

# **Visitor Attitudes, Experiences and Expectations Associated with the Oversand Vehicle Zone and Backcountry Camping Areas at Assateague Island National Seashore**

## **OMB Control Number XXXX**

### **A. Justification**

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

From the Organic Act of 1916 to enabling legislation for specific parks, the National Park Service (NPS) has received a viable Congressional mandate for collecting information to assist in the management of national parks, monuments, and historic sites. Specifically, 16 U.S.C. 1 through 4 (NPS Organic Act of 1916) provides the authority for the Director of the NPS to manage the parks. Part 245 of the Department of the Interior Manual delegates to the Director of the NPS the Secretary of the Interior's authority to supervise, manage, and operate the National Park System. The National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-391, Section 202; 16 U.S.C. 5932) requires that units of the NPS be enhanced by the availability and utilization of a broad program of the highest quality science and information. The NPS *Management Policies 2006*, Section 8.11.1, further states that the NPS will facilitate social science studies that support the NPS mission by providing an understanding of park visitors and human interactions with park resources.

The proposed study provides information for use in identifying and evaluating alternatives for future management of an Oversand Vehicle (OSV) Zone and backcountry areas at Assateague Island National Seashore. The purpose of this research is to provide park managers with information about the types and characteristics of visitors to the OSV zone and adjacent backcountry areas, attributes of the OSV zone important to the quality of visitor experience, and visitor attitudes regarding OSV management and resource protection practices. This information will inform an update of the park's 1982 General Management Plan (GMP). The 1982 GMP designated a "Traditional Recreation Subzone" in the park's Maryland District that is approximately 12 miles long and is to be managed for multiple uses, including oversand travel by properly equipped and permitted OSVs. The Traditional Recreation Subzone also includes a small area for overnight accommodation of self-contained OSVs and two hike-in, beachfront primitive backcountry campgrounds.

To inform the update of the GMP, the proposed study includes two components. The first focuses on OSV permit holders utilizing the Traditional Recreation Subzone. The second targets backcountry campers and hikers who also use the Traditional Recreation Subzone.

Two information collections are planned:

- Mailback surveys of 500 randomly selected OSV permit holders from 2009. The survey will also be made available online to OSV permit holders using a unique identification

password. The survey will include questions about OSV user demographics, the frequency, patterns and type of OSV use, factors influencing visitor experiences (both positive and negative), and user attitudes regarding the impacts of current and potential future OSV management and resource protection practices. This research is proposed for the summer of 2010.

- Mailback surveys of 330 randomly selected backcountry permit holders from 2009. The survey will also be available online using a unique identification password. The survey will include questions about backcountry user demographics, the frequency, patterns, and type of backcountry use, factors influencing visitor experiences (both positive and negative), and user attitudes regarding the impacts of current and potential future OSV management and resource protection practices of the backcountry areas. This research is proposed for the summer of 2010.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. [Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.]

The results of the two information collections will be used by Assateague Island National Seashore management to assist in the General Management Plan revision process by providing information about uses and indicators of quality relevant to future management of the OSV zone and backcountry area at Assateague Island National Seashore.

The proposed surveys are informed by qualitative research conducted in fall 2007 (OMB control # 1024-0224, NPS: 07-035). In addition, prior research and discussions with park management, university professors, and research staff from the Eppley Institute informed the design and format of specific questions. Defenders of Wildlife, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Assateague Mobil Sport Fisherman Association were given drafts of the survey and the opportunity to provided comments for the Eppley Institute to consider. Of these groups, Assateague Mobil Sport Fisherman Association provided comments.

Table A1. Justification for Oversand Vehicle Permit Holder Questions.

Questions	Justification
Section A—Trip Characteristics (Questions 1-15)	Questions in this section provide important information describing the trip characteristics of visitors who purchase OSV permits. Knowledge of frequency of visits, lengths of stay, and areas visited improves understanding of variability in responses to questions about management preferences.
Section B—Visitor Experiences (Questions 16-23)	Questions in this section identify the resource and experience preferences, activities, and trip motives that are perceived as most important by OSV users. Knowledge of visitors' preferences and motives improves park planning for resource protection and appropriate, enjoyable recreational use.
Section C—Management Issues (Questions 24-30)	These questions identify problems experienced by OSV users and their preferences for alternative management responses to these. Many of these issues were identified by visitors in earlier qualitative research. This input is fundamental to the General Management

	Planning process.
Section D—Visitor Characteristics (Questions 31- 41)	Questions in this section describe the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of visitors who purchase OSV permits. Knowledge of who visitors are improves understanding of variability in responses to questions about management preferences.

Because the backcountry user questionnaire is very similar to the OSV Zone survey instrument, question justifications are also similar. These are summarized in Table A2.

