

**1 Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission:
Part A**

National Park Service Visitor Survey Card

Renewal of a Currently Approved Collection

OMB Control Number: 1024-0216

Expiration Date: November 30, 2010

Terms of Clearance:

“This ICR was approved for 18 months for NPS to evaluate the current collection methods and to improve them so that the data collected would be suitable to be used for GPRA and other program evaluation purposes. The average response rates achieved for the Visitor Survey Card ICR are approximately 25%. The agency has not demonstrated that the corresponding non-response bias is not significant. Since other NPS visitor surveys achieve much higher response rates, the low response rates for this survey should be improved. Within three months of approval of this ICR, the agency must submit to OMB a study plan that NPS will undertake to evaluate and improve the current collection methods, including a non-response bias assessment plan.

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Response: On March 20, 2010, we submitted a study plan to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as a response to terms of clearance listed above (attached in ROCIS as a supplementary document). The NPS prepared four alternatives to improve response rates to address the issue of non-response bias analysis. At this point the NPS has added on-site drop boxes as a return option for the respondents; this option has been used with a similar survey conducted by the Bureau of Land Management with a response rate of at least 60%. Secondly, a non-response bias analysis will be conducted by surveying a stratified random sample of respondents at approximately 33 of the parks annually (10% sampling error at 90% confidence level). At these 33 units, every contact will be asked their age, the overall satisfaction question from the VSC survey and their gender will be observed. Findings from non-respondents will be compared to respondents to check for significant differences. If no significant differences are found, the probability of non-response bias is reduced. If differences are detected, actions to improve response rates will be implemented in future years.

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.**

Because the National Park Service (NPS) has the overall federal responsibility of managing visitor service programs that assist in preserving national parks for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations, up-to-date information is necessary to assist with park management and planning. To assist in carrying out these responsibilities, the Visitor Survey Card (VSC) is administered annually by the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho. The authorizations for carrying out this survey are:

- National Park Service Act of 1916, 38 Stat 535, 16 USC 1, et seq.;
- National Environmental Policy Act, 1969; and
- The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62). This collection has been designed and maintained to provide information to NPS managers concerning GPRA goals IIa1 and IIb1:

IIa: Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services and appropriate recreational opportunities

IIb: Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations

- 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 Visitor Services Project, part of the National Park Service Social Science Program, uses the VSC to provide park managers with scientifically accurate data about visitors. The studies answer questions about visitors: who they are, what they do, what they need, and what their opinions are. Parks use the results to improve visitor services and facilities. Local businesses also use the data to determine how visitors are contributing to the area economy, and to discover new markets.

Use of Information

Data from this collection has been used for more than 20 years by NPS managers to assist them in developing long-term and annual goals. The results of the VSC have been used by park managers to assess visitor services at more than 330 units where the survey has been

administered. The Service, in cooperation with the Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho, has been conducting customer satisfaction surveys at various NPS units since 1982, with the objective of using the data to improve service to park visitors. The twelve activities included and rated in the visitor services survey include: park personnel, visitor centers, directional signs, restrooms, campgrounds, picnic areas, ranger led/conducted programs, exhibits, park brochures, lodging, food services and gift shops. These functions serve as viable indicators of NPS performance in serving its primary customers, park visitors. The trend data provided by the survey are the basis for annual performance targets. Because regular surveys are needed by park managers to better manage the visitor experience, the NPS adopted the Visitor Survey Card as a means for assessing visitor satisfaction at all of the parks rather than just a few each year. The better-than-expected results from previous surveys are the basis for the continuation of the project. The visitor service project surveys will continue to collect in-depth visitor information to gauge visitor use trends, and determine the current visitor needs.

Question Justification

The Visitor Survey Card contains 17 questions. Twelve questions are grouped into the following three categories: *park facilities visitor services*, and *recreational opportunities*. These questions are followed by two demographic questions, two open-ended questions, and an “overall satisfaction” question,

Park facilities

There are five items in this category that ask visitors to rate the following park facilities:

- Visitor center
- Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)
- Restrooms
- Walkways, trails, and roads
- Campgrounds and/or picnic areas.

These variables are rated on a five-point scale ranging from “very good” to “very poor,” with an “average” mid-point. A “not used or not available” option is included because not all parks have all facilities. Parks have used these ratings to indicate potential areas of concern with facilities. This information is needed to more effectively assess the condition of facilities which allows the NPS to better manage its facilities to reduce costs and improve visitor satisfaction and safety.

