QORF
OUTDOOR PROJECTS

2 UNDERSTAND AND HAVE A PLAN

Before you begin monitoring visitors, you need to be very clear about what you need to monitor or measure. There are a few steps you can follow that will help you determine how you should best start and what you can get out of your monitoring.

Image: Visioning the Outdoors Film and Photo Competition

UNDERSTAND

1. **What are the objectives of the visitor monitoring? i.e. what do you want to achieve?**
2. **What processes are needed to achieve the outcomes sought?**
3. **Define what you are counting – is it users or uses (visitors or visits)?**
4. **Who will use the data (and to make what decisions)?**

For example, the data could be used to:

- Identify areas of high/low use
- Estimate potential demand for new facilities, trails and infrastructure
- Document increase in usage as a result of – new facilities, trails, programs etc.
- Determine spatial dispersion of visitors to determine high usage areas
- Understand variation in visitor patterns over a year or season
- Understand who your park visitors are.

PLAN

1. **What data collection tools best suit the information we need to collect?**
   - Do we want automated or manual counting?
   - Do we need multiple tools to gather broad and deep data?
   - Do we need back to base reporting from counters?
2. **What resources do we have available that impacts on the approach we might take?**
   - Money, time, staff, expertise, access to expert knowledge in other organisations?
3. **Do we need to accommodate to variations in usage?**
   - Is usage constant or are there seasonal changes?
   - Multiple activities on single trails – e.g. horses, bicycles, walkers, runners etc
4. **What type of data or analysis is needed so we can share our findings with other agencies?**
5. **What are the best locations for capturing visitor data?**
   - Trail heads? Single/multi-use trails? Day use facilities? Car parks? Campsites? Entry/exit locations?
6. **How can we calibrate our findings so we are confident in the results?**
7. **Who is responsible for ensuring the collection, analysis and distribution of visitor monitoring/measurement information?**
8. **Where will we report our data?**

For more information, click *here*