



**Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys**

1. <b>Project Titles</b>	Visitor Services Project (VSP) Survey at the following parks:	June 22, 2011
<b>Submission Date:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Fort Scott National Historic Site (FOSC)</li><li>2. Petersburg National Battlefield (PETE)</li><li>3. Denali National Park and Preserve (DENA)</li><li>4. Shenandoah National Park (SHEN)</li><li>5. Fort Stanwix National Monument (FOST)</li><li>6. Yellowstone National Park (YELL)</li></ol>	

2. **Abstract:** This submission contains 6 separate collections. Visitors will be given a mail back questionnaire at six parks when they exit the park. The results from the surveys will be used to provide information and data to assist park managers in developing and providing services and interpretive programs that meet visitors' needs and expectations. The information will also be shared with park partners and gateway communities to assist in mutual planning efforts. The questionnaires will be designed to systematically collect data that will include information on trip/visit characteristics (e.g. activities, evaluation of park services/facilities, perceptions of park experiences, and opinions on park management).

3. **Principal Investigator Contact Information**

**First Name:**  **Last Name:**

**Title:**

**Affiliation:**

**Street Address:**

**City:**  **State:**  **Zip code:**

**Phone:**  **Fax:**

**Email:**

4. **Park or Program Liaison Contact Information** See attached list of contacts for each park

**Project Information**

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

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Fort Scott National Historic Site (7/28/2011 to 8/5/2011)</li><li>2. Petersburg National Battlefield (7/21/2011 to 7/27/2011)</li><li>3. Denali National Park and Preserve (7/14/2011 to 7/20/2011)</li><li>4. Shenandoah National Park (7/15/2011 to 7/21/2011) and (10/11/2011 to 10/17/2011)</li><li>5. Fort Stanwix National Monument (7/17/2011 to 7/23/2011)</li><li>6. Yellowstone National Park (7/23/2011 to 7/29/2011)</li></ol>
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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.)

*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 Justifications:

Each park has specific reasons for needing a visitor study:

1. **Fort Scott National Historic Site** — Established in 1978, this park has never had a visitor study. The park needs basic information about visitor demographics and visitor opinions. The results from the survey will be incorporated into the upcoming General Management Plan in 2011.
2. **Petersburg National Battlefield**—The last VSP visitor study for this park was conducted in 1990. The park is preparing a new visitor-use monitoring program that would compare visitor use monitoring data with the VSP data. The data will also be used to assess fiscal and staffing needs and to improve the efficiency of park operations.
3. **Denali National Park and Preserve** —The last VSP general visitor study for this park was conducted in 2006. The park is currently preparing a new Vehicle Management Plan for the 90-mile long park road. Visitor use data is needed to monitor road use and visitor opinions over time as the Vehicle Management Plan is implemented. According to park managers, the VSP survey will gather data critical to the development and implementation of a Road Use Plan.
4. **Shenandoah National Park** —The last VSP visitor study for this site was conducted in 2001. Since then, the park has established a new concessions contact and built a new visitor center. Visitation and use has changed significantly in that time, dropping from 1.5 million visitors per year in 2001 to 1.3 million in 2010 with even greater drops in the intervening years. This data is from the last VSP study in 2001 showing that more visitors are using the park for day use activities and less overnight stays than in the past The park needs updated visitor data for the upcoming General Management Plan, new concessions contract and new visitor information center. The data would also be valuable for the park in working with local communities and partners to better tailor their products and services.

5. **Fort Stanwix National Monument** —The last VSP visitor study for this park was conducted in 2003. The park has a new Visitor and Education Center, where visitors enter the site. The park would like to measure how well this new center is serving the public and identify ways to better serve visitors, as well as ways to work more closely with park partners and neighbors.
6. **Yellowstone National Park** —The last VSP visitor study in 2006 focused on concession services—the visitors that used them and their evaluations of those services. The park would like to do a follow-up survey using most of the same questions as the 2006 survey. The results will be used to assess concession operations for contracts expiring in 2013.

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

**(a) Respondent universe:**

The respondent universe for this collection will be all recreational visitors, age 16 and older visiting the park during the study period. A systematic sample of visitors will be contacted by VSP-trained interviewers at selected park locations (see table below).

Park	Intercept Locations
1. Fort Scott National Historic Site	Visitor center
2. Petersburg National Battlefield	City Point, Eastern Front entrance station, Five Forks visitor centers and trailhead
3. Denali National Park and Preserve	Denali train station, Wilderness Access Center, Riley Creek Mercantile and Talkeetna
4. Shenandoah National Park	Front Royal, Thornton Gap, Swift Run Gap, and Rockfish Gap Entrance Stations
5. Fort Stanwix National Monument	Visitor center
6. Yellowstone National Park	West Yellowstone, South, North, East and Northeast entrance stations

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

Mail-back questionnaires will be used to collect the following data from visitors:

- 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 studies as they visit selected park locations in each park during a 7-day period; Fort Scott NHS, will be a 9-day period.