Visitor services

The five questions ask respondents to rate park services. A five-point scale and the “not available” option (listed above) is used to rate these questions. They include:

- Assistance from park employees
- Park map or brochure

- Ranger programs
- Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rentals, etc.)
- Value for entrance fee paid.

These services are considered essential to visitor orientation, education, and enjoyment. These ratings are used by park managers to improve the quality of services offered to visitors. The benefits derived from understanding visitor satisfaction about services offered within the park allowed park managers to continue justifying a wide range of services to encourage greater support by the visiting public. Park visitors are now provided with orientation services to ensure a safe and enjoyable visit while minimizing visitor related damages.

With more than 630 concessioner contracts and 418 permits operating in 132 parks meeting the visitor satisfaction goal requires the development of contracting authorizations based on planning documents, which include terms and conditions, operating standards, and maintenance requirements, and the use of various operational programs. The concession program uses the visitor survey card to determine both visitor satisfaction levels and identifying areas of improvement.

Recreational opportunities

The two questions in this category are asked to encompass the range of cultural and natural resource-based recreation experiences provided in parks. These items use the same five-point response scale and also include “not used or not available” as a response option. The experiences include:

- Learning about nature, history, or culture
- Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)

Parks have used these ratings to determine if visitors are satisfied with the kinds of recreational experiences available to them in a park. Tracking these ratings over time indicates if visitors think the opportunity for these experiences is increasing or diminishing.

An additional question measures performance on GPRA goal IIa1. Using the same “very good” to “very poor” response scale, visitors are able to rate the “overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.” This data is reported for each park and for the National Park System as a whole.

Two demographic questions have been added to the instrument in order to assess potential non-response bias. These questions are gender and age of the respondent. A modified open-ended question will be used to ask the respondents to:

Name two special things about this park that made it significant enough to be added to the National Park System.

This question has been used to measure performance for GPRA goal IIb1. Answers to this question are organized and scored based on the number of visitors correctly noting one of the five significance items reported by the park as a reason for the designation of the park. This is then divided by the total number of visitors answering the question. This average is then reported by the parks as part of the GPRA requirement to educate visitors on the park's significance.

Finally, an open-ended question will be used to ask visitors if there is anything else they would like to tell the park about its facilities, services, or recreational opportunities. This question gives respondents a chance to comment on other aspects of their experience not previously covered.

- 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 [and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements].**

The visitor will have the option of mailing the survey back to the University of Idaho or using a designated surveys drop-box. No automated data collection will take place.

- 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.**

There are no other comparable sources of reliable data on visitor satisfaction on a park by park basis that we can adapt to satisfy the requirements of GPRA and the DOI Strategic Plan. Without this survey, the NPS will have to acquire the data at greater expense and delay or use outdated and inconsistent data where available.

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

The proposed data collection does 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.**

This survey is administered to more than 100,000 visitors over 300 national park sites. This opportunity does not occur using any other form at any other time providing results on an annual basis. This survey has become an integral component of NPS management and operations.

This request correlates with the goal in the NPS and Department of the Interior's Strategic Plans used to measure specific GPRA Goals IIA1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIB1 (visitor understanding and appreciation) and complies with P.L. 103-62. Visitor responses are used, by park managers, to compare to the significance statements identified in the park's GPRA plans. Without this survey park managers will not have rapid response to fundamental research needed to meet their management goals that are linked to decision making.

- 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.**

There are no circumstances that require us to collect the information in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

- 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. [Please list the names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of persons contacted.]

The NPS published a 60-day Federal Register Notice on July 20, 2010 (75 FR 42116). We received a comment from one individual who objected to the use of the national parks for hunting, and related recreational uses. The commenter did not address the necessity, clarity, or accuracy of the information collection, but suggested that we seek input concerning her objections to hunting inside the park boundaries. The proposed survey will include a representative sample of all visitors to the park. We did not make any changes to our information collection based on this comment.

In addition to our Federal Register notice, we solicited comments from potential survey respondents to obtain their views on the clarity of the questions and the estimated burden time to complete the survey. We incorporated their suggestions and comments concerning grammatical edits in the final survey. The individuals contacted are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Individuals Contacted

<p>Contact #1 Nancy Holmes P.O. Box 8981 Moscow, ID 83843 208-883-4918</p>	<p>Contact #2 Will Boyd P.O. Box 8605 Moscow, ID 83843 208-301-4737</p>	<p>Contact #3 Cyndi Jette 928 West C Moscow, ID 83843 208-310-9909</p>
<p>Contact #4 Lourana Swayne 315 N. Almon Moscow, ID 83843 208-882-4230</p>	<p>Contact #5 Judy Kunth-Folts P.O. Box 168 Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190-0168 307-344-2255</p>	

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.

