

Attachment B: BACKCOUNTRY USER SURVEY

Dear Assateague Island National Seashore Visitor,

This study will develop information about use patterns and expectations and preferences of visitors to the backcountry of Assateague Island National Seashore. The results will assist in the upcoming General Management Planning process by providing information that will inform decision-making about the future management of the Oversand Vehicle Zone and backcountry areas at the National Seashore.

You are one of a select number of park visitors sampled, and your opinions are very important to the success of this project. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete, and your answers are completely voluntary.

Reports from this study will summarize findings across all responses so that individual answers will not be associated with you in any way. Your contact information is kept only so we can record who has returned a survey. After the survey is completed, all contact information will be destroyed.

After you have finished the survey, please put it in the enclosed postage- paid envelope and place it in any U.S. mailbox. Or, if you prefer, you can access the survey online at:

www.XXXXX.

Your user name: XXX

Password: XXXX

Thank you for your time and cooperation in completing the survey. If you have any questions, please contact Jeff Bransford, Eppley Institute at Indiana University, 501 N. Morton St., Suite 101, Bloomington, IN 47404; (812) 856-3870.

Sincerely,

Trish Kicklighter, Superintendent
Assateague Island National Seashore

A. BACKCOUNTRY USERS

1. **About how many Assateague Island National Seashore backcountry permits have you purchased in the last 10 years?**

_____ # permits

2. **In a typical year, how often do you use the backcountry area in Assateague Island National Seashore?**

_____ Once a year

_____ 2 – 5 times a year

_____ 6 – 10 times a year

_____ 11 – 20 times a year

_____ 21 – 49 times a year

_____ 50 or more times a year

3. **How much time do you typically spend in the backcountry during a visit? (Check one only)**

_____ Number of **hours**, if less than 24 hours

OR

_____ Number of **days**, if 24 hours or more

4. **Who do you usually use the backcountry with? (Please check only one.)**

_____ Alone

_____ With family

_____ With friends

_____ With family and friends

_____ With an organized group

5. **What day(s) of the week do you prefer to use the backcountry?**

_____ Weekdays (Monday – Thursday)

_____ Weekends (Friday – Sunday)

_____ No preference

6. **What percentage of your visits in the last 12 months occurred during the following seasons?**

_____ May through August

_____ September through January

_____ February through April

(Total must equal 100%)

7. Where do you most frequently go in the backcountry? Please check only one.

- Tingles Island Campground (Bayside)
- Little Levels Campground (Oceanside)
- Pine Tree Campground (Bayside)
- Pope Bay Campground (Bayside)
- State Line Campground (Oceanside)
- Ocean beach
- Bayside waterways
- Varies by trip
- Other. Please describe: _____

8. On a typical visit to Assateague Island National Seashore, do you stay overnight?

- Yes → Go to Question 8a.
- No → Skip to Question 9.

8a. If yes, where do you usually stay? Please check only one.

- National Park Service campground
- State park campground
- Private campground
- Local hotel or motel
- Stay with family or friends
- Other _____

9. If you use the backcountry campgrounds, about how many nights per year do you typically stay?

_____ # nights

10. Do you generally have a dog with you in the backcountry area?

- Yes
- No

B. VISITOR EXPERIENCE

11. Which characteristics of Assateague Island National Seashore are most important to the quality of your backcountry experience? Please check your top 5.

- Natural beach and landscape
- Clean water / pristine ocean
- Beach life (shells, crabs, etc.)
- Wildlife (horses, deer, fox, etc.)
- Natural views
- Clean air
- Sand dunes
- Bay sea life (sea grasses, clams, mussels, etc.)
- Bird life (shore birds, gulls, raptors, etc.)
- Natural sounds and quiet
- Ocean sea life (dolphins, fish, etc.)
- Starry night skies
- Clean beach
- Natural vegetation and plant life
- Solitude
- Other. Please describe _____

12. Which recreational activities and/or opportunities are most important to your backcountry experience? Please check your top 5.

