



## Expedited Approval for NPS- Sponsored Public Surveys

1. **Project Title | Submission Date:** Pilot Interviews of Visitors' and Nearby Residents' Perceptions of the Yosemite Fire Management Program

2. **Abstract:** Understanding perceptions of the Fire Management Program in Yosemite National Park is an integral part of developing stakeholder collaboration, communication, and cooperation. This qualitative study employs face-to-face semi-structured interviews aimed at gaining an initial understanding of the range of public perspectives on smoke, fire ecology, and prescribed burning held by park visitors and local residents of Yosemite's gateway communities. This pilot study will inform a larger quantitative study that will interview a more comprehensive sample of park stakeholders. The pilot study also will provide information useful to the park for addressing residents' concerns regarding the effects of smoke upon park visitation and local communities. The larger study will be submitted through the regular PRA review process.

(not to exceed 150 words)

### 3. Principal Investigator Contact Information

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### 4. Park or Program Liaison Contact Information

**First Name:** Bret **Last Name:** Meldrum

**Title:** Branch Chief, Visitor Use and Social Science

**Park:** Yosemite National Park

**Park Office/Division:** Resources Management and Science Visitor Use and Social Sciences Branch

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## Project Information

5. Park(s) For Which 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.)  
Social science research in support of park planning and management is mandated in the *NPS Management Policies 2006* (Section 8.11.1, "Social Science Studies"). The NPS pursues a policy that facilitates social science studies in support of the NPS mission to protect resources and enhance the enjoyment of present and future generations (National Park Service Act of 1916, 38 Stat 535, 16 USC 1, et seq.). NPS policy mandates that social science research will be used to provide an understanding of park visitors, the non-visiting public, gateway communities and regions, and human interactions with park resources. Such studies are needed to provide a scientific basis for park planning, development, operations, management, education, and interpretive activities.

Yosemite NP applies an active prescribed burn policy that at times can generate noticeable smoke in the park and nearby communities. The proposed study seeks to understand impacts of smoke on visitors and gateway community residents. Interviews will be held with persons living near the park, some of whom are regular park visitors and have had interaction with the park's Fire Management Program. So far little information has been collected regarding visitors' or residents' perceptions of Yosemite's fire management strategy. For this reason, the pilot study is needed to inform the larger quantitative project. The themes generated from the interviews will be used to develop a survey instrument, which will be submitted through the regular Paperwork Reduction Act review process.

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

**(a) Respondent universe:**

The respondent universe is local community members who visit the park and/or have some experience with the park's Fire Management Program.

**(b) Sampling plan/procedures:**

The study will purposively sample residents of communities located adjacent to Yosemite National Park, some of whom are park visitors and all of whom have had at least some previous interaction with the Fire Management Program at the park. This interaction is important, given the questions the park needs to have answered and also to provide an empirical basis for the subsequent quantitative study. Previous experience with the Yosemite Fire Management Program will allow interviewees to speak from a position of increased awareness, with an ability to focus on detailed program information, specific circumstances, and personal experiences as park visitors and/or community residents. Approximately 30 interviews will be completed. The PI will be introduced at a monthly Gateway Partners meeting in the park and will describe the purposes and value of participating in the study. Contact information will be given to the PI from the park's various local mailing lists, and he will approach those residents who have been identified as knowledgeable about the Fire Management Program by park managers. Prior to the PI's contact, the Yosemite Public Information and Outreach Office will introduce the study with a letter to potential participants (attached) that describes the purpose of the interview.

**(c) Instrument administration:**

In-person interviews will be scheduled in locations agreed upon by the interviewees. The interview guide will be distributed prior to the interview to help the participants understand the purpose and scope of the questions. The initial contact will take approximately five minutes. If the interview is accepted, the attached interview guide will be used to facilitate the interview discourse, expected to take approximately 45 minutes.

**(d) Expected response rate:**

Response rates for similar interview research are typically high. Given the material covered and the application to potential participants, a 95% response rate is expected (Fiske, 1990; Fiske, 1991; Fiske, 1992). Because this is a qualitative, confidence intervals and margins of error are not applicable.

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

Because this study is qualitative and uses a purposive sample, there is no statistical basis for generalizing the findings to all park visitors or local residents. Therefore, non-response bias does not present the same concerns as it does in quantitative studies based on probability samples and employing inferential statistical analysis.

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

An independently funded pilot study was conducted with portions of the interview guide in 2006. Modifications were made as a result of feedback from interview participants. The face-to-face interview guide was adapted from pre-existing interview guides used by numerous Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Units. Additionally, procedures have been developed based on discussions with park managers and staff. Park managers have reviewed the instruments and methods.

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|-----|---|----|----|-----|---|---|----|-----|----------------------------|----|
| 10. | <b>Total Number of Initial Contacts   Expected Respondents:</b> | 35 | 30 | 11. | <b>Estimated Time to Complete Initial Contact   Instrument (mins.):</b> | 5 | 45 | 12. | <b>Total Burden Hours:</b> | 25 |
|-----|---|----|----|-----|---|---|----|-----|----------------------------|----|

13. **Reporting Plan:**

The PI will provide a final report and present the findings to Yosemite National Park upon completion of the study. This report will discuss the range of themes/issues generated from the interviews. Additionally, transcriptions will be cleaned of any interviewee personal information and made available to the park for the purposes of better understanding the context in which themes/issues were discussed. The findings and report will be used to shape the larger project. A copy of the report will be given to the NPS Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection of NPS Focus.

**References Cited**

Fiske, E. 1990. Perspectives on Agriculture and Natural Resource Issues in Washington State and What Might be Done to Address Them. Report to the Washington State Conservation Commission. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Department of Rural Sociology.

Fiske, E. 1991. Controversial issues as opportunities: Extension's effectiveness in resolving environmental disputes. *Journal of Extension* (Fall, 1991, pp. 17-19).

Fiske, E. 1992. Composition of the Dungeness-Quilicene Regional Watershed Pilot Planning Group (Chelan Agreement). Report to the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Department of Rural Sociology