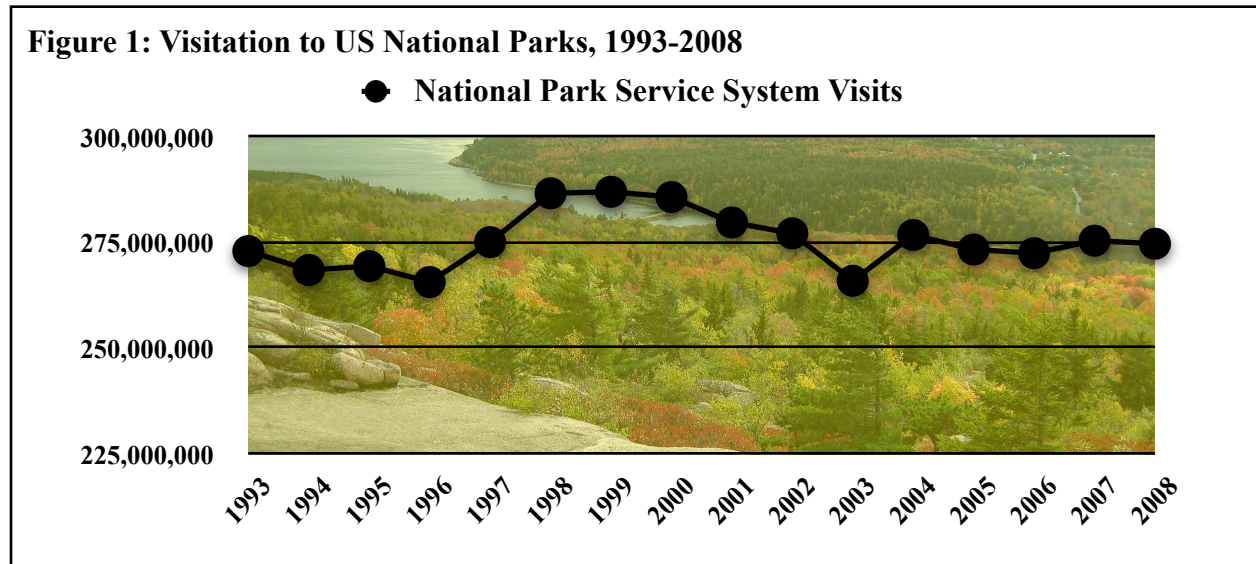


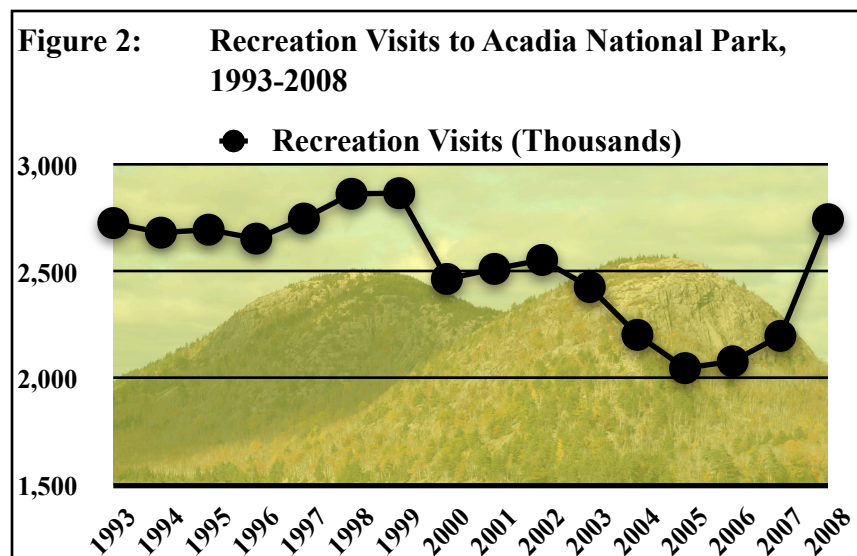
### Recreation Trends: Visitation & Use Data

Visitation to parks and public lands is a useful gauge of demand for many types of outdoor recreation (notably nature-based recreation). It is possible to look at national level trends to get a “big picture” view of visitation trends. In this light, **figure 1** shows the trend in visitation to properties administered by the *U.S. National Park Service*. Over the last 15 years, there has been significant fluctuation in visitation across the National Parks. However, the last five years have been more constant.



