

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Social Science Program

Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys (OMB # 1024-0224) Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report



Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks (photo courtesy NPS Social Science Program)

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Background on Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves the nation's natural and cultural heritage and provides for its enjoyment by citizens and visitors from throughout the world. An accurate understanding of the relationship between people and parks is critical to achieving the mission of the National Park System: protecting resources unimpaired and providing for public enjoyment, education, and inspiration. Such understanding requires a sound scientific basis. Hence, social science research is a necessary and important function of the National Park Service.

As part of its Social Science Program, the NPS sponsors surveys of the public to provide park managers with information for improving the quality and utility of NPS programs. All information collection activities funded or sponsored by the NPS must be done in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13) and implementing rules (5 CFR 1320) written by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Since many of the NPS surveys are similar in terms of the populations being surveyed, the types of questions being asked, and research methodologies, the NPS, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior (DOI), proposed to OMB and received clearance for a program of approval for NPS visitor surveys (OMB# 1024-0224 exp. 8/31/2001). The program presented an alternative approach to complying with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The program was designed to provide several specific benefits. First, it would improve the opportunity for meaningful public comment by offering one public review period for the entire program of similar surveys. Second, it would increase federal government efficiency by reducing the personnel time and funding necessary to prepare and review the proposed collections of information. Third, it would assist researchers by simplifying the review process for social science research. Fourth, it would improve the timely delivery of usable knowledge to NPS managers.

In 2001, the NPS Social Science Program submitted an extension request for the program of expedited review. That extension request

expanded the program to include surveys of park visitors, potential park visitors, and residents of communities near parks. OMB clearance was granted in September 2001. Clearance of a second three-year extension was granted on 10 January 2005 (OMB# 1024-0224 exp. 1/31/08)

The positive result is more savings in time and cost to the federal government (NPS, DOI, and OMB) and principal investigators, and a further reduction in burden on the public.

Annual reports are required as a component of the review. This is the seventh annual report, summarizing activities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2006. In this report, the program is referred to as the Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys.

Management and Oversight

Separate management, oversight, and approval responsibilities are held by the NPS Social Science Program, DOI, and OMB.

The NPS Visiting Chief Social Scientist, Dr. James Gramann, provides guidance for submissions and reviews all survey instruments for compliance with technical standards and program guidelines. In FY 2006, the staff responsibility for the Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys was assigned to Megan McBride, Senior Research Associate.

For submissions that comply with program requirements, the Visiting Chief Social Scientist determines the appropriate number of burden hours, certifies that the survey instrument and research methodology are technically acceptable and in compliance with the PRA, and transmits the individual survey package to OMB for final approval. If the NPS receives approval from OMB, the NPS allocates the OMB control number (and an NPS tracking number), survey expiration date, and designated burden hours, and authorizes the principal investigator to use the approved instrument.

The DOI office responsible for oversight of information collection activities (the Office of Policy Analysis) monitors NPS activities within the program, provides policy guidance, and reviews annual reports.

The OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) provides expedited review of NPS submissions under the program and notifies the Social Science Program of approval (or the need for revision) within 10 working days.

The NPS Social Science Program developed guidelines describing the authorities, scope, and submission process for the program. The current document, *Guidelines and Approval Form for Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys, Focus Groups and Field Experiments*, was published and widely disseminated in January 2005 and revised in June 2006. The guidelines and associated forms are available on the NPS Social Science Program Web site at: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/expedited.cfm>

Fiscal Year 2006 Activities

FY 2006 activities under the Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys are summarized in Table 1. In FY 2006, 61 surveys were received and 55 were approved.

Approved surveys were conducted in or for 53 units of the National Park System. The total estimated burden on the public for all surveys approved in FY 2006 was 11,343 hours. The average survey in FY 2006 placed a burden on the public of 208 hours. The mean burden on each individual respondent in FY 2006 was 15 minutes.

Effects of the Expedited Review Process

There are several immediate effects derived from this program. These include time savings, cost savings, reduction in burden on the public, and increased peer review. The standard PRA survey review process takes approximately six months once the first *Federal Register* notice is published. Under the expedited program, the review time has been reduced to 60-days or less, once a survey has been submitted to the NPS for review. (Note: This review time has been increased, from 45 to 60 days, due to an increase in the number of submissions over the last two years, leading to more time being needed to process submissions.)

Table 1 – Fiscal Year 2006 Activities

NPS Survey #	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	Expiration	Burden Hours
06-E-001	Coronado Cave Visitor Survey	22-Nov-05	22-Sep-06	30-Sep-06	63
06-E-002	Cape Lookout National Seashore Visitor Use Study	20-Nov-05	20-Nov-07	31-Dec-07	322
06-E-003	Buffalo National River Visitor Use Assessment	1-Aug-06	31-Jan-07	1-Mar-07	69
06-E-004	Evaluating the Cane River National Heritage Area: A Process Approach	1-Jan-06	15-Apr-06	30-Jun-06	42
06-E-005	National Park Service Interpretive Development Program Evaluation Study	20-Jan-06	30-Jul-06	30-Sep-06	82
06-E-006	Glacier Bay National Park Backcountry Camper Survey	1-May-06	30-Sep-06	1-Oct-07	78
06-E-007	Adult Learning Strategies in Personnel-based Wilderness Education Programs	20-Mar-06	1-Nov-06	1-Nov-06	11
06-E-008	Acadia National Park (Mount Desert Island Section) Hiker Survey	7-Jul-06	23-Aug-06	1-Oct-07	23
06-E-009	Jamaica Bay Visitors Center Station, Gateway National Recreation Area: Formative Evaluation	10-May-06	11-May-06	31-May-06	26
06-E-010	Education Program Assessment Tool (5th+): Northeast Region	20-Apr-06	30-Nov-06	30-Nov-06	690
06-E-011	Petroglyph National Monument Visitor Use and Trail Assessment Survey	1-Sep-06	30-Sep-06	1-Sep-07	53

06-E-012	Monitoring Visitor Behaviors on Acadia National Park Carriage Roads	1-Jul-06	31-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	50
06-E-013	Presenting Race and Slavery at Historic Sites	31-Mar-06	31-May-06	1-Jun-06	10
06-E-014	Confronting Slavery: Visitor Responses to Interpretation of African American Experience at Kingsley Plantation	1-Apr-06	31-Oct-06	1-Apr-07	82
06-E-015	Identifying Capacity for Local Community Participation in Wildlife Mgmt Planning: White-tailed Deer in NE NPS units	SUBMISSION SENT THROUGH FULL PRA PROCESS			
06-E-016	Great Smoky Mountains National Park Backcountry Use and User Survey	1-May-06	31-May-06	1-Jul-06	117
06-E-017	Ozark National Scenic Riverways: Visitor Survey	26-May-06	31-Jan-07	31-Jan-07	196
06-E-018	Canyon de Chelly National Monument Visitor Study	1-Jun-06	15-Aug-06	1-Dec-06	152
06-E-019	Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Teacher Survey	EXPIRATION DATE EXTENDED			
06-E-020	Determine Best Messaging to Support Impact Mitigation during Glacier National Park Road Rehabilitation	8-May-06	25-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	203
06-E-021	Evaluation of Park Communication with German-speaking Visitors at Yosemite National Park	28-May-06	20-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	60
06-E--22	Denali National Park: Semi-Structured Interviews of Denali Park Road Vehicle Users	1-Jul-06	15-Oct-06	1-Apr-07	78
06-E-023	Kings Mountain National Military Park Visitor Study	21-Jun-06	27-May-06	30-Jun-06	120
06-E-024	John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site Visitor Survey	28-Jun-06	28-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	96
06-E-025	Monocacy National Battlefield Visitor Study	14-Jul-06	30-Jul-06	1-Feb-07	96
06-E-026	Education Program Assessment Tool (3 rd & 4 th grade): Northeast Region	1-May-06	30-Nov-06	30-Dec-06	400
06-E-027	Katmai National Park and Preserve Visitor Study	4-Jun-06	26-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	380
06-E-028	Non-Visitor Use Constraints Study--An Exploration of Issues Through Focus Groups	1-Aug-06	31-Jan-07	28-Feb-07	283
06-E-029	Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park--Georgetown Visitor Center Formative Evaluation	27-May-06	28-May-06	1-Jul-06	11
06-E-030	A Study of Trail Users and Social Trailing in Golden Gate National Recreation Area	15-Jul-06	30-Sep-06	1-Mar-07	192
06-E-031	Visitor Expectations and Experiences Related to Night Skies: Bryce Canyon National Park	10-Jun-06	15-Oct-06	15-Apr-07	97

06-E-032	Focus Group of Trail Users and Social Trailing: Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Marin Trails	17-May-06	17-May-06	1-Jun-06	19
06-E-033	Visitor Voices: Assessment of Interpretive Practices in the Intermountain Region of the NPS	10-Jul-06	31-Mar-06	1-Oct-07	504
06-E-034	San Mateo County Visitor Survey	20-Jun-06	31-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	288
06-E-035	Muir Woods National Monument Shuttle Evaluation	WITHDRAWN BY THE PI			
06-E-036	Mammoth Caves National Park Visitor Study	23-Jul-06	29-Jul-06	1-Feb-07	250
06-E-037	Zion National Park Visitor Study	2-Aug-06	7-Nov-06	1-Apr-07	459
06-E-038	Devils Postpile National Monument Visitor Study	12-Jul-06	18-Jul-06	1-Feb-07	113
06-E-039	Evaluation of Pilot Project on Community-based Promotion of Healthful Recreation in Cuyahoga Valley NP	WITHDRAWN BY THE PI			
06-E-040	Denali National Park Visitor Study	1-Aug-06	7-Aug-06	1-Apr-07	292
06-E-041	Golden Spike National Historic Site Visitor Study	10-Aug-06	19-Aug-06	1-Mar-07	101
06-E-042	Social Research in Support of Impact Mitigation on Restoration of the Going to the Sun Road in Glacier National Park	17-Jun-06	5-Sep-06	1-Apr-07	42
06-E-043	Understanding & Managing Soundscapes in National Parks: Grand Teton & Yosemite National Parks Visitor Use Study	23-Jun-06	23-Jul-06	1-Feb-07	103
06-E-044	Yellowstone National Park Visitor Study	23-Jul-06	29-Jul-06	1-Feb-07	392
06-E-045	Alaska Resident Outdoor Recreation and Travel Survey	15-Jun-06	15-Oct-06	1-Aug-07	2475
06-E-046	Visitor Use Patterns on the Moose Wilson Road Corridor in Grand Teton National Park	18-Aug-06	30-Sep-06	1-Mar-07	34
06-E-047	Acadia National Park Cadillac Mountain Visitor Survey	CLEARANCE DECLINED BY OMB			
06-E-048	Assateague Island National Seashore Visitor Survey	30-Jul-06	13-Aug-06	1-Feb-07	446
06-E-049	Understanding & Managing Soundscapes in National Parks: Muir Woods Soundscape Questionnaire	1-Sep-06	15-Sep-07	1-Jan-08	326
06-E-050	Understanding and Managing Soundscapes in National Parks: Muir Woods Adaptive Management	COMBINED WITH 06-E-049 STUDY			
06-E-051	Preliminary Assessment of Fish Utilization of the Waters Adjacent to the Cape Cod National Seashore	10-Aug-06	1-Nov-06	1-Jun-07	37
06-E-052	Motivations for Visitors to Attend Ranger-led Interpretive Programs at Yosemite Valley, Yosemite National Park	26-Jul-06	1-Sep-06	1-Mar-07	113

06-E-053	Voyaguers National Park Visitor Center Exhibits Formative Evaluation	21-Jul-06	23-Jul-06	1-Feb-07	14
06-E-054	African Burial Ground National Monument 'Front-end' Survey of Potential Visitors	28-Jul-06	30-Oct-06	1-Apr-07	63
06-E-055	African Burial Ground National Monument 'Front-end' Focus Groups with Potential Visitors	15-Aug-06	30-Oct-06	1-Apr-07	98
06-E-056	Navigation in Space: A study Comparing Map Views at Zion National Park	5-Sep-06	29-Sep-06	1-Mar-06	61
06-E-057	Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Interpretation Assessment	15-Sep-06	31-Aug-07	31-Dec-07	908
06-E-058	Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historic Park--Great Falls Visitor Center Formative Evaluation	23-Sep-06	24-Sep-06	1-Mar-07	11
06-E-059	Remedial Evaluation of New Exhibits in the Sunset Crater and Wupatki Visitor Centers	25-Oct-06	31-May-07	1-Nov-07	60
06-E-060	Ecology Village Teacher Camping Course Assessment Tool	14-Oct-06	30-Jun-07	1-Dec-07	16
06-E-061	Ozark National Scenic Riverways: Hunting Visitor Survey	1-Oct-06	31-Dec-06	6-Jun-07	36
TOTAL BURDEN					11,343

A conservative estimate nets a time savings of approximately four and one-half months per survey. In FY 2006, 55 surveys were approved under the program with an estimated time savings of 248 months. On average, it took 58 calendar days from initial submission for a survey to be reviewed by the NPS Social Science Program staff, revised by the Principal Investigator as needed, certified by the NPS Visiting Chief Social Scientist, and approved by OMB. This was 15 days longer than the previous year. The increase was caused by the vacancy of the Senior Research Associate position for nearly half of FY 2006, resulting in the Expedited Review Process being understaffed within the Social Science Program.

The expedited review process provides substantial cost savings for the federal government by reducing staff time required to review submissions. Table 2 shows that the review process saves approximately \$1,545 per study.

This eighth year of the program yielded a direct cost savings to the federal government of approximately \$84,975 (55 studies X \$1,545

per study). In addition to these direct cost savings, principal investigators also benefit by a significant reduction in labor required to prepare review packages.

The project manager for the NPS-sponsored Visitor Services Project (VSP) estimates a savings of 15 hours at an estimated cost of \$446 per study. The VSP conducted 12 studies in FY 2006 for a total cost savings of approximately \$4,460. Estimating similar time savings to principal investigators for the 45 remaining studies conducted in FY 2006, an additional cost savings of approximately \$20,070 was incurred. The total cost savings to principal investigators is estimated to be \$24,530. Hence, the total amount of dollars saved by the federal government and principal investigators in FY 2006 is estimated to be at least \$109,505.

In eight years, a total of 371 individual surveys have been approved, providing the federal government and principal investigators a time and cost saving estimated to be at least \$723,087.

Burden on the public has been reduced by eliminating the repetitive *Federal Register* publications for substantially similar survey research. Extensive public review of the program as a whole resulted in effective and efficient public comment. Those comments were incorporated into the final submission to OMB.

Finally, the expedited review process encourages principal investigators to have their survey instruments peer-reviewed prior to submission. This has resulted in higher quality

studies that reduce burden on the public and ensure more accurate data.



Photo: Visitor Study at Zion National Park (courtesy of Visitors Services Project)

Table 2 – Fiscal Year 2006 Costs and Savings

Activity	Approx. Salary	Standard Review		Expedited Review		Cost Savings
		Average Review Time Per Study	Cost Per Study	Average Review Time Per Study	Cost Per Study	
Review and handling by Social Science Program staff (GS-11 Step 5)	\$29.47/hr*	12.5 hours	\$368.38	6 hours	\$176.82	\$191.56
Review by Chief Social Scientist (GS-14 Step 6)	\$51.10/hr*	7.5 hours	\$383.25	3 hours	\$153.30	\$229.95
Review by NPS Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-13 Step 5)	\$42.00/hr*	3 hours	\$126.00	None	None	\$126.00
Review by DOI Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-15 Step 10)	\$66.97/hr*	2 hours	\$133.94	None	None	\$133.94
Review by OMB OIRA Desk Officer for DOI (GS-15 Step 5)	\$56.67/hr*	3 hours	\$170.01	1 hour	\$56.67	\$113.34
<i>Federal Register</i> Notice Publication	\$75 per page (~5 pages)	2 per study	\$750.00	None	None	\$750.00
Total Cost Savings Per Study						\$1,544.79

* Salary estimates based on 2006 OPM Salary Tables for Washington DC Area

Progress on NPS Initiatives

The NPS Social Science Program has undertaken several initiatives as part of this review program. The major initiative undertaken in FY 2006 included continued development of an archive of survey results.

The NPS Social Science Program has established a social science data and information archival system in consultation with scientists conducting NPS-sponsored public surveys and NPS library programs. The Social Science Studies Collection has been established with hard copies of reports housed in libraries in the NPS Social Science Program Washington, DC office and the Harpers Ferry

Center (HFC) in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. To date, 297 reports have been digitized and made available on the NPS Focus Digital Library and Research Station. In FY 2006, NPS Focus (including the Social Science Studies Collection) became available to the public at <http://npsfocus.nps.gov/>

The NPS Visitor Services Project (VSP) based at the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit has developed an archival portion of their Web site, providing access to survey instruments, executive summaries, and full reports. The VSP Web site is located at <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>. The NPS Social Science Program Web site at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/activities.cfm>

includes links to the Social Science Studies Collection on NPS Focus and the VSP website. In its eighth year, the Expedited Review for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys has proven to be useful and efficient. The NPS Social

Science Program looks forward to continuing to work with NPS managers, social scientists, DOI, OMB and the public to ensure the continued success of this valuable program.



For Additional Information

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