



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Social Science Program

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Programmatic Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

Submission Date 9-3-2013

1. **Project Title:** Visitor study at Fort Monroe National Monument (FOMR)

2. **Abstract:** *Fort Monroe National Monument was authorized on 11/1/2011, creating a national monument out of a former army base. This site's history dates back to the 17th century and includes historic fortifications and the North Beach, on a peninsula near Hampton, Virginia. The National Park Service (NPS) wants to gather data about the current visitors and obtain opinions to plan for future visitors, to establish baseline data. No previous visitor studies have been conducted. Since the site is brand new to the NPS, visitor input is needed to plan appropriate services and facilities for this site into the future. Future management plans will all benefit from having this baseline visitor data. A mail-back questionnaire will be used to gather information from visitors and a focus group will be used to gather local residents' preferences regarding the future operation of the site.*

(not to exceed 150 words)

3. **Principal Investigator Contact Information**

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Project Information

5. **Park(s) For Which Research is to be Conducted:** Fort Monroe National Monument

6. **Survey Dates:** 9/16/2013 - 10/20/2013

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:** *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, gateway communities and regions, and human interactions with park resources. Information on visitor perceptions about security and safety will also be evaluated. Such studies are needed to provide a scientific basis for park planning and development decisions.*

Management Justification:

Fort Monroe National Monument was authorized on 11/1/2011, creating a national monument out of a former army base. This relatively small park (325 acres) has just recently started receiving visitors and the National Park Service (NPS) wants information about visitors to establish baseline. The portions of the peninsula managed by the NPS require a cohesive plan to direct the on-site services and facilities. This collection will be used to provide feedback from visitors and local community members about park management that will be used during collaborative planning efforts with partners (Commonwealth of Virginia, City of Hampton, Fort Monroe Authority and United States Army).

The findings from the visitor survey will be used to:

- establish baseline profile of current visitors
- provide feedback about visitor experiences at the current site facilities and visitor experiences currently available
- obtain data about visitor activities, interests, length of stay, etc.
- obtain visitor preferences about the services and facilities they would like to have available.

The findings from the focus group will be used to:

- obtain local residents' preferences about the development of facilities,
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- services and recreational opportunities of the nearby national monument
- find out how residents have used the national monument
- obtain information about issues that residents want considered in the planning process

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

(a) Respondent Universe:

Visitor survey: The respondent universe for this collection will be all recreational visitors, age 16 and older, visiting the park during the study period (July 1-7, 2013). Visitors will be sampled as they enter the monument by vehicle or on foot at Casemate Museum, Engineer’s Pier, Outlook Beach, Continental Park, O-Club, and Colonies RV Park.

Resