

Supporting Statement Part B for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission for Appalachian Trail Management Partner Survey

OMB Control Number

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The respondent universe is all ATPO management partners during the survey period. The ATPO works with approximately 100 partner organizations, including 36 Appalachian Trail Conservancy Club, 5 National Parks, 8 National Forests and 40 state partners. Therefore, this is a census of the partner organizations. One respondent will reply for each organization, and the expected response rate for the collection as a whole is 75%. This will yield approximately 75 completed surveys. The person who receives the survey will be the person in each organization who works most closely with the ATPO. Given the NPS's relationship with the partner organizations, a relatively high response rate, consistent with previous NPS surveys, is expected.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:
 - * Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,
 - * Estimation procedure,
 - * Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,
 - * Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and
 - * Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

Because this is a census in which each partner organization will be sampled, there is no stratification, nor will unusual or specialized sampling procedures be used.

The satisfaction of the partner organizations will be estimated by tabulating the frequency and percentage of answers in each category of all questions. In addition, an importance-performance grid will be constructed to determine if forms of assistance that are viewed as important receive high or low mean satisfaction scores.

A "satisfaction index" will be computed from responses to the question asking about satisfaction with overall assistance to an organization's work in maintaining and managing the Appalachian Trail. This index will be the simple sum of the percentage of partners responding that the assistance was either "good" or "very good."

A verbatim transcription of responses to the final open-ended question will be produced.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

All partners participating in the survey are e-mailed a questionnaire on a biennial basis. Each survey is administered October 1 of the survey year. The cut-off date for receiving responses back is December 15.

Once the original survey is sent out the first follow-up will be sent to all participants via email notification 11 days after the initial notification. The second follow-up email will be sent to non-respondents 21 working days after the initial notification. The third follow-up email will be sent to non-respondents 35 working days after the initial notification. The web-based program survey monkey will be used to implement the survey.

Initial partner contacts are made via e-mail using the following script, "The Appalachian National Scenic Trail is conducting a short Management Partner Survey to improve program effectiveness and public accountability and to measure our performance in this area. Your participation in the survey is voluntary, and you can complete the survey in less than ten minutes, when it is convenient to you. Your opinion is important and will help the ATPO better serve its partners and the public through its technical assistance programs. When you receive the survey by e-mail, please take a few minutes to complete and return it, using the instructions provided. If you have any difficulties accessing the survey or have any questions, please let me know."

This notification also will be used to clean and update the ATPO's mailing address file. If notification e-mails are returned as "undeliverable," the ATPO will contact the organization by telephone, explain the purpose of the survey, and ask for updated contact information.

The questionnaire will be distributed one week following the notification e-mail. To maximize response rates, two follow-up notices will be sent. The survey will be available on the web based survey monkey. Survey monkey will distribute emails and assign passwords to each recipient. Spreadsheets that tally all results will also be generated through survey monkey. Hard copies may be requested if the web survey is not available to recipient.

Non-response bias will be assessed by comparing characteristics of the responding organizations with those of non-respondents. Relevant characteristics include type of organization and function size as well as budgets.

Data from the surveys will be used to evaluate the performance of the ATPO's technical assistance program and to satisfy GPRA and strategic plan reporting requirements. No other uses are planned.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

The Management Partner Survey was based off a previously approved survey for River, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program. The survey employs typical satisfaction questions used in previous survey instruments.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

Megan McBride, Senior Research Associate, Social Science Program, National Park Service, and thus, is involved in oversight and design of the Appalachian Trail Management Partner Survey (ATMPS) (contact number: 202-513-7192)

Dr. James Gramann, Texas A&M University and the National Park Service Social Science Program, was consulted in the oversight and design of the ATMPS. (contact number: 979-845-4920)