



Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

1. **Project Title** | City of Rocks (CIRO) National Reserve Visitor Study (VSP) | **Submission Date:** May 29, 2008

2. **Abstract:** The last Visitor Services Project (VSP) survey was done in 1991 and the data needs to be updated. CIRO has just begun General Management Planning efforts. CIRO has traditionally attracted a larger number of visitors who come primarily to experience climbing opportunities. With a new full-service campground and other lodging facilities being built adjacent to the park, it is expected that the audiences will grow and diversify. A visitor study will provide information about changes in visitor demographics and expectations since 1991.
The mail-back questionnaire in this visitor study is designed to systematically collect data from visitors, including individual characteristics, trip/visit characteristics, individual activities, individual evaluation of park services/facilities, individual perceptions of their park experiences and individual opinions on park management. Park visitors will be randomly selected to participate in the study as they visit the park at selected locations during an 11-day period from September 7-17, 2008.

3. **Principal Investigator Contact Information**

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4. **Park or Program Liaison Contact Information**

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Title: Superintendent
Park: City of Rocks National Reserve
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Project Information

5. **Park Where Research is to be Conducted:**

6. **Survey Dates:** (mm/dd/yyyy) to (mm/dd/yyyy)

7. **Type of Information Collection Instrument (Check ALL that Apply)**

- Mail-Back Questionnaire** **On-Site Questionnaire** **Face-to-Face Interview** **Telephone Survey** **Focus Groups**

Other (explain)

8. **Survey Justification: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)**

Legal Justification: The National Park Service Act of 1916, 38 Stat 535, 16 USC 1, et seq., requires that the National Park Service (NPS) preserve the national parks for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. At the field level, this means resource preservation, public education, facility maintenance and operation, and physical developments that are necessary for public use, health, and safety. Allocation of funding is to be roughly in proportion to the seasonally adjusted volume of use (P. L. 88-578, Sect. 6) and in consideration of visitor characteristics and activities for determining carrying capacity (92 Stat. 3467; P. L. 95-625, Sect. 604 11/10/78). Other federal rules (National Environmental Policy Act, 1969 and NPS guidelines) require visitor use data in impact assessment of development on users and resources as part of each park's general management plan.

Managerial Justification.
The last Visitor Services Project (VSP) survey at City of Rocks National Reserve was done in 1991, and the data needs to be updated. CIRO has just begun General Management Planning efforts. CIRO has traditionally attracted a larger number of visitors who come primarily to experience climbing opportunities. With a new full-service campground and other lodging facilities being built adjacent to the park, it is expected that the audiences will grow and diversify. A visitor study will provide information about changes in visitor demographics and expectations since 1991.

The results of this survey will be used to guide park management to meet visitor expectations. The study will be used to shift visitor services, interpretation, and facility development to meet expectations and attract new audiences.

The mail-back questionnaire in this visitor study is designed to systematically collect data from visitors, including individual characteristics, trip/visit characteristics, individual activities, individual evaluation of park services/facilities, individual perceptions of their park experiences and individual opinions on park management. Park visitors will be randomly selected to participate in the study as they visit the park at selected locations during an 11-day period from September 7-17, 2008.

9. **Survey Methodology: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)**

(a) Respondent universe:
The respondent universe will be all recreational visitors, aged 16 and older, who visit the park during the study period. A random sample of visitors will be contacted by VSP-trained interviewers from September 7-17, 2008 at two selected locations in the park.

(b) Sampling plan/procedures:
The survey design and sampling plan for the City of Rocks NR visitor study are based upon Dillman's Tailored Design Method (TDM). The TDM has been shown to increase response rates, improve accuracy, and reduce cost and burden hours. This methodology and survey instrument design has been used in 187 previous surveys conducted by the Visitor Services Project (VSP). The majority of questions in the City of Rocks questionnaire appear in the Social Science Program's known pool of questions and have been used in other VSP questionnaires. A systematic sampling procedure, based on the park's visitation statistics from the previous year, will require intercepting

every 3rd vehicle approaching sampling points to ask visitors to participate in the study. Visitor groups will be intercepted at the east and west entrances, and one survey supervisor will oversee two interviewers. Approximately 450 visitor groups will be contacted during the planned sampling period.

(c) Instrument administration:

The initial contact with visitors to explain the study and determine if visitors are interested in participating (see attached script) takes approximately 1 minute. The number of visitor groups who refuse are recorded and used in calculating response rates. Visitors who voluntarily agree to participate in the study are verbally given a short front-end interview (1 additional minute) to collect information used in a non-response bias check. They are also asked to record their name, address, and phone number/email address. If a group agrees to participate, the researcher will give the survey to the eligible individual within the group who has the next birthday. Participants will be given a stamped, addressed questionnaire to complete and return.

Participants will be mailed a thank you/reminder post card 11 working days after the completion of the survey. If the thank you/reminder post card proves unsuccessful, a reminder letter with a stamped, addressed replacement questionnaire will be sent 21 working days after the completion of the survey. A second reminder letter will be mailed after 35 working days with a stamped, addressed questionnaire.

(d) Expected response rate/confidence levels:

Based on the park's visitation data and the number of days of surveying, approximately 450 groups will be contacted over the sampling period. It is expected that approximately 416 of these will accept the questionnaires, and 333 will return them. This produces an overall response rate of 70%. This expected response rate is based upon those obtain in nearly identical surveys in similar areas: (Craters of the Moon NM & Pres 2004–83%, Denali NP & Pres 2006–81%, Katmai NP & Pres 2006–74%, Big Cypress NPres 2007–63%.)

Assuming non-response is randomly distributed across the population contacted, results will be accurate to within +/-5.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level for questions with dichotomous response scales. The confidence intervals will be somewhat larger for questions with more than two response categories.

(e) Strategies for dealing with potential non-response bias:

During the front-end interview, questions are asked of the respondents to check for non-response bias. Answers are recorded on a log of every survey contact. Results of the non-response bias check are described in the report and the implications for park planning and management are discussed.

(f) Description of any pre-testing and peer review of the methods and/or instrument (recommended):

The questionnaire format and many of the questions have been used in over 187 previous VSP survey instruments. Most of the questions appear in the Social Science Program's known pool of questions. Questionnaires are peer reviewed by NPS managers and university professors.

10.	Total Number of Initial Contacts Accept Instrument Expected Respondents:	450	416	333	11. Estimated Time (mins.) to Complete Initial Contact (refusals only) Accept Instrument Return Instrument:	1	1	20	12. Total Burden Hours:	125
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13. **Reporting Plan:** Responses will be tabulated and frequencies, means, or medians for each question will be reported, as appropriate. The results of this information collection activity will be presented in an internal agency report for park managers and NPS managers at the regional and national level. The report will be archived with the NPS Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection. It will also be posted on the Park Studies Unit VSP website. Hard copies will be available upon request.

This economic data will be used to produce a special report for the NPS covering overall use estimates and local economic impacts.