*Acadia National Park*, Maine’s iconic National Park, has experienced more pronounced visitation changes over greater part of the past decade. As **figure 2** shows, Acadia NP saw a significant drop in visitation starting in 1999 and bottoming out in 2005. Recent trends show increasing visitation, including 2,749,000 visits in 2008 (just shy of the 1999 high of 2,871,000).

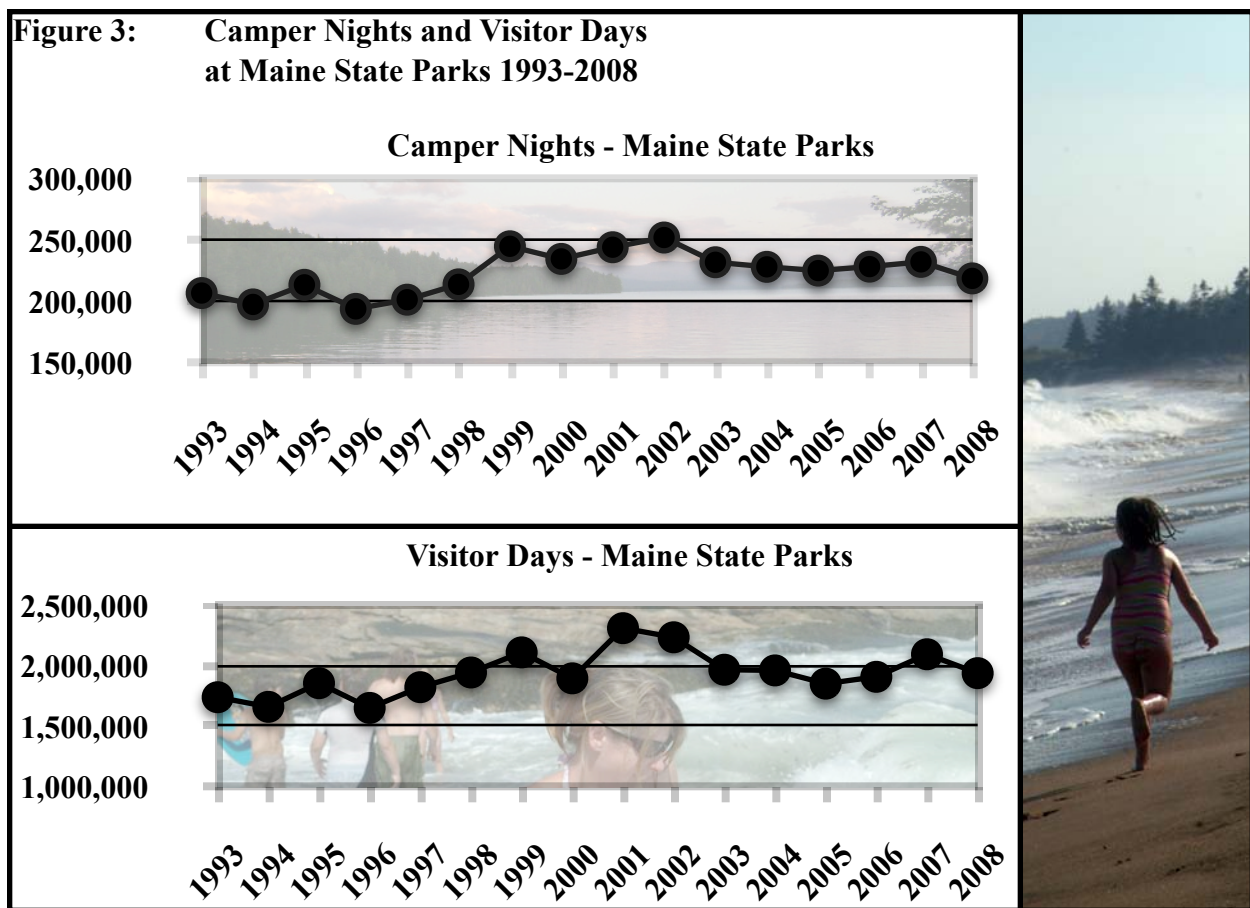
The United States Department of Agriculture oversees the *United States Forest Service*. In 2003, the USFS estimated its total visitation at 204.8 million (plus or minus 4.3 million) (USFS, 2009). *The White Mountain National Forest*, situated in both New Hampshire and Maine, estimates visitation to be 1,692,000 (2005 data). Prior estimates for trend analysis are unavailable, as



the US Forest Service’s National Visitor Use Monitoring project has not yet produced comparable data across time. Additional data from White Mountain NF staff show 6,380 camper nights at Hastings and Crocker Pond Campgrounds (the two Maine White Mountain NF campgrounds).