Table A2. Justification for Backcountry User Survey Questions.

Questions	Justification
Section A—Trip Characteristics (Questions 1-10)	Questions in this section provide important information describing the trip characteristics of visitors to the backcountry of Assateague Island National Seashore. Knowledge of frequency of visits, lengths of stay, and areas visited improves understanding of variability in responses to questions about management preferences.
Section B—Visitor Experiences (Questions 11-17)	Questions in this section identify the resource and experience preferences, activities, and trip motives that are perceived as most important by backcountry users. Knowledge of visitors' preferences and motives improves park planning for resource protection and appropriate, enjoyable recreational use.
Section C—Management Issues (Questions 18-22)	These questions identify problems experienced by backcountry visitors and their preferences for alternative management responses to these. Many of these issues were identified by visitors in earlier qualitative research. This input is fundamental to the General Management Planning process.
Section D—Visitor Characteristics (Questions 23- 33)	Questions in this section describe the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of visitors who obtained backcountry permits. Knowledge of who visitors are improves understanding of variability in responses to questions about management preferences.

**3.** Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

Data will be collected using a standardized mail survey instrument. To maximize the response rate and make it easier for participants to complete the survey, we are offering the option to complete the survey online. The surveys will be posted on Survey Monkey. Survey Monkey is an online survey generator licensed to the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands. The mailback survey will provide respondents with a URL that will provide access directly to the online survey instrument requiring a unique identifier to log in and complete the survey. Approximately 10% of respondents are expected to respond electronically.

**4.** Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The questions in the survey instruments address specific knowledge needs related to the effects of oversand vehicle and backcountry use on the quality of visitor experiences in Assateague Island National Seashore. Assateague Island has no current quantitative information about these user groups, their experiences and/or quality indicators, or tolerance for changes to management of these areas. The only other data collection effort relating to OSV and backcountry use was the 2007 interview pre-testing that was used to inform the design of these final survey instruments.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

This collection will not impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

Should these data not be collected, management policy decisions would be made without input from visitors about their experiences or concerns regarding the OSV zone or backcountry areas of ASIS. This could result in a less accurate analysis of the impacts of OSV management in the park. Any changes to the GMP without considering systematic input from visitors would be inconsistent with the Record of Decision (2003), potentially resulting in legal action against the park.

The two populations of permit holders to be surveyed are relatively small. The planned sample sizes for each group represent a trade-off between public burden and the minimum number of respondents needed to produce estimates that are sufficiently reliable to meet park needs. Restricting the proposed sample sizes further would risk compromising the significance and reliability of the information collected.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:
  - \*requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;
  - \*requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
  - \*requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
  - \*requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;
  - \*in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
  - \*requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
  - \*that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
  - \*requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

These circumstances are not applicable to this collection of data. These collections consist of one-time surveys, so frequency of reporting, preparation of submission of documents, retaining of records, and revealing of trade secrets do not apply in any way.

**8.** If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice [and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years] and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

The NPS published a 60-day notice to solicit public comments on this visitor survey in the Federal Register on February 8, 2008 (Vol. 73, No. 34, Page 9354– 9355). The comment period closed on April 21, 2008. After multiple notifications to stakeholders requesting comments, the NPS received 43 comments as a result of the publication of the 60-day Federal Register notice.

The majority of comments related to possible management actions the NPS might take, but did not relate to the need for the information collection or the burden of the collection. Three commenters requested a copy of the draft survey instruments. Copies were sent to each of the parties requesting them. Respondents expressed opinions about how the OSV zone in the park should be managed, but they did not specifically comment on the proposed survey. The Defenders of Wildlife and the Center for Biological Diversity sent a joint set of comments. Some of these comments included specific thoughts regarding the proposed survey. Other concerned the current management of the Oversand Vehicle Zone. As a result, the Defenders of Wildlife and the Center for Biological Diversity, along with the Assateague Mobil Sport Fishermen's Association, were invited to comment on the content and wording of the draft questionnaires. The Defenders of Wildlife and the Center for Biological Diversity declined to provide additional comments. The Assateague Mobil Sport Fishermen Association did provide additional feedback, including recommendations for wording changes in some questions, along with guidance to make sure the information collected was relevant to issues surrounding the OSV zone. There were also concerns that a particular area of the OSV Zone was being targeted in a number of the questions. The surveys were modified as a result of these comments.

**9.** Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts will be provided to respondents.

**10.** Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality will be provided to respondents, because the Department of the Interior does not have the statutory authority to protect confidentiality or to exempt the survey from a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Instead, those who inquire about this issue will be told that their answers will be used only for statistical purposes. They will also be told that reports prepared from this study will summarize findings across the sample so that responses will not be associated with any specific individuals. Respondents will be informed further that the researchers will not provide information that identifies respondents to anyone outside the study team, except as law requires.

Participants' names and addresses are assigned a number that becomes the respondent ID number. The ID number is placed on the questionnaire and respondents are told not to place their name on the questionnaire. When a questionnaire is returned, the ID number can be used to record the return of the questionnaire and end the mailing out of any further reminders. The ID number is entered with the responses to the questionnaire in a separate data file. Once data collection is complete, the link between names/addresses and data will be destroyed. Data are stored on Eppley Institute's secure server. No one other than members of the research team will have access to the names and addresses. All contact information files will be destroyed at the end of the survey; thus, final data will be anonymous.

- 11.** Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked. In addition, respondents are advised that their answers are voluntary.

- 12.** Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

\*Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.

\*If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.

\*Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.

Table A3. Projected Number of Respondents, Completion Times, and Burden Hours for the ASIS Oversand Vehicle Permit Holder Survey.

<b>Instrument Oversand Vehicle Users</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>	<b>Completion Time</b>	<b>Burden Hours</b>
Mail Survey to Visitors (initial contact)	500	1	3 min.	25 hrs.
Responses to mail-survey	350	1	15 min.	88 hrs.
<b>TOTAL</b>				113 hours

Table A4. Projected Number of Respondents, Completion Times, and Burden Hours for the ASIA Backcountry Permit Holder Survey

<b>Instrument Backcountry Area Users</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>	<b>Completion Time</b>	<b>Burden Hours</b>
Mail Survey to Visitors (initial contact)	330	1	3 min	17 hrs.
Responses to mail-survey	230	1	10 min.	38 hrs.
<b>TOTAL</b>				55 hours

Table A5. Projected Number of Respondents, Completion Times, and Burden Hours for the Non-respondent Bias Survey

<b>Instrument Non-respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>Frequency of Response</b>	<b>Completion Time</b>	<b>Burden Hours</b>
Phone survey of non-respondents	40	1	5 min	3 hrs.

The burden estimate is based on 9 pre-tests of the surveys with individuals from the study population. There are a total of 830 potential respondents who will be contacted to participate in this study. The burden associated with the mailings that these individuals will receive is 3 minutes, resulting in a total burden of 42 hours for both surveys combined. Assuming a 70% response rate, there will be a total of 580 respondents. Based on the pre-tests, the burden associated with completing the OSV survey is 15 minutes. The respondent burden for the OSV study is 88 hours (350 respondents to a 15-minute survey). Based on the pre-tests, the burden associated with completing the backcountry survey is 10 minutes. The respondent burden for the backcountry survey is 38 hours (230 respondents to a 10-minute survey). In addition, up 40 nonrespondents (20 from each sample) will be contacted and asked to complete a short 2-question interview for use in a non-response bias analysis. The respondent burden for this survey is 3 hours (40 respondents to a 5 minute survey). The total burden for all respondents and non-respondents is 171 hours. The March 2010 report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics national compensation survey lists an average hourly wage of \$27.42 (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf>). Within this hourly figure, \$19.41 is accounted for in hourly wages and salaries and \$8.00 in benefits. Thus, for both surveys combined, the estimated annualized cost to respondents for the hour burden is \$3,319.11.

**13.** Provide an estimate of the total annual [non-hour] cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).

- \* The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information [including filing fees paid]. Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.
- \* If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.
- \* Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.

The cost burden on respondents and record-keepers, other than hour burden, is zero.

**14.** Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The NPS estimates that the annualized cost to the agency is \$10,644. This a one-time cost. The costs include researcher salaries and benefits, contract services, supplies and printing, communications, and indirect costs.

Expense category	Cost
Labor plus overhead	\$9,124
Printing	\$625
Postage	\$895
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,644</b>

**15.** Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

This is a new one-time collection. No adjustments are involved.

**16.** For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

Park managers stated the need for having reliable data for the different user groups of the oversand vehicle zone and backcountry area to facilitate their ability to manage the areas for these different visitor populations. Thus, survey findings will be tabulated separately for each user group. Survey responses will be analyzed to determine baseline data on users of the Oversand Vehicle Zone and other backcountry areas including the types, frequency and patterns of use; to identify potential standards of quality for maintaining the desired visitor experience; and to determine visitor attitudes towards existing and potential alternative OSV management and resource protection practices.

The target date to begin the mail surveys is mid-July 2010. Mail survey follow-up mailings will be completed during early fall of 2010. Data analysis and preparation of the draft report will continue until November 2010. Following review of the draft by NPS, the final report will be submitted in December 2010.

**17.** If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

We are not seeking such approval.

**18.** Explain each exception to the certification statement.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.