National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Social Science Program

Programmatic Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

1.	**Project Title:**	Klondike Gold Rush Seattle Unit National Historical Site Outdoor Recreational Information Center (ORIC) visitor study	**Submission Date**	3-2-2012

2.	**Abstract:**	The Outdoor Recreational Information Center (ORIC) is a multi-agency operation in which Klondike Gold Rush Seattle Unit National Historic Site (KLSE) is one of the partners. The center provides information about outdoor recreational opportunities in various National Park units such as Mount Rainier National Park, North Cascades National Park, Olympic National Park, and other federal, state, and county recreational areas. Approximately 21,000 people use the information center annually. In order access how the information center attracts recreational users and meets their needs, KLSE has requested the assistance of the Visitor Services Project's (VSP) to conduct a survey of its current users.

(not to exceed 150 words)

3. **Principal Investigator Contact Information**

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

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Project Information

5.	**Park(s) For Which Research is to be Conducted:**	Klondike Gold Rush Seattle Unit National Historical Site

6.	**Survey Dates:**	3-13-2012	TO	11-16-2012

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) ☑ internet survey

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.

Klondike Gold Rush Seattle Unit National Historical Site (KLSE) is currently engaged in multi-agency collaborative effort to provide information and attract visitors to national parks in the Pacific Northwest area, specifically, Mount Rainier National Park, North Cascades National Park, and Olympic National Park as well as other federal, state, and county recreational areas. The park manages the Outdoor Recreation Information Center (ORIC – Ranger Station) Incorporated flagship store in Seattle. The ORIC provides information about a variety of recreational opportunities in the region. It is an example of a successful partnership of agencies, pooling resources to serve visitor needs. There are, however, organizational issues related to the role that the unit will play in supporting ORIC in the future.

Partners and mangers at KLSE are interested in understanding the current role and value of the visitor information provided by the ORIC. The Visitor Services Program will conduct and on-site pre-trip and post-trip internet survey among a random sample of customers who requesting information from the ORIC.

Two surveys will be used to provide feedback to managers about: individual characteristics, trip/visit characteristics, individual activities, individual evaluation of ORIC services, individual perceptions of their experiences, and individual opinions on their experiences with ORIC.

The research objectives are to help the managers of KLGO to:
- identify and categorize type of information and areas of inquiry made by recreational users;

- learn about the effectiveness of the ORIC in term of providing planning information to recreational users;
- determine information areas that are currently lacking or need improvement; and

The results of both surveys will provide feedback needed to understand the ORIC's effectiveness in meeting the public's information needs.

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 a random sample of all recreational users, age 16 and older who visit the ORIC or call ORIC staff for recreational information during two different survey periods to capture both winter and summer user groups. **(b) Sampling Plan/Procedures:** The survey design and sampling plan for this collection visitor studies is based upon Dillman's Tailored Design Method (TDM) for internet surveys. The TDM has been shown to increase response rates, improve accuracy, and reduce cost and burden hours. A systematic sampling procedure, based on the user statistics tallied by ORIC staff from the previous year, will require intercepting every *nth* visitor group to participate in the study. Visitors, in the sample, will be contacted by VSP-trained interviewers after they have received services from ORIC staff. Persons who contact ORIC staff in person, at the counter, will be asked to complete the on-site version of the survey. Persons who contact ORIC over the phone will be asked if they would be willing to complete the survey online after receiving the service. An URL with password control will be sent to the user via email. Each interviewer will receive 1-1/2 hours of training on how to conduct on-site surveys. This training will cover: sampling intervals, sampling bias, and visitor and the interviewer safety. Interviewers will be given instructions on how to use the prepared script and how to fill out survey log. Quality control will be ensured by periodically monitoring interviewers and by checking their paperwork at the end of each day of surveying. A random subset of 800 respondents will be selected to participate in a post-trip survey. This subgroup will consist of all respondents (from either survey) who stated that they were planning to travel in within the next 2 weeks. An algorithm will be written to send emails including web link and password to the online survey to the selected respondents. Email reminders will be sent after 1 week and 3 weeks of the initial email to increase response rate. **(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 2 minutes. 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 study.

