

**National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Social Science Division**

**Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys**

1.	<b>Project Title :</b>	Identifying indicators of visitor experience and resource condition at Kenai Fjords National Park				
	<b>Submission Date:</b>	January 6, 2010				
2.	<b>Abstract:</b>	This survey will obtain input from park visitors to inform the development of indicators of quality for visitor experiences and resource conditions in the backcountry of Kenai Fjords National Park (Alaska). Kenai Fjords includes 400 miles of remote coastline accessible only by boat or floatplane. Suitable landing beaches and camping areas are limited by the steep fjord topography, thus concentrating visitor use in the more accessible areas. Higher use densities leads to more rapid and severe impacts to natural resources and social values. To protect visitor experiences and park resources, indicators and standards of quality need to be developed for these areas. With specific indicators identified and standards for acceptable conditions defined, staff at Kenai Fjords will be better equipped to manage recreational use and natural resources in sensitive coastal areas.				
3.	<b>Principle Investigator Contact Information</b>					
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4.	<b>Program Liaison Contact Information</b>					
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	<b>Park:</b>	Kenai Fjords National Park				
	<b>Park Office/Division:</b>	Resource Management				
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	<b>Project Information</b>				
5.	<b>Park(s) For Which Research is to be Conducted:</b>	Kenai Fjords National Park			
6.	<b>Survey Dates:</b>	06/01/2010	(mm/dd/yyyy)	to	08/30/2010 (dd/mm/yyyy)
7.	<b>Type of Information Collection Instrument (Check ALL that Apply)</b>				
	<b>Mail-Back Questionnaire</b>	<b>On-Site Questionnaire</b>	<b>Face-to-Face Interview</b>	<b>Telephone Survey</b>	<b>Focus Group</b>
		X			
	<b>Other (explain)</b>				
8.	<b>Survey Justification: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)</b>	<p>Social science research in support of park planning and management is mandated in the <i>NPS Management Policies 2006</i> (Section 8.11.1, "Social Science Studies"). The NPS pursues a policy that facilitates social science studies in support of the NPS mission to protect resources and enhance the enjoyment of present and future generations (National Park Service Act of 1916, 38 Stat 535, 16 USC 1, et seq.). NPS policy mandates that social science research will be used to provide an understanding of park visitors, the non-visiting public, gateway communities and regions, and human interactions with park resources. Such studies are needed to provide a scientific basis for park planning, development, operations, management, education, and interpretive activities.</p> <p><u>Literature Review.</u> Impacts caused by visitors in coastal areas of national parks in Alaska are an increasing challenge for management. Kenai Fjords National Park (KEFJ) includes approximately 400 miles of remote coastline that is accessible only by boat or floatplane. The availability of suitable landing beaches and camping areas is limited by the steep fjord topography, thus concentrating visitor use in the more accessible areas. Higher use densities leads to more rapid and severe impacts to the natural resources and social values. Preserving these resources and maintaining high quality visitor experiences are integral to the mission and purpose of KEFJ, but park managers need clearly defined management objectives to determine at what point management action must be taken to reduce impacts on resources and experiences.</p> <p>KEFJ recently completed a revision of its method for assessing resource conditions at coastal backcountry campsites. The result is a protocol to guide continued monitoring and analysis of trends in campsite conditions. If these monitoring data are to be utilized to protect visitor experiences and park resources, indicators and standards for resource conditions and experiences must be developed. The first step in this process is to obtain input into the development of indicators of visitor experiences and resource conditions by administering surveys to backcountry visitors. The visitor survey described here will solicit this input. No previous surveys of backcountry visitors to KEFJ have been conducted. The only other visitor study at the park was a 2001 survey of frontcountry visitors to the Overlook Loop Trail at Exit Glacier (Vande Kamp et al, 2005).</p> <p>Once results of the backcountry survey are reviewed and indicators defined by management, the next step will be to establish quantitative standards for each of the indicators to define their minimum acceptable conditions. Under this procedure--often referred to as Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP)—indicators are monitored and, when standards are exceeded, management actions are taken to reduce these impacts. This approach has been applied in a number of NPS units (e.g. Manning,</p>			

