

# Itasca Area Visitor Profile Study 2014–2015

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## Background

Current consumer profile information is essential for tourism marketing & planning

Most recent traveler information in Itasca was from 2002 (Tourism Center, 2002) → Updated information is needed.

Visit Grand Rapids contracted with Tourism Center to conduct a visitor profile project in the greater Itasca area from Sep 1, 2014 to Aug 31, 2015.

## Method

**Study setting** 45,564 residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015)  
A major tourism destination with many natural assets

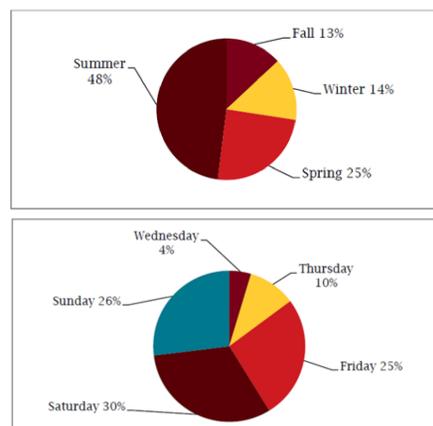
**Sampling** Convenience sampling  
75 sites in 8 communities  
N=3,811

**Data collection** Onsite intercept survey

**Questionnaire** Visitor characteristics  
Travel party and trip profile  
Trip purpose and activities  
Expenditure

**Analysis** Descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS (version 23.0)

## Response rate



## Key Findings

Table 1: Visitor characteristics & place of origin

Visitor characteristics	Fall 2014	Winter 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2015
Average Age	51	49	50	51
% Male	56%	51%	55%	48%
Place of origin-state				
Minnesota	80%	84%	84%	70%
Wisconsin	3%	6%	5%	5%
Place of origin-metro area				
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	45%	40%	41%	39%
Duluth, MN-WI	12%	15%	15%	10%
St. Cloud, MN	3%	4%	3%	3%



Table 2: Average visitor spending per person per day while in Itasca area

	Fall 2014	Winter 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2015
Lodging	\$44.71	\$47.41	\$52.95	\$53.24
Other fishing-related expense	\$39.76	\$2.56	\$3.15	\$1.75
Restaurants	\$26.82	\$25.57	\$22.03	\$23.64
Shopping	\$23.83	\$13.31	\$15.43	\$18.24
Transportation	\$21.68	\$18.21	\$16.67	\$19.35
Groceries	\$10.33	\$8.30	\$9.55	\$14.85
Recreation	\$6.22	\$3.47	\$8.26	\$4.68
Miscellaneous	\$5.83	\$0.16	\$0.32	\$1.52
Fishing equipment	\$1.36	\$3.71	\$2.45	\$2.91
Fishing-related guide service	\$0.21	\$1.46	\$0.09	\$1.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$180.74</b>	<b>\$124.16</b>	<b>\$130.90</b>	<b>\$142.13</b>

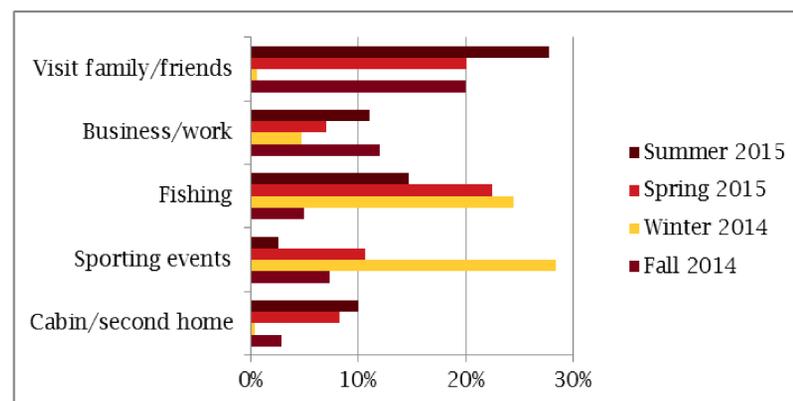


Fig. 4: Respondents' top reasons for visiting Itasca across the four quarters (n=3811)

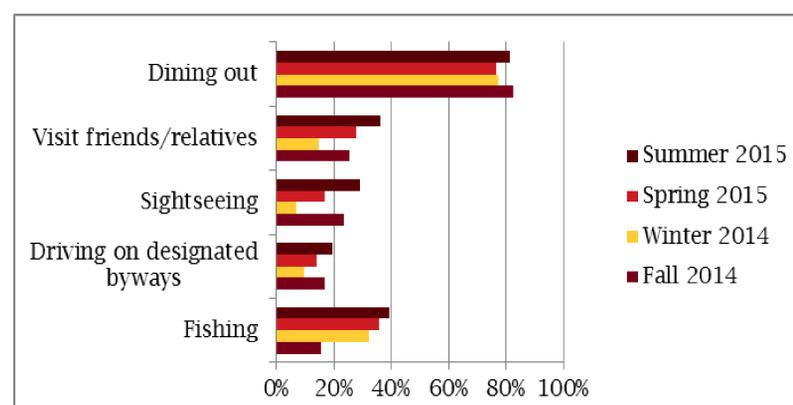


Fig. 5: Respondents' top five activities during the trip across the four quarters (n=3811)

Table 3: Trip information of visitors to Itasca area

	Fall 2014	Winter 2014	Spring 2015	Summer 2015
<b>Lodging</b>				
Hotel/motel	50%	52%	35%	36%
Home of friend/relative	14%	11%	12%	14%
Own vacation home	8%	3%	12%	11%
Resort	4%	10%	8%	10%
RV	4%	3%	5%	8%
<b>Planning time frame</b>				
Less than 2 weeks	35%	29%	29%	30%
2-4 weeks	27%	27%	25%	19%
5-8 weeks	14%	18%	16%	13%
9-13 weeks	9%	13%	11%	12%
13+ weeks	10%	12%	19%	26%
<b>Information source</b>				
Friends & family	47%	50%	52%	52%
Destination website	18%	22%	14%	18%
<b>Post-trip sharing</b>				
Word of mouth	66%	69%	68%	67%
Text message	40%	44%	41%	42%
Facebook	39%	41%	39%	39%

## Discussion

### Market segments:

- In-state visitors
- Minneapolis-St. Paul a key market
- Baby boomers and Generation X as two key age groups
- Vacation home owners: sizeable presence, high spending, and active participation in the happenings of the area

### Activities:

- Fishing an important activity, esp. ice fishing in winter
- Sightseeing: high participation rate
- Youth hockey tournament in winter
- Festivals and events as secondary activities

### Trip planning & sharing:

- Trip planning within a month
- Destination website: maintenance & update
- Facebook: established sharing platform

### Sustainability:

- Periodic review of the region's assets and existing tourism support infrastructure
- Community engagement

## Acknowledgements

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