Park*** in its 2001 GMP stated it would use “preliminary carrying capacities” (i.e., 80 day hikers and 70 overnight users in the Narrows from the northern park boundary down through Orderville Canyon, and 50 people in the Left Fork of North Creek (p. 36)) until a wilderness management plan and carrying capacity studies were completed. The GMP also stated that visitor use levels are somewhat regulated by the shuttle system. The GMP also set “interim carrying capacities, pending further research, for hikers and saddle stock groups in the primitive and pristine zones.” They include hiker group size limits of 12 individuals, and saddle stock group size limit of six people per group with six saddle stock.

###