At the state level, there are several sources of visitor use figures. One major source of insight is visitor use at *Maine State Parks*. As with a variety of outdoor recreation managers, Maine’s State Parks saw a reduction in visitation between the early 2000s time frame and the mid 2000s. However, the dip in visitor days between the 2001/2002 peak and the 2005/2006 valley (approximately 17%) is not as pronounced as some other recreation agencies experienced.

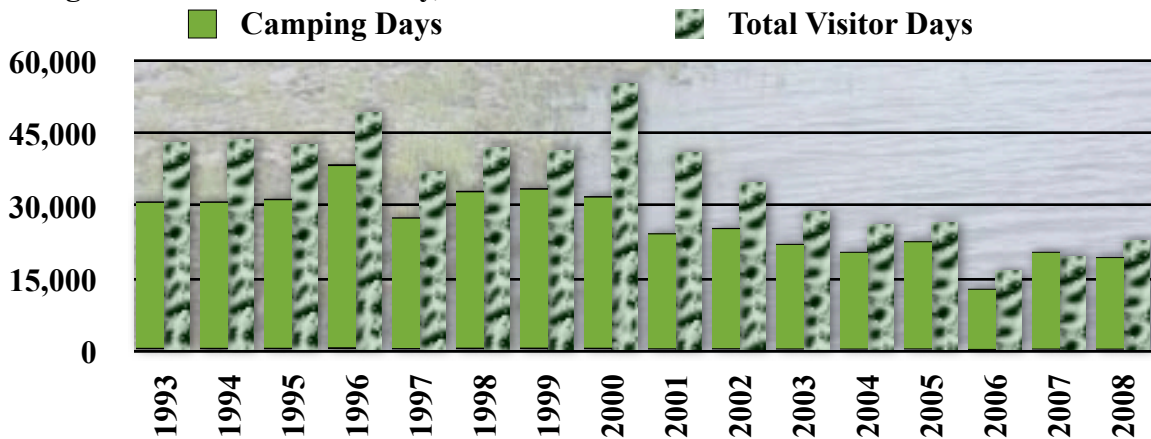
**Figure 3** (below) shows both camper nights (overnight use) and visitor days (day use) figures for Maine State Parks and Historic Sites from 1993-2008.



*The Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the Penobscot River Corridor*, both waterways managed by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, show noticeable trends in remote river-based recreation. In both cases, the overall trend since the mid to late 1990s has been generally reduced visitation. Trends for both waterways can be seen in **figures 4 & 5**.

*Baxter State Park (BSP)*, a 204,733 acres wilderness park operated under the guidance of a Governing Authority (Maine Attorney General, Maine Commissioner of Inland Fisheries

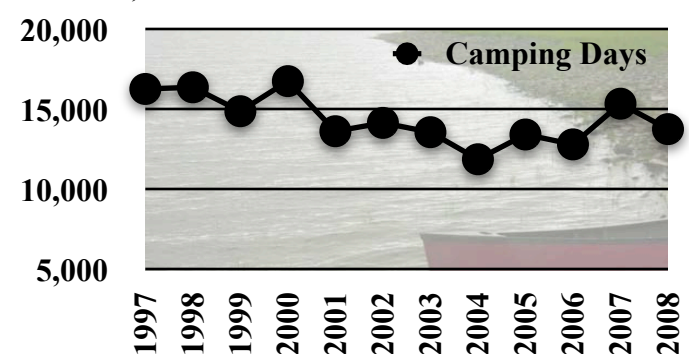
**Figure 4: Camping Days and Total Visitor Days at the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, 1993-2008**



