National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Social Science Division

Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

1. **Project Title Submission Date:**

Visitor Services Project (VSP): Understanding Visitors' Experience at Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)	

Abstract:

Mail back surveys will be used to collect information from visitors Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO). The surveys will be used to gather information concerning visitor satisfaction about the park's services and facilities. The data will be used to prepare National Park Service planning documents, such as: General Management Plans (GMP), Resource Management Plans (RMP), Wilderness Plans, and Long-Range and Comprehensive Interpretive Plans. The information from these visitor studies will be used to by park managers to inform decisions about park operations. The information will also be shared with park partners and gateway communities to assist in mutual planning efforts. The questionnaires will be designed to systematically collect data that will include information on trip/visit characteristics (e.g. activities, evaluation of park services/facilities, perceptions of park experiences, and opinions concerning park management).

(not to exceed 150 words)

3. **Principal Investigator Contact Information**

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4. **Park or Program Liaison Contact Information**

First Name: Denise **Last Name:** Schultz

Title: Chief of Interpretation

Park: Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)

Park Office/Division: Interpretation

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Project Information

5. **Park(s) For Which Research is to be Conducted:** Fort Bowie National Historic Site (FOBO)

6. **Survey Dates:** 3/1/2011 (mm/dd/yyyy) to 3/31/2011 (mm/dd/yyyy)

7. **Type of Information Collection Instrument (Check ALL that Apply)**

X Mail-Back Questionnaire	**On-Site Questionnaire**	**Face-to-Face Interview**	**Telephone Survey**	**Focus Groups**

❑ **Other (explain)**

8. **Survey Justification: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)**

Legal Justification: The National Park Service Act of 1916, 38 Stat 535, 16 USC 1, et seq., requires that the National Park Service (NPS) preserve the national parks for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. At the field level, this means resource preservation, public education, facility maintenance and operation, and physical developments that are necessary for public use, health, and safety. Allocation of funding is to be roughly in proportion to the seasonally adjusted volume of use (P. L. 88-578, Sect. 6) and in consideration of visitor characteristics and activities for determining carrying capacity (92 Stat. 3467; P. L. 95-625, Sect. 604 11/10/78). Other federal rules (National Environmental Policy Act, 1969 and NPS guidelines) require visitor use data in impact assessment of development on users and resources as part of each park's general management plan.

Managerial Justification.
Study findings will be used:

- As input into planning (e.g., General Management Plan, Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, Long Range Interpretive, Plan, Wilderness Plan, Resource Management Plan, Backcountry Management Plan).
- To design interpretive and educational programs to match visitor interests and needs. Interpretive media at some parks are outdated, and wayside exhibits need to be replaced or added in many areas.
- To design future visitor facilities or to prepare plans for renovating existing facilities.
- To evaluate visitor behavior for potential impacts on natural and cultural resources.
- To determine whether concession services in parks are meeting visitor needs.
- To provide local businesses and governments with a better understanding of how visitors contribute economically to the area.

A mail-back questionnaire will used to systematically collect data from visitors, including individual characteristics, trip/visit characteristics, individual activities, individual evaluation of park services/facilities, individual perceptions of their park experiences and individual opinions on park management. Park visitors will be randomly selected to participate in the studies as they visit this park location during a 7-to 14-day period.

This survey will contribute to soundscape management in Mount Rainier National Park by informing the identification of potential indicators and standards for soundscape conditions in this park. Indicators of quality are defined as measurable, manageable variables that act as proxies for the quality of park resources and visitor experiences. Standards define the minimum acceptable condition of these indicator variables. The management process involves identifying indicators and standards of quality; monitoring the indicator variables; and taking management actions to ensure that quality standards for each indicator are maintained.

9. **Survey Methodology: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)**

(a) Respondent universe:

A systematic sample of all visitors, age 16 and older, will be contacted by VSP-trained interviewers at selected locations in each park.

(b) Sampling plan/procedures:
The survey and sampling design for this visitor study is based upon Dillman's Tailored Design Method (TDM). The TDM has been shown to increase response rates, improve accuracy, and reduce cost and burden hours. The methodology has been used in 214 previous surveys conducted by the VSP. Most questions have been included in other VSP questionnaires or appear in the NPS Known Pool of Questions. A systematic sampling procedure will be based on the park's visitation statistics from the previous year. We will intercept every *nth* visitor group to participate in the study. Each interviewer will be trained in the intercept and interview procedures. A supervisor will be on-site during the survey to ensure that interview procedures are followed. On-site visitors will be intercepted at locations shown below:

Park	Intercept Locations
FOBO	Ranger station/information center

(c) Instrument administration:

The initial contact with visitors will take approximately 1 minute. This time will be used to explain the study and determine interest of participation. The number of visitor groups who refuse will be recorded and used to calculate response rates. Visitors who volunteer to participate in the study will be asked five questions (2 additional minutes) to collect information used in a non-response bias check. They will also be asked to record their name, address, phone, and email address on the interviewer's log sheet. Phone and email addresses are used to follow up and check on non-response bias among non-respondents. If a group agrees to participate, the researcher will give the survey to the individual (16 years or older) within the group who has the next birthday. Participants will be given a stamped, addressed questionnaire to complete and mail back to the Visitor Services Project.

All participants will be mailed a thank you/reminder post card 11 working days after completion of the survey. A reminder letter with a stamped, addressed replacement questionnaire will be sent to all non-respondents 21 working days after completion of on-site contacts. A second reminder letter will be mailed after 35 working days with a stamped, addressed replacement questionnaire.

(d) Expected response rate/confidence levels:
The number of questionnaires to be distributed is based on each park's visitation data and the number of days of surveying. The table below gives a projection of the expected sample sizes, response rates, and associated confidence intervals and confidence levels for each park.

Park	Number of Survey Days	Number of initial Contacts	Expected Number of Responses	Expected Response Rate	Margin of Error +/- %
FOBO	30	371	340	71%	5.0

For dichotomous response variables, estimates will be accurate within the margins of error and levels of confidence described above. The confidence intervals will be somewhat larger for questions with more than two response categories.

(e) Strategies for dealing with potential non-response bias:
During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each visitor five questions taken from the survey. These questions will be used in a non-response bias analysis.

1) What type of group are you traveling with today?
2) (If with an organized group-tours, school, etc.) How many people are in your group?
3) How many in your party are, 18 years and older?
4) How many are in your party are 17 years and younger?
5) How old is the person who will complete the questionnaire?

Responses will be recorded on a log for every survey contact. Results of the non-response bias check will be described in a report and the implications for park planning and management will be discussed.

(f) Description of any pre-testing and peer review of the methods and/or instrument (recommended):

The questions included in this survey were initially designed and reviewed by the principal investigator, research staff, and scientists at the University of Idaho. The questionnaire format and many of the questions have been used in 214 previous VSP survey instruments. Questionnaires were peer reviewed by NPS managers and university professors.

10.	**Total Number of Initial Contacts**	371	11.	**Estimated Time to Complete Initial Contact**	3	12.	**Total Burden Hours:** 132
	Expected Respondents:	340		**Instrument (mins.)**	20		

13. **Reporting Plan:** The results of the studies will be presented in internal agency reports for NPS managers. Response frequencies will be tabulated and measures of central tendency computed (e.g., mean, median, mode, as appropriate).The reports will be archived with the NPS Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection. They will also be posted on the Park Studies Unit VSP website at: http:/psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.reports.htm. Hard copies will be available upon request. The economic data will be used to produce special reports for the NPS covering overall use estimates and local economic impacts.