		<p>2007), and the use of indicators and standards has now been adopted into the NPS general management planning process. With specific indicators identified and standards for the acceptable conditions of the indicators defined, KEFJ will be better equipped to manage recreational use and natural resources in sensitive coastal areas.</p>
9.	<p><b>Survey Methodology:</b> (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)</p>	<p><b>Respondent Universe:</b> The respondent universe for this study will be backcountry visitors to Kenai Fjords National Park from June-August 2010.. In 2009, approximately 276 groups visited Aialik Bay, the most-used area of the coastal backcountry. This estimate is based on the park’s voluntary backcountry permit system (VBR) and ranger contacts with visitors on the coast. This number is likely an underestimation of total backcountry use, as only commercial guided trips are required to file VBRs and rangers are unable to contact all visitors.</p> <p>Visitors age 18 years and over will be eligible to participate in the survey.</p> <p><b>Sampling plan/procedures:</b> Sampling will take place for approximately 50 days throughout the summer use season, and will be stratified to include both midweek and weekend periods. We expect to contact approximately 200 groups during the sampling period. The individual with the most recent birthday in the group will be asked to complete the survey.</p> <p>Due to the small backcountry visitor population, researchers will attempt to sample one member from each group encountered in order to achieve an adequate sample size.</p> <p>Backcountry visitors will be intercepted at popular landing beaches and public use cabins and asked to participate in the study by completing an on-site questionnaire. Surveys will also be administered at various visitor use locations in the town of Seward to visitors returning from a backcountry trip. Most backcountry users access the coast via water taxi. Several companies offering water taxi services are located in Seward. All of the companies dock at the Seward Small Boat Harbor, with the exception of one, which lands at a different location southwest of town. Researchers accompanying staffed backcountry patrols will only be able to access backcountry areas a limited number of times throughout the sampling period. Thus, contacting visitors at docking locations in Seward will ensure that a representative and acceptable sample size will be obtained.</p> <p><b>Instrument administration:</b> An on-site questionnaire will be administered to park visitors by a Utah State University graduate student and park resource intern staff. Visitors agreeing to participate in the study will be given a questionnaire and asked to complete it. An interviewer will be present and available to answer any questions the respondents may have.</p> <p>Potential respondents will be contacted using the following script:</p> <p>“Excuse me, sir/ma’am. The National Park Service is conducting a survey of backcountry users for Kenai Fjords National Park to better understand visitor use. Participation is voluntary and all responses are anonymous. Did you visit any backcountry coastal areas during your trip?”</p> <p>If YES: “Thank you. Have you completed a survey at a different location in the park?”</p> <p>If YES: “We can only accept one response per group. Thank you for your time.”</p>

		<p>If NO: “Would you be willing to take 10 minutes to complete a survey about your visit? Who in your group has the next birthday? (Give survey to this group member.)</p> <p>If NO: “We are only surveying people who were in the backcountry of the park. Thank you.”</p> <p><b>Expected response rate/confidence levels:</b> In total, we expect to contact 200 backcountry groups, and surveys are expected to be completed by 150 (75% response rate). An on-site survey at the Overlook Loop Trail at Exit Glacier in 2001 achieved a response rate of 77.2%. Survey findings are estimated to be accurate within +/-7% using the 95% confidence level.</p> <p><b>Strategies for dealing with potential non-response bias:</b> Survey administrators will keep visitor contact logs. Observable information about each visitor group asked to participate in the study will be recorded, along with reasons for refusal (if this is volunteered). This will allow researchers to test for non-response bias in the final sample. The implications of non-response bias for interpretation of the survey findings will be discussed in the final report.</p> <p><b>Description of any pre-testing and peer review of the methods and/or instrument (recommended):</b> The survey instrument has been reviewed by park staff to ensure that it addresses issues of interest and relevance to the management of the park. The methods employed in the survey instrument have been used in a number of NPS units and have proven effective in identifying indicators of quality.</p>
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10.	<b>Total Number of Initial Contacts  Expected Respondents:</b>	200	150	11.	<b>Estimated Time to Complete Initial Contact/ Instrument (mins):</b>	1	10	12.	<b>Total Burden Hours:</b>	28
13.	<b>Reporting Plan:</b>									<p>A final report of survey results will be prepared and provided to the park by December 31, 2010. The key estimates will be descriptive in nature, primarily measures of central tendency (mean and median), dispersion (standard deviation), and frequency distributions.</p> <p>Responses to open-ended questions will be coded to identify indicators of quality. Means for responses to closed-ended questions will be computed to identify important indicators of quality. Statistical tests of significance (ANOVA, chi-square) will be used when appropriate to identify differences in responses between groups of visitors (e.g. commercial day trippers, independent paddlers, overnight visitors, etc.). All statistical tests will be completed using the SPSS (SPSS Inc., IBM, Chicago) statistical software package.</p> <p>One electronic version (in PDF file format) and 2 hard copies of the final report will be provided to the NPS Social Science Division at the following address: National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW (2300) Washington, DC 20240, for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection.</p>