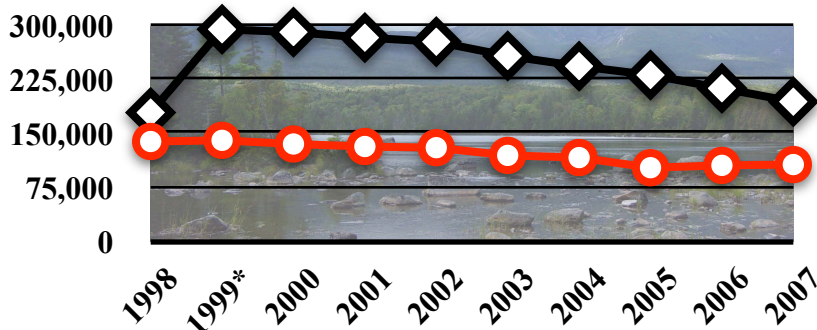
and Wildlife, and Director of the Maine Forest Service), is separate from Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands. BSP, given its predominantly gated access and camping reservation system, has accurate data for trend analysis.

As with Baxter State Park, *North Maine Woods Inc. (NMW)*, a group of corporations, individuals, families, public agencies, and non-profit landowners, also has an insightful collection of visitation records. The gated entry system to this 3.5 million plus- acre landbase enables NMW recreation managers to measure recreation use year to year. **Figure 6** shows that visitation has diminished at both Baxter State Park and the North Maine Woods system.

**Figure 5: Camping Day at the Penobscot River Corridor, 1997-2008**



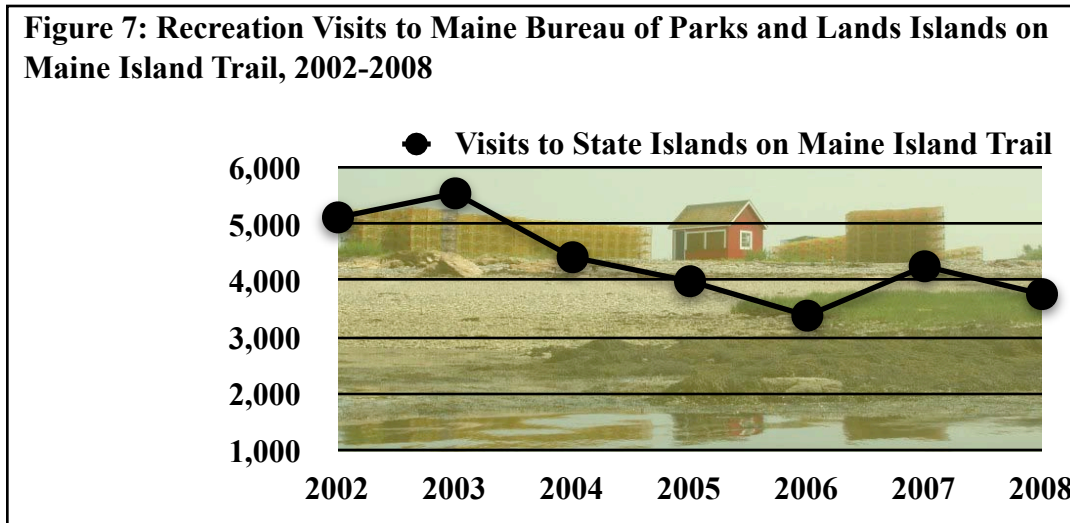
**○ Baxter State Park Visitor Days (Summer Season)**  
**◇ North Maine Woods, Inc. (Summer Season)**



**Figure 6: Visitation Trends at Baxter State Park and the North Maine Woods.**

\* In 1999, the Ragmuff Seboomook Forest was added to NMW, increasing the landbase from 2.8 million to 3.5 million acres.

The *Maine Island Trail Association (MITA)* is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining volunteer stewardship and recreation management of coastal islands along a 350-mile waterway extending from Cape Porpoise Harbor, Kennebunkport, on the western Maine coast, to Washington County on the east. It includes over 150 islands and mainland sites along the route, available for day visits or overnight, low-impact camping. MITA, in conjunction with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, manages 47 coastal islands along the trail. individuals or entities. MITA estimates visitation to MITA managed islands. **Figure 7** shows trends in Maine Island Trail use.



*Commercial whitewater rafting* is regulated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. **Figure 8** shows recent use trends on Maine’s three primary rafting rivers. Like some of the visitation figures, whitewater rafting figures show a downturn from an approximate turn of the century peak.