The survey design and sampling plan for this collection of visitor surveys is 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. The methodology has been used in 230 previous surveys conducted by the VSP. Most questions have been included in other VSP questionnaires or appear in the NPS Known Pool of Questions. A systematic sampling procedure, based on the park's visitation statistics from the previous year, will require intercepting every *nth* visitor group to participate in the study.

Each interviewer will receive 1-1/2 hours of training on how to conduct interviews. This training will cover every aspect of interviewing, including conducting the interviews using sampling intervals, avoiding sampling bias, and how to handle all types of interviewing situations, including safety of the visitor and the interviewer. Quality control will be ensured by monitoring interviewers in the field, and by checking their paperwork at the end of each day of surveying.

**(c) Instrument administration:**

The initial contact with visitors will be used to explain the study and determine if visitors are interested in participating (see attached script). This should take approximately 1 minute. If a group is encountered, the survey interviewer will ask the individual within the group who has the next birthday to serve as the respondent for the survey. At that point, the survey respondent will be asked 5 questions to collect information that will be used in the non-response bias analysis (see questions below). The respondent will also be asked to record their name, address, and phone number or email address on the survey log. Finally the respondent will be given a stamped, addressed questionnaire to complete and mail back to the Visitor Services Project. The number of visitors refusing to participate will be recorded and used to calculate the overall response rate for the collection. This will take an additional 2 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey sampling period all participants will be mailed a thank you/reminder post card within 11 working days. A reminder letter with a stamped, addressed replacement questionnaire will be sent to non-respondents 21 working days after completion of on-site contacts. A second reminder letter will be mailed after 35 working days with a stamped, addressed replacement questionnaire.

**(d) Expected response rate/confidence levels:** (see table below for numbers for each park)

A total of "n" visitors will be contacted during the sampling period. Based on previous and nearly identical studies conducted by the VSP, "n" visitors will agree to participate in each survey. The number of refusals will be recorded and reported in a survey log, and will be used in calculating the response rate. Among the visitors contacted, "n" are expected to complete and return the survey by mail. This response rate was estimated by comparing similar surveys conducted by the VSP (see table below). Based on the day-use survey sample size, there will be 95% confidence that the day-use survey findings will be accurate to within 5 percentage

points. Thus, the proposed sample size will be adequate for bi-variate comparisons and will allow for comparisons between study sites and more sophisticated multivariate analysis if deemed necessary. For dichotomous response variables, estimates will be accurate within the margins of error and confidence intervals will be somewhat larger for questions with more than two response categories.

Park	Number of Survey Days	Number of initial Contacts	Expected Number of Responses	Expected Response Rate	Margin of Error +/-%
FOSC	7	370	252	68%	5
PETE	7	545	345	63%	4.3
DENA	7	1200	770	64%	3
SHEN	14	1963	1296	66%	3.4
FOST	7	370	231	62%	3
YELL	7	1036	684	68%	5

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

During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each potential respondent six questions before they are given the survey instrument. These questions are taken from the survey. The responses to these questions will be used in a non-response bias analysis for each park.

- 1) *What type of group are you traveling with today?*
- 2) *(If with an organized group-tours, school, etc.) How many people are in your group?*
- 3) *Was this park the primary destination on this trip?*
- 4) *Was this park one of several destinations on this trip?*
- 5) *Was this park not a planned destination on this trip?*
- 6) *How old is the person who will complete the questionnaire?*

Responses will be recorded on a log for each potential respondent contacted. Results of the non-response bias check will be described in a report and the implications for park planning and management will be 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 230 previous VSP survey instruments. Questionnaires are regularly peer reviewed by NPS managers and university professors.

Estimated Number of Contacts and Burden

Park	Total Number of Contacts	Number of visitors accepting instrument	Estimated time (2 minutes)for initial contact (HOURS)	Expected Number of Responses	Estimated completion time (20 minutes) per response (HOURS)	Total Estimated burden (HOURS)
FOSC	370	340	11	252	84	95
PETE	545	500	17	345	115	132
DENA	1200	1,100	37	770	257	294
SHEN	1963	1,800	60	1,296	432	492
FOST	370	340	11	231	77	88
YELL	1036	1,000	33	684	228	261
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,484</b>	<b>5,080</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>3,578</b>		<b>1,362</b>

13. **Reporting Plan:** The results of the studies will be presented in internal agency reports for NPS managers. Response frequencies will be tabulated and measures of central tendency computed (e.g., mean, median, mode, as appropriate).The reports will be archived with the NPS Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection. They will also be posted on the Park Studies Unit VSP website at: <http://psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.reports.htm>. Hard copies will be available upon request. The economic data will be used to produce special reports for the NPS covering overall use estimates and local economic impacts.