References:

Manning, R.E. (2007). *Parks and Carrying Capacity: Commons Without Tragedy*. Island Press: Washington, D.C.

Vande Kamp, M., D. Johnson, and R. Manning. 2005. Managing Exit Glacier's Popularity: Social Science Looks at Visitor Experience. *Alaska Park Science* 3(2): 28-33).

# KENAI FJORDS VISITOR SURVEY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Location Survey Administered: \_\_\_\_\_

Commercial or Private Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Tour Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendant: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ Warm  
\_\_\_\_\_ Cool  
\_\_\_\_\_ Sunny  
\_\_\_\_\_ Partly sunny  
\_\_\_\_\_ Cloudy  
\_\_\_\_\_ Foggy  
\_\_\_\_\_ Rain

Dear Kenai Fjords National Park Visitor:

The National Park Service is conducting this survey to learn more about our visitors so that we can improve our service to you. You are one of a select number of people randomly chosen for this survey, so your opinions are important to us. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete, and all of the information collected will be anonymous. Please read each question carefully.

1. How many people, including you, are in your personal group today? Your “personal group” is anyone you are visiting the park with, such as spouse, family, or friends. It doesn’t include the larger group you may be traveling with, such as a tour group or school groups. [1. GR3]

Number of people: \_\_\_\_\_

2. On this visit, what kind of personal group (not guided tour/school group) were you with? Please circle only one. [1. GR5]

- |                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Alone                          | c. Family             |
| b. Friends                        | d. Family and friends |
| e. Other (Please describe: _____) |                       |

3. On this visit, were you and your personal group with any of the following types of groups? (Circle all that apply.) [1. GR6]

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| a. | Guided tour group                                |
| b. | School/educational group                         |
| c. | Commercial tour                                  |
| d. | Other organized group (Please describe<br>_____) |

4. Have you visited the Park Information Center (in downtown Seward) during your visit? [3. Variation ITIN3]

- a. Yes b. No

5. How did you access the coast? (Circle all that apply.) [3. Variation TRANS1]

- |    |                                  |
|----|----------------------------------|
| a. | Sea kayak                        |
| b. | Chartered water taxi             |
| c. | Commercial outfitter service     |
| d. | Sea plane                        |
| e. | Private watercraft               |
| f. | Other (Please specify:<br>_____) |

6. How would you describe your trip to the coast? [3. Variation TBACK1]

1. Day trip (did not spend the night in the backcountry) → Question 9
2. Multi-day trip (spent 1 or more nights in the backcountry)

7. What was the length of your trip in days? [3. Variation TRIPC11]

Length of trip: \_\_\_\_\_ days

8. Did you spend the night at any of the following areas? (Circle all that apply.) [3. Variation TRIPC15]
1. Aialik Public Use Cabin
  2. Holgate Cabin
  3. North Arm Cabin
  4. Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge
  5. Backcountry campsite (Please specify area(s): \_\_\_\_\_)

9. Have you visited Kenai Fjords National Park before? (Circle one number.) [1. VISITHIS1]
- a. Yes
  - b. No → Question 10

If YES, approximately how many times have you visited Kenai Fjords National Park before this trip?

Number of previous visits: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Below is a list of possible reasons for visiting Kenai Fjords National Park. For each item, please indicate how important the reason for visiting is to you. (Circle one number for each item.) [4. Variation PREF1]

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a. To learn about the cultural history of this area	1	2	3	4	5
b. To see and learn about the natural environment of this area	1	2	3	4	5
c. To participate in a recreational activity (e.g. kayaking, hiking)	1	2	3	4	5
d. To be with family and/or friends	1	2	3	4	5
e. To get some exercise	1	2	3	4	5
f. To experience solitude	1	2	3	4	5
g. Other (please specify: _____)	1	2	3	4	5

11. Which of the following activities did/will you participate in during your trip? (Circle all that apply.) [3. ACT22]
- a. Viewing wildlife
  - b. Photography
  - c. Bird watching
  - d. Saltwater fishing
  - e. Freshwater fishing
  - f. Sea kayaking
  - g. Hiking
  - h. Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)



These questions ask about things that made your visit more or less enjoyable.