<u>On-site or internet Survey</u>
Upon completion of the transaction with ORIC staff, a random sample of visitors will be asked to complete a survey on site. A survey interviewer will present the questionnaire on a clipboard with the request that it be returned upon completion.

For those individuals who contact the ORIC staff by telephone phone, a survey interviewer will speak to them after the transaction with the ORIC staff is complete. Upon agreement the interviewer discuss the purpose of the study and will request an email address. The interviewer will tell the potential respondent that a survey will be emailed within a designated timeframe (see phone survey log).

For the participants that decline to participate in either version of the survey, they will be asked 3 questions. This information will be used in the nonresponse bias analysis:

> *1) Is this your first time using ORIC?*
> *2) What is your zip code (or name of the country)?*
> *3) What is your age?*

The number of visitors refusing to participate will be recorded and used to calculate the overall response rate for the collection.

<u>Post-trip Survey</u>
Names and email addresses will be recorded and used to send this subgroup of respondents a web link, unique password and user name for the post-trip survey. Email reminders will be sent 1 week and 3 weeks after the initial email to remind participants.

(d) Expected Response Rate/Confidence Levels:

A total of 2200 visitors will be randomly selected to participate in the on-site, online, and post-trip surveys. Of those it is estimated that 2000 will participate in the survey (10% refusal rate). The number of refusals will be recorded and reported in a survey log, and will be used in calculating the response rate. Among 2000 participants, 800 who responded that they will have travel plans within the next 2 weeks will be randomly selected to receive a post-trip survey. Based on previous Web-based survey conducted by the VSP, 416 (52%) are expected to complete online follow-up survey. With this sample size, there will be 95% confidence that the survey findings will be accurate to within 2.1 percentage points. Thus, the proposed sample size will be adequate for bivariate comparisons 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.

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

During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each visitor if they are willing to participate in the survey. The interviewer will ask all visitors if they would be willing to answer the three questions listed above in item 9c. The responses to these questions will be used in the non-response bias analysis for on-site and online surveys.

For post-trip survey, any potential non response bias will be determined by using the demographic information (e.g., age, zip code and race/ethnicity) – from the onsite survey to determine if any demographic was under-represented. Responses will be recorded on a log for every survey contact. Results of the nonresponse bias check will be described in a report and the implications for ORIC planning and management will be discussed.

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

Most questions have been included in other VSP questionnaires or appear in the NPS Known Pool of Questions. The questionnaire format and many of the questions have been used in 214 previous VSP survey instruments. Questionnaires are regularly peer reviewed by NPS managers and university professors.

| 10 | **Burden Estimates:** | We plan to approach at least 2,200 individuals during the sampling period. With an anticipated response rate of 90%, we expect to receive 2,000 total responses for this collection. |

Among 2000 participants, we will randomly select 800 individuals who responded that they will have travel plans within the next 2 weeks will receive a post-trip survey we expect that 416 will complete the post survey.

We expect that the initial contact time will be at least one minute per person (2,200 x 2 minute = 73 hours). We will ask everyone we approach to at least to answer the three questions that will be used for the non-response check. This is estimated to take no more than 2 minutes

For those who agree to participate in the pre-trip survey we expect that 2000 will complete and return the survey, with that, an additional 13 minutes will be required to complete the follow through (2000 response x 13 minutes = 433 hours). The burden for this collection is estimated to be XXX hours. For the 800 visitors who agree to participate in the post-trip survey we expect that 416 will complete and return the post-trip survey, with that, 5 minutes will be required to complete the follow through (416 response x 5 minutes = 35 hours). The total respondent burden for this collection will be 541 hours.

Estimated Number of Contacts		**Estimation of Time**		**Estimation of Respondent Burden**	
Total Number of Initial Contacts	2,200	Estimated Time (mins.) to Complete Initial Contact	2	Estimated Burden Hours	73

Estimated number completing pre-trip survey	2,000	On-site response	13	Estimated Burden Hours	433
Estimated number completing post-trip survey	416	Time to complete and return surveys	5	Estimated Burden Hours	35

Total Burden Hours 541

11. **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 also be posted on the Park Studies Unit VSP website at: http:/psu.uidaho.edu/vsp.reports.htm; and we will submit a copy of the technical completion report, as required, to the NPS Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection.