

Cover Letter Accompanying the First Mail Survey Packet



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<ADDRESS BLOCK>

Dear

We hope you enjoyed your trip to Rocky Mountain National Park in early Fall.

When you entered the Park, you completed a contact information sheet indicating you would be willing to help us with a research project.

We sincerely appreciate your willingness to help us with our research. You are one of a select sample of visitors being asked to complete the enclosed survey. Our research project focuses on developing a better understanding of visitor's knowledge of wildlife management in Rocky Mountain National Park.

Our findings will help the Rocky Mountain National Park staff provide more information about wildlife management in the Park for visitors like yourself.

Please complete the enclosed survey and mail it to us in the enclosed, stamped, return envelope.

Your responses to this survey are voluntary and final data is confidential. Our findings will be released as summaries. When you return the survey, your name will be deleted from our mailing list and never connected to your answers in any way. If, for some reason, you prefer not to respond, please let us know by returning the blank survey in the enclosed envelope.

If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail, call, or write me (see letterhead).

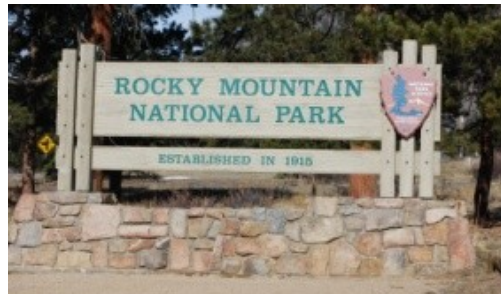
Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Don Zimmerman
Professor & Director

OMB Control Number:1024-0224
Expiration Date: 8/31/2014

Understanding Park Resource Stewardship



PRIVACY ACT and PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

16 U.S.C. 1a-7 authorizes collection of this information. This information will be used by park managers to better understand visitors' knowledge of elk biology and elk impact on vegetation and general awareness of the management practices in Rocky Mountain National Park to serve the public. Response to this request is voluntary. No action may be taken against you for refusing to supply the information requested. Your name and address have been requested for follow-up mailing purposes only. When analysis of the questionnaire is completed, all name and address will be destroyed. Thus permanent data will be anonymous. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number..

BURDEN ESTIMATE STATEMENT: Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be 20 minutes per response. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection to: Judy Visty, Research Administrator/Ecologist Continental Divide Research Learning Center Rocky Mountain National Park 1000 Highway 36, Estes Park, CO 80517, Judy_Visty@nps.gov (E-mail).

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Control No. _____

For the purposes of this review and submission the justifications for each question or section of questions is highlighted in a shaded text box above each question. These text boxes will not be printed on the final version of the surveys. The Topic Areas noted and consistent with the currently approved pool questions for the NPS Programmatic Review Process (1024-0224). The questions that are slight variations are denoted as such and an explanation is provided. Questions that are outside the general scope of the programmatic review process have been carefully discussed and generally approved by the NPS Information Collection Review Coordinator with understanding that those questions will require further review and consideration by OMB before for full determination can be granted.

Part I. Background Questions

TOPIC AREA 1 - VISITHIS 3: variance—this question is needed to provide an estimated of prior experiences in RMNP that might influence their assessing their awareness of the elk damage to vegetation in RMNP and the need to implement the elk and vegetation plan.

1. When you visited Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) about a month ago, **about how many hours** did you spend **inside the RMNP**? ____ (Hours)

TOPIC AREA 1 - VISITHIS2: variance—the questions below are needed to know about prior visitation history, specifically about the first visit—i.e. prior to elk & vegetation management being implemented.

2. Was your visit to RMNP about a month ago, your first visit to RMNP? __No __Yes

2a. If no, when was your first visit to RMNP? _____(Year)

2b. When you visit this area, about how many days **do you spend in RMNP**? ____ (days)

2c. In the last three years, about how many days did you spend visiting in RMNP ?

(Please check one.)

__ 1-2 days __ 3-4 days __ 5-6 days __ 7 or more days.

TOPIC AREA 1 - TRIPC15: variance—this information is needed to know more about the possible influence of camping in RMNP. If visitors camp in RMNP, they may be more likely to observe more elk and vegetation conditions as well as they may be more likely to observe the fences, collared elk, and other elk and vegetation management activities.

3. When you visit RMNP, do you usually stay (camp) overnight in RMNP? __Yes __No

TOPIC AREA 2 - TPLAN 6: variance, this information is needed to understand if seasonal factors influence visitations patterns and their observations of the vegetation conditions and implementation of the elk and vegetation management plan..

4. Please check all seasons that you visit RMNP.

__ Spring __Summer __Fall __Winter

TOPIC AREA 3- TRIPC4: variance, this information is needed to determine if visitors are taking advantage and understanding that peak elk viewing is early morning and later afternoon hours. Based on the responses, Park management may be encouraged to develop educational materials to explain the best times to view elk in the Park.

5. If you visit RMNP in the **fall**, what time(s) of the day do you visit RMNP? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.)
 Early morning Mid-morning Early afternoon Late afternoon

TOPIC AREA 1- RES1: no variation

6. Where do you live?
 City _____ State ____ Zip Code _____
 Country (if not US) _____

TOPIC AREA 4 –PA: variance, we would like to understand more about a visitor’s overall experience and attitudes about their visit to RMNP as well as determining if they find any negative experiences. Questions later in the survey will focus more specifically on their awareness of various elk and vegetation management practice. These questions are provided so as not to lead or bias their responses.

7. Think about your last visit to RMNP. For each of the items please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Use a 1 to 7 scale here where 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. If it does not apply to you, circle NA.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
a. I enjoyed my trip to RMNP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
b. Scenery was beautiful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
c. Nothing distracted me from RMNP's beauty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA

TOPIC AREA 6 – OPMGMT 4: variance, there have been changes in the Park and we know to if the visitors noticed some of them—specifically the new fenced areas.

8. If you have visited RMNP before, did you notice any changes in the Park from the last time you visited RMNP?
 If so, please describe: _____

TOPIC AREA 3 - ACT18—VARIANCE - changed wording to specific activities in the Park.

9. On your September visit to RMNP, in what activities did you or your group participate? **Please check all that apply in Column A. For other visits to RMNP during the last 12 months, please check the frequency of your activities in Column B.**

	Column A Your Fall 2011 Visit	Column B Frequency of activities during visits In the past 12 months				
		Never	Less 50% of visits	51% to 75% of visits	More than 75% of visits	During every Visit
		a. Viewing scenery				
b. Viewing wildlife						
c. Bird watching						
d. Hiking						
e. Picnicking						
f. Camping						
g. Fishing						
h. Photography						
i. Other _____						

TOPIC AREA 2- TPLAN 1: VARIANCE - visitors have certain expectations when making plans to visit RMNP. One expectation is to see a variety of wildlife commonly associated with the Park. We would like to determine their expectation about seeing elk in the Park without specifically asking them obvious and leading question.

10. When you visit Rocky Mountain National Park, what animals and birds do you expect to see? Please list below:

TOPIC AREA 6 –OPMGMT4: VARIANCE --it is important to determine if the visitors can assess the elk damage to vegetation.

11. Please rate the condition of the trees and shrubs along the streams and the aspen stands in the valleys in RMNP. Use a 1 to 7 scale where 1= Extremely Poor Condition to 7 = Extremely Good Condition. If you don't know, circle DK.

	Extremely Poor Condition	Very Poor Condition	Poor	Fair Condition	Good	Very Good Condition	Extremely Good Condition	Don't Know
a. Aspen stands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
b. Willows along streams	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK

TOPIC AREA 1 - VISITHIS2: VARIANCE-- we would like to know if the visitors notice any changes in the elk population since their prior visit.

12. If you have visited RMNP before, would you say that on your most recent visit, RMNP had:
 ___Fewer elk ___ About the same number of elk ___More elk ___Don't Know

TOPIC AREA 1—VISITHIS2: VARIANCE—we would like to know if the visitors are able to recall the number of visible elk since their prior visit.

13. About how many elk did you see on your last visit to RMNP? _____ elk

TOPIC AREA 6 - OPMGMT4: VARIANCE - we are interested in understanding visitor expectations related the importance of seeing elk during a single visit.

14. Seeing elk when visiting RMNP is important for some visitors, but not for other visitors. On a 1 to 7 scale, how important was for you to see elk on your last visit? Please circle your answer.

Not at all Important	Low Importance	Slight Importance	Neutral	Moderate Importance	High Importance	Extremely High Importance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

TOPIC AREA 3 - ACT18: VARIANCE—because elk congregate in Horseshoe Park and Moraine Park, , we are interested to know more about where the majority of the visitors receive information about elk viewing and vegetation management as well as where they view them.

15. When you visit RMNP, how often do you visit each of the following areas? Use the scale below where 1 = Not at All to 7 = Almost always. Please circle your answers. Please circle DK for don't know if you don't know the answer to the question.

	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes but rarely	Sometimes but not often	Occasionally	Often	Almost Always	Don't Know
a. Fall River Visitor Center	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
b. Fall River Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
c. Horseshoe Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
d. Alpine Visitors' Center	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
e. Moraine Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
f. Moraine Park Museum	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
g. Beaver Meadows Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
h. Beaver Meadows Visitor Center	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK

Part II. RMNP Management

TOPIC AREA 6 - OPMGMT1: VARIANCE— we are asking this question because the Park’s management needs to know about the visitor’s awareness of differences in fencing and management policies related to fencing.

1. Using the 1 to 7 scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement listed below. If you haven’t thought about it or it does not apply to you, circle DK (i.e., Don’t Know).

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
a. I noticed the fencing when I visited RMNP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
b. I noticed different kinds of fencing in RMNP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
c. I found the wire fence distracting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
d. I found the plastic fencing distracting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
e. The fencing detracted from my park experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
f. Park visitors can hike inside the fenced areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
g. Anglers can enter the fenced areas to fish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
h. Visitors can go inside fenced areas to watch birds.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
i. I saw the gates to enter the fenced areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
j. I wanted to enter a fenced area, but couldn't.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
k. I read the exhibits (signs) outside of the fenced areas that explained the fencing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
l. Visitors shouldn't enter the fenced areas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
m. Fences were not a major distraction during my visit to RMNP.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
n. Fences inhibited my opportunity to enjoy viewing elk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK

TOPIC AREA 6 – OPMGMT4 or TOPIC AREA 1- KNOW: VARIANCE– this question uses a combination of approaches to understand the visitor’s knowledge, understanding and level of awareness of the operational aspects of elk biology and the foundations of the elk and vegetation management. By assessing visitor’s current knowledge, understanding and awareness of the following variables, the managers can then develop information and educational materials needed to help visitors better understand the complexities of elk management in RMNP.

2. For each item listed below, please tell us whether you believe the statement to be true. Use a 1 to 7 scale where 1 = Never true to 7= Always true. If it does not apply or you don't know, circle DK (i.e., Don't Know).

Statement	Never True	Rarely true	Sometimes, but	Neutral	Sometimes true	Usually true	Always true	Don't Know
a. In summers, elk move to the high mountains. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
b. In the fall, elk move to lower elevations. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
c. When elk browse, they eat the young tree branches. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
d. The black on the white bark of aspen is from elk chewing on the bark. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
e. RMNP has too many elk for their winter habitat to support. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
f. Scientists conduct studies to assess elk damage to RMNP vegetation—i.e., plants, shrubs, & trees. OPMGMT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
g. Scientific studies confirm that elk are overgrazing (eating) the willows along the streams. OPMGMT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
h. Scientific studies confirm that elk eating of young aspen trees prevents aspen stands from regrowing. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
i. More willows and aspen along the streams will benefit beaver. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
j. More willows and aspen along the streams will benefit songbirds. KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
k. Increased beaver populations benefit other wildlife? KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
l. Increased beaver populations benefit fish populations? KNOW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK

3. Please indicate if the following statements are true, false, or don't know. Please circle your response.

- a. The RMNP staff prepared an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the elk & vegetation management plan. **OPMGMT**

True	False	Don't Know
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- b. Based on the EIS, the RMNP staff proposed alternative elk and vegetation management methods. **OPMGMT**

True	False	Don't Know
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- c. The RMNP staff held public meetings reviewing the elk and vegetation management plan. **OPMGMT**

True	False	Don't Know
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TOPIC AREA 6 - OPMGMT1: VARIANCE—all items listed below are part of the RMNP elk & vegetation management plan. We are using the questions in this section to understand if the visitors' level of agreement is consistent with their awareness of the specifics contained in the approved elk and vegetation management plan.

1. Some visitors are aware of RMNP's elk and vegetation management plan and ongoing studies; other visitors are not. For each item, please indicate if you agree or disagree using a 1 to 7 scale here 1= Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. If it does not apply or you don't know, circle DK (i.e., Don't Know).

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't Know
a. Fencing allows willows and aspen to regrow.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
b. RMNP plans to remove the fences after willows and aspen have regrown.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
c. Putting colored collars on elk allows scientist to study the elk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
d. Scientists are studying birth control as a possible method of elk management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
e. Limited culling (shooting) is an approved elk management method.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
f. Wolf reintroduction needs to be addressed regionally because RMNP does not have enough habitat area to sustain wolves in the long-term.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK
g. Scientists are investigating chronic wasting disease (CWD) in elk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DK

Part III. Information Sources

TOPIC AREA 2- TPLAN11: VARIANCE—we would like to know more about the information sources visitors may have used in the past that contained information about the elk and vegetation management plan..

