

To: Nathan Frey

Office of Management and Budgets

August 10, 2011

Re: Responses to OMB's Comments Concerning the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

Dear Sir:

Apologies for the short delay in responding to OMB's last round of comments concerning the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). We needed to confer with our technical team at the human dimensions research center that fields the NSRE for us. They were on vacation. Please see the answers to your questions, **in bold**, below. Some of this represents previous responses to comments and questions, left in for reference.

RDD Telephone Survey concerns:

We have significant concerns that it appears the survey is proposed as landline only, and does not include a cell phone frame. As more of the general population has begun to use cell phones, including those who have given up their landlines entirely, about 25 percent of all U.S. households are cell phone only (i.e. do not have a landline). Therefore, it is increasingly important to reach sampled persons on cell phone numbers in order to adequately cover the general population. In particular, young adults in the U.S. aged 18 to 34 years, can no longer be reached successfully via the landline frame. Thus, the inclusion of the cell phone frame to reach young adults and other demographic groups (e.g., renters and Hispanics) most likely to use cell phones, has become a necessity for telephone survey researchers.

There are cost implications of including a cell phone frame, of course. It's important to keep in mind that the cost of cell phone sampling must be considered within the context of optimizing the dual frame design. RDD cell phone samples in the U.S. are undertaken to improve coverage and to bring into the final sample proportionally members of groups that would (increasingly) be underrepresented in a RDD landline-only design; thereby enhancing the survey's face validity, as well as providing a more representative unweighted final sample. For more information, please see:

http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Cell_Phone_Task_Force&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=2818

After reviewing the information link you provided and in conferring with our sponsors, partners and the human dimensions research center, we will use a dual frame design using both land-line and cell

phone numbers for the NSRE. RDD sample for the NSRE telephone survey is drawn on a per-state basis. Future RDD samples will include landline RDD and wireless phone RDD sample drawn proportional to that state's reported percentage of wireless- phone-only households. *It is recognized that including a wireless phone RDD sample will result in an increase in costs, however the dual frame design will help to provide a more representative final sample.* State rates of wireless-phone-only households are reported by CDC and gathered through the CDC National Health Interview Survey.^[1]

Sample Size questions:

Please justify the sample size that is being proposed, in terms of your precision analysis. Specifically, what is the rationale for estimates that can measure the difference of +/- 3%, as indicated on p. 7 of Part B.

Data from the NSRE is widely used by state and federal agencies, among others, to examine participation rates and trends at the national, regional, state and within state levels. Hence, this sample size is needed to provide adequate sample sizes for the more geographically focused analyses (i.e., regional, state and within state).

Part B, p. 14, section h: What additional sample weight is being constructed to account for refusals having a higher rate of non-participation in outdoor recreation than those that respond to the full survey?

An additional sample weight will be constructed as the ratio of respondents'-to-refusers' participation rates. Ratios will be calculated for 10 age x gender strata because analysis of past NSRE data has shown participation rates to be different among these strata. These weighting ratios will be applied to the full survey.

NSRE 2011 Survey:

1. On the 1st page (Introductory Screens), when discussing confidentiality, either
 - a) Indicate that information will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law, or
 - b) Use wording regarding the intended use, similar to the wording used in Part A, #10, p. 18.

Survey has been changed to state: "that information will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law."

2. Q594, "So that I may complete my report on calls I make, can I ask you two quick questions?" We suggest rewording this to something similar to, "So that I may complete my report on calls I make, I have two quick questions to ask you." This reduces the opportunity for the respondent to break off midway through the survey (the same logic would apply to any other similarly worded questions throughout the survey as well).

Survey has been changed to state: "So that I may complete my report on calls I make, I have two quick questions to ask you."

3. Demographic questions: What is the specific use of the detailed race and ethnicity information that is being requested?

In conferring with our sponsors and partners, we have decided to remove the more detailed race and ethnicity questions.

4. The statement that respondents may select more than one race in the race question must be read. The current text of the race question reads, "What race or races do you consider yourself to be? *<respondents may select more than one race>*" We suggest that the question be reworded as follows, or something similar, "What race or races do you consider yourself to be? You may choose one or more of the following."

Survey has been changed to state: "What race or races do you consider yourself to be? You may choose one or more of the following."

We appreciate the time and effort of the OMB personnel to review the NSRE. If you have any further questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Dr. H. Ken Cordell, USDA FS,
Pioneering Research Scientist
Southern Research Station