- Sightseeing
- Camping
- Beach driving
- Swimming / boogie boarding
- Stargazing
- Fishing
- Surfing
- Birdwatching
- Sunbathing
- Viewing wildlife
- Barbecuing / beach fires
- Photography
- Duck hunting
- Clamming
- Kite surfing
- Relaxing
- Deer hunting
- Gathering with family / friends

- Kayaking / canoeing
- Beachcombing
- Partying
- Other. Please describe _____

13. Which factor MOST influences where you choose to spend your time in the backcountry area? (Please check ONE only.)

- Crowding
- Fishing opportunities
- Natural views
- Paddling distance
- Hunting opportunities
- Availability of restroom facilities
- Hiking distance
- Solitude
- Wildlife viewing opportunities
- Sight of off-road vehicles
- Noise from off-road vehicles
- Noise from motorized vessels
- Sight of motorized vessels
- Campsite locations
- Safety
- Other. Please describe _____

14. Which of the following, if any, have been a problem for you during your backcountry experience? (Please check your top 5.)

- I haven't experienced any problems → Skip to Question 15.
- Overcrowding
- Motorized boats
- Trash and litter
- Bad behavior by others
- Waiting in line at park entrance station
- Cost of permit
- Pets off leash
- Too many vehicles on beach
- Closures to protect safety due to storms and high tides
- Poorly maintained restroom facilities
- Difficulty landing at campsites
- Fishermen and fishing lines
- Camping restrictions
- Difficulty finding campsites by boat
- Conflicts with other user groups
- Closures to protect plants and wildlife
- Not enough information to plan trip

- Hunting activity
- Noise from off-road vehicles and vessels
- Other. Please describe _____

15. The Assateague Island backcountry, which includes all the area south of the developed area, is designated for different types of recreation, including oversand vehicle use, backcountry camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, and other uses. In the last 12 months have you experienced a problem of any kind with one of these users?

- Yes → Go to Question 15a.
- No → Skip to Question 16.

15a. Please describe. _____

16. Please place a check next to your primary reason for using the backcountry. (Check only one.)

- Spend time with family and friends
- Experience peace and quiet
- Get away from beach crowds
- See and experience nature
- Physical and mental challenges
- Get away from demands of daily life
- Continue traditions
- Thrills and excitement
- Relaxation
- Experience a sense of personal freedom
- Other. Please describe _____

17. How important is the protection of the following attributes at Assateague Island National Seashore to you? Please circle one response for each attribute.

Attribute	Importance				
	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A lot	No Opinion
History & culture of Assateague	1	2	3	4	5
Undisturbed wild areas	1	2	3	4	5
Natural barrier island conditions and processes	1	2	3	4	5
Natural wildlife and plant communities	1	2	3	4	5
Rare species and their habitats	1	2	3	4	5
Natural landscapes and ocean views	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunities for use and enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5

C. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

18. Assateague Island National Seashore managers are considering different options for managing access to the Oversand Vehicle Zone. The following are possible alternatives under consideration. For each one, please circle your level of support or opposition.

Alternative	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Raise cost of camping permit fee by up to 50% for the Bullpen	1	2	3	4	5
Limit number of overnight users in the Bullpen	1	2	3	4	5
Increase OSV permit fee by up to 25%	1	2	3	4	5
Require reservations for overnight camping in the Bullpen	1	2	3	4	5
Continue to manage OSV use as is currently done	1	2	3	4	5
Charge a \$5 separate nightly overnight camping fee in the Bullpen	1	2	3	4	5
Eliminate all overnight camping in the Bullpen	1	2	3	4	5
Limit the number of nights per year an individual can camp in the Bullpen	1	2	3	4	5
Increase the number of vehicles allowed on the Oversand Vehicle Zone	1	2	3	4	5

19. In your opinion, enforcement of rules and regulations in the backcountry by the National Park Service is: (Check only one.)