We will ask respondents questions about the type of recreation activities they engage in, but will not collect any personal identifying information. We will aggregate all information collected and use it only for statistical purposes. No assurance of confidentiality will be provided to respondents.

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.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

We estimate that the total burden for this collection will be 4,400 hours. Our estimate is based upon our own experience with previous iterations of this collection plus the outreach described in item 8. For this collection we have considered the time to contact the visitors, and for each respondent to read and complete the survey.

At a random sample of 33 parks a non-response bias check will be conducted where 13,200 visitors will be asked 2 verbal questions. The verbal questions will take 2 minutes to listen to and respond (totaling 440 burden hours).

We estimate the total annual dollar value of the burden hours will be \$120,296. The hour cost is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) news release USDL-10-1241 of September 8, 2010, to obtain the individual/household average hourly wage using the average full compensation per hour including benefits for private industry (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf>). According to this news release, the private industry hourly wage is \$27.34, (average hourly wage is \$19.53 multiplied by 1.4 to account for benefits). We used this information to calculate the value of respondent burden hours.

The projected number of respondents and the estimated burden for the VSC are indicated in the table 2 below.

Table 2. Estimated Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours

Intercepted Visitors at 297 NPS sites	Annual Number of Responses	Estimated Completion Time per Response	Total Annual Burden Hours	Dollar Value of Burden Hour Including Benefits	Total Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours*
Initial contact	118,800	1 minute	1,980	\$27.34	\$54,133
Visitors completing the survey (responses)	35,640	3 minutes	1,782	\$27.34	\$48,720
Intercepted Visitors at 33 NPS sites	Annual Number of Responses	Estimated Completion Time per Response	Total Annual Burden Hours	Dollar Value of Burden Hour Including Benefits	Total Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours*
Initial contact	13,200	2 minutes	440	\$27.34	\$12,030

Visitors completing the survey (responses)	3,960	3 minutes	198	\$27.34	\$5,413
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TOTAL			4,400		\$120,296
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* Total is rounded

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual [non-hour] cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information

There is no non-hour cost burden to respondents or record-keepers associated with this collection.

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 total estimated cost to the Federal Government for collecting data, analyzing result and preparing reports as a result of this collection of information is \$211,550. This includes non-federal FTE, travel, equipment and operating costs associated with this information collection (Table 3).

The VSC is a component of the Visitors Services Project, which is funded by the NPS through a cooperative agreement with the Park Studies Unit at the University of Idaho. The non-Federal FTE and expenses listed in Table 4 below are included in the tasks associated with the agreement.

Table 3. Costs associated with this information collection

Expense	Annual Cost
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Non-federal Personnel FTE	
Research Scientist	\$54,000
Technical Reports Specialist	\$7,505
Part--time Assistant	\$3,968
Travel	\$6,000
Operating Expenses	
Printing/Shipping materials	\$34,339
Equipment	\$5,000
Miscellaneous (VISA subcontract)	\$70,000
SUBTOTAL	\$180,812
Indirect Costs (17%)	\$30,738
TOTAL	\$211,550

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

We estimate that there will be an increase of 39,600 responses totaling a net increase of 933 burden hours. This program change is an increase from our previous request of 132,000 to 171,600. The increase represents the addition of new non-response survey to this collection, upon the recommendation of OMB (3/28/2011).

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

All survey forms will use a scantron bubble mark format. Returned cards will be electronically scanned and the data analyzed. Frequency distributions will be calculated for each indicator and category. All percentage calculations will be rounded to the nearest percent.

All survey results will be computed by the University of Idaho. Individual data reports will be created for each participating National Park. A separate System-wide Report will provide information for all participating sites. These reports will be produced in a printable PDF format and will have formats and tables similar to those of previous reports published by the University of Idaho. Copies of the reports will be archived with the National Park Service Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection, and will be available on the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit website www.psu.uidaho.edu.

Data collected from the verbal questions at non response bias check parks will be entered into an excel spreadsheet. Analysis will determine if a non response bias exists on a System-wide level. Results of this analysis will be provided to the National Park Service Social Science Program and OMB as a part of the terms of clearance. If bias exists, changes to the survey methodology may be implemented for year 2 with a repeat of the non-response bias check.

The sampling period each for year will begin in February and end in August. Reports are typically available by mid-October of each year.

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 will display the OMB control number and expiration date on appropriate materials.

18. Explain each exception to the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.