1. Please indicate how often you have read, heard, or seen stories about the RMNP elk and vegetation management program in the following media. Use the scale below ranging from 1 to 5 where 1 = Never to 5 = Every month. Please circle your response. If you do not recall, circle DRC for Don't Recall.

Statement	Never	Once a year	Twice a year	Once every four months	Every month	Don't recall
a. Newspaper articles	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
b. Magazine articles	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
c. Radio stories	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
d. Television stories	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
e. Websites	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
f. Public presentations	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
g. Talking with other people	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
h. Other (please list) _____	1	2	3	4	5	DRC

TOPIC AREA 2 – TPLAN11: VARIANCE - we would like to know more about how visitors plan their trips and the expectations they have when using the RMNP website for planning and learning more about the Park's culture and management.

2. About how often have you used **RMNP's Website** in the past three years? _____

If you used the RMNP Website, please indicate how much of each section of the Website you've visited or used. Use the rating scale where 1 = None to 7 = All of it. Circle DRC if you don't recall. Circle your answers.

Statement	None	Very Little	Little	Some	Most of it	Almost all	All of it	Don't recall
a. Directions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
b. Fees & Reservation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
c. Things to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
d. Webcam, videos, podcasts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
e. History & culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC

f. Nature & science	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
g. News	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
h. Management of natural resources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
i. Elk & vegetation management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC
j. Video on elk & vegetation management	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	DRC

TOPIC AREA 2 - TPLAN11: VARIANCE—we would like to know more about if visitors recalled using the information sources that contained information about the elk and vegetation management plan during the visits to RMNP.

3. Please tell us how often you recall using each source for information about the elk and vegetation management plan. Use 1 = Never to 5. If you do not recall, circle DRC. Circle your responses.

Statement	Never	Once	2 to 3 times	4 to 5 times	6 times or	Don't recall
a. Visitor centers	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
b. Exhibits in visitor centers	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
c. Ranger campfire talks	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
d. RMNP newspaper articles	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
e. Ranger talks in visitor centers	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
f. Ranger led talks	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
g. Newsletters	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
h. Informational signs	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
i. Video at visitor center	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
j. Park volunteers	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
k. Other park visitors	1	2	3	4	5	DRC
l. RMNP Assoc. publications	1	2	3	4	5	DRC

TOPIC AREA 1 KNOW: VARIANCE—we are trying to assess visitor’s understanding of the differences between recreational hunting and culling. The elk and vegetation management plan calls for culling by a limited number of highly trained individuals. The RMNP management needs to know if visitors understand the differences between hunting and culling. If not, the Park management needs to provide clarifications in the Park information and education materials.

4. The elk and vegetation management plan calls for some culling of the elk herd. “Culling” means different things to different people. Could you please tell us what “Culling” means to you?

TOPIC AREA 1 KNOW: VARIANCE When implementing the elk and vegetation management plan, the Park staff found some publics and some recreational hunters confused hunting and culling. The Park Staff needs to know if the confusion is wide spread and if so, the Park staff will provide information in media specific groups—i.e., recreational hunters and membership in conservation, environmental, hunting, and fishing organizations, using various forms, to clarify “culling.”

- 5. Do you hunt? Yes No

- 6. Do you belong to any conservation, environmental, hunting, or fishing organizations?
 No Yes 5a. If yes, which ones? _____

The questions below have been added because of the increasing use of social media to receive information. Park managers are interested in knowing if personal computer, cell and smartphone will be a valid mode of communication. This question will help us to determine the percentage of visitors with these technologies. Understanding this, Park managers can consider the probability of directed future funds toward delivering information and education materials about the elk and vegetation management plan using these new media.

- 7. Do you own a personal computer? No Yes
 - 7a. If yes, is it connected to the Internet by a broadband connection? No Yes
 - 7b. Would you be interested in receiving information about elk and vegetation management on your computer? Yes No

- 8. Do you own a cell phone or Smart Phone ? No Yes
 - 8a. If yes, is it connected to the Internet? No Yes
 - 8b. Would you be interested in receiving information about elk and vegetation management on your cell or smartphone? Yes No

TOPIC AREA 6 – OPMGMT6: VARIANCE - we would like to know more about visitors’ experiences that are not covered in the questions above. The Park is interested in ways to better communicate the goals of its elk and vegetation management plan—this open-ended question will allow the respondents to provide qualitative feedback that is important to them in the context of this survey.

Do you have any suggestions about how Rocky Mountain National Park could improve its communication about the elk and vegetation management? Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences at Rocky Mountain National Park? If so, please use the space below.

We sincerely appreciate you completing this survey. If you would like a summary of the results, print your name and address on the back of the return envelope (not this survey). We will send you a copy.

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