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent
- Don't Know

19a. If poor or fair, please describe the needed improvements: _____

20. During the past 12 months, how many times have you observed the following violations of the rules and regulations in the backcountry of Assateague Island? Please circle one response for each violation.

Violation Type	Number of Times		
	0	1-2	3 or more
Dogs off leash	0	1-2	3 or more
Excessive vehicle speed	0	1-2	3 or more
Driving outside Oversand Vehicle Zone	0	1-2	3 or more
Littering	0	1-2	3 or more
Use of a metal detector	0	1-2	3 or more
Feeding wildlife	0	1-2	3 or more
Destruction of plants or animals	0	1-2	3 or more
Illegal overnight camping	0	1-2	3 or more
Un-permitted vehicles in the Oversand Vehicle Zone	0	1-2	3 or more
Illegal fishing (size, species, etc.)	0	1-2	3 or more
Other _____	0	1-2	3 or more

21. For each of the following topics, please circle your level of agreement or disagreement.

Topic	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Support nor Oppose	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The current backcountry regulations/limits are necessary and adequate.	1	2	3	4	5
The current number of backcountry campsites is adequate .	1	2	3	4	5
The number of backcountry campsites should be increased.	1	2	3	4	5
The number of first-come/first-served sites in the backcountry should be increased.	1	2	3	4	5
The location of the campsites should be better marked to improve access from the water.	1	2	3	4	5
Motorized vehicles and vessels should not be allowed near backcountry campsites.	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate information about backcountry use is readily available.	1	2	3	4	5
Seasonal closures of the backcountry should be used to protect natural resources.	1	2	3	4	5
More ranger patrols should be provided to inform and educate visitors and enforce rules.	1	2	3	4	5

Motorized vehicles/vessels should not be allowed anywhere in the backcountry.	1	2	3	4	5
Backcountry camping permit fees are fair.	1	2	3	4	5
The number of multiple recreation uses (hunting, camping, oversand vehicles) allowed in the backcountry should be reduced or limited.	1	2	3	4	5
The overall size of the Oversand Vehicle Zone should be reduced.	1	2	3	4	5

22. Please rate your overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with your backcountry experience(s) during the past 12 months.

- Highly satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Highly unsatisfied

D. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: Please provide the following:

23. Do you live in the United States?

- Yes (What is your Zip Code? _____)
- No (What country do you live in? _____)

24. What is your age? _____

25. What is your gender? Male Female

26. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin? Yes No

27. What is your race? (Please check one or more.)

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native

28. On a typical trip, how many children do you have in each of the following age ranges that go backcountry camping with you?

- # 0 – 5 years old
- # 6 – 10 years old
- # 11 – 13 years old
- # 14 – 18 years old

29. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Check only one.)

- Some high school
- High school graduate or GED
- Trade/vocational school certificate
- Some college
- College graduate
- Post-graduate degree

30. On a typical trip to Assateague Island, does anyone in your group have a physical condition that makes it difficult to access or participate in Seashore activities or services? Yes No

If yes, what services or activities did the person have difficulty with?

31. Do you currently belong to any of the following types of organizations? (Please check all that apply.)

- Environmental advocacy or conservation organizations
- Hunting or fishing organizations
- Off-road vehicle users organizations
- Other recreational organizations (camping, hiking, etc.)

32. Which category best represents your annual household income?

- Less than \$24,999**
- \$25,000-\$34,999**
- \$35,000-\$49,999**
- \$50,000-\$74,999**
- \$75,000-\$99,999**
- \$100,000-149,999**
- \$150,000-\$199,999**
- \$200,000 or more**

33. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Assateague Island National Seashore? _____

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. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. Your name is kept for follow-up mailing purposes only. When analysis of the questionnaire is completed, all name and address files will be destroyed. Thus the permanent data will be anonymous. Please do not put your name or that of any member of your group on the questionnaire. 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.

OMB #:

Expiration Date:

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:

Carl Zimmerman, Chief of Resource Protection, Assateague Island National Seashore,
carl_zimmerman@nps.gov, (410) 629-6071