



## Visitor/Non-Visitor Use Constraints Exploring Ethnic Minority Experiences and Perspectives

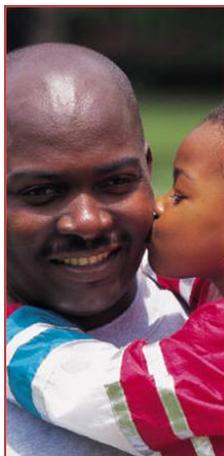
**The Objective:** *Identify primary constraints to use or visitation for underserved groups and determine new strategies for efforts of future outreach and civic engagement, in general.*

This study explored past and current participation in recreation at GGNRA, specific types of experiences and activities desired from visiting, preferred facilities, favored types and sources of information about recreation at the park, and interest in future visitation and participation in enjoying the parks natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational values and opportunities. Park managers, interpretation, education, and law enforcement staff wanted to learn how best to engage under-represented groups in park planning & projects. Identifying community leaders, groups and strategies for seeking input on trail projects and the GGNRA General Management Plan was a subsequent part of the study.



**The Project:** *Conduct focus groups in the tri-county area consisting of GGNRA lands, provide recommendations to park managers.*

Applying a snowball sampling technique, previously existing organizations and community groups were recommended by both formal professionals and informal leaders across all cultural groups. Nearly 100 ethnic minorities in the Bay Area were interviewed (i.e., African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino(a), and Asians/Pacific Islanders, including recent Chinese immigrants). Eight focus groups were assembled ranging in size from 9 to 15 individuals. There were 64 females and 35 males ranging in age from 18 to 63. Collectively, participants represented either a contingency that has never been to GGNRA or one with a broad range of types and experiences with the park (i.e., slightly more than 1/3 of all people interviewed have visited various sites of the Golden Gate National Park Recreation Area). The eight groups convened at eight different times to maintain group cohesion within a specific racial/ethnic group. A series of semi-structured questions set the foundation for the interview process.



“If you’ve never been exposed to a national park, how can there be an interest?”

**The Results:** *Numerous parallel constraints were discovered among participants as well as differences within and between ethnic groups. Common findings include:*

Primary constraints limiting or preventing use of—or visitation to—GGNRA and/or other national parks in the Bay Area include the following five broad categories with a few subsequent themes: 1) Access (e.g., transportation, associated costs); 2) Lack of Knowledge, experience, and awareness 3) Communication (e.g., language/materials, education about park policies, lack of engaging ethnic media); 4) Concerns about discrimination and prejudice, cultural differences;; and 5) Representation such as lack of ethnic minorities on staff (workforce diversity), lack of awareness of, or questioning, recruitment and hiring practices. Targeting/reaching youth through schools and field trips was brought up and discussed in every group interviewed. For instance, if children are interested and excited about visiting a park, adult parents or care-takers will usually endure any hardship to “make it happen.” Findings are consistent with other studies on ethnic groups in that *family* is the primary ‘recreation companion’ as commonly brought up among all groups interviewed.

*This summary is based on a General Technical Report submitted to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. For more information about GGNRA, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/goga>. Questions about this summary should be addressed to Dr. Nina S. Roberts, San Francisco State University at [nroberts@sfsu.edu](mailto:nroberts@sfsu.edu)*