12a. What did you enjoy most about your visit? [6. EVALSERV25]

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b. What did you enjoy least about your visit? [6. EVALSERV24]

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13. If you could ask the National Park Service to change some things about the way it manages Kenai Fjords, what would you ask it to do? [Topic Area 7, Individual Opinions on Park Management]

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14. If you have visited these areas of Kenai Fjords before, please note any things that have changed for the better or for the worse since your last visit. [Topic Area 6, Individual Perceptions of their Park Experiences]

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**OR**

a. This is my first visit to these areas.

15. Do you think visitors are having any negative effects on the natural and/or cultural resources of this area or the quality of the visitor experience? [Topic Area 6, Individual Perceptions of their Park Experiences]

- a. Yes
- b. No

If YES, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

16. What do you value most about your visit to Kenai Fjords National Park? [Topic Area 6, Individual Perceptions of their Park Experiences]

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17. What do you consider to be the most important qualities of Kenai Fjords National Park? [Topic Area 6, Individual Perceptions of their Park Experiences]

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18. How much of a problem do you think the following issues are at Kenai Fjords National Park.(Circle one number for each item.) [6. OPMGMT2]

	Not a Problem	Small Problem	Big Problem	Don't Know
a. The number of people at beaches	1	2	3	4
b. The number of kayaking groups	1	2	3	4
c. The presence of large kayaking groups	1	2	3	4
d. Environmental impact to beaches from visitor use	1	2	3	4
e. Environmental impact to campsites from visitor use	1	2	3	4
f. Damage to ghost trees caused by visitors	1	2	3	4
g. Presence of tour boats	1	2	3	4
h. Speed of tour boats	1	2	3	4
i. Noise from tour boats	1	2	3	4
j. Air quality	1	2	3	4
k. Visitors making too much noise	1	2	3	4
l. Visitors harassing wildlife	1	2	3	4

19. Do you live in the United States? [1. RES3]  
 a. Yes (If so, what is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_)  
 b. No (If not, what country do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_)
20. In what year were you born? [1. AGE1]  
 Year born: \_\_\_\_\_
21. What is your gender? (Circle one number.) [1. GEND2]  
 a. Male  
 b. Female
22. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Circle one number.) [1. ED2]  
 a. Less than high school  
 b. High school graduate/GED  
 c. Vocational/trade school certificate  
 d. Some college  
 e. Two-year college degree  
 f. Four-year college degree  
 g. Graduate degree

23. Are you Hispanic or Latino? [1. RACE/ETH2]
- a. Yes, Hispanic or Latino
  - b. No, not Hispanic or Latino
24. What is your race? (Please circle one or more.) [1. RACE/ETH3]
- a. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b. Asian
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - e. White
25. Does anyone in your group have a physical condition that made it difficult to access or participate in park activities? [1. GR2]
- a. Yes
  - b. No

If YES, because of the physical condition, what specific problems did the person have? Please circle all that apply.) [1. GR2]

- a. Hearing (difficulty hearing ranger programs, guides, audiovisual exhibits or programs, or information desk staff, even with a hearing aid)
  - b. Visual (difficulty in seeing exhibits, directional signs, visual aids that are part of a program, even with prescribed glasses or due to blindness)
  - c. Mobility (difficulty in accessing facilities, services, or programs, even with walking aid and/or wheelchair)
  - d. Other (Please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
26. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your visit to Kenai Fjords National Park? [6. OPMGMT7]

Thank you for your help with this survey! Please return this completed questionnaire to the surveyor.

PRIVACY ACT and PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT statement:  
16 U.S.C. 1a-7 authorizes collection of this information. This information will be used by park managers to better serve the public. Response to this request is voluntary and anonymous. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. BURDEN ESTIMATE STATEMENT: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 10 minutes per response. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this form to Laura Phillips, Ecologist, Kenai Fjords National Park, (907)224-7542, Laura\_Phillips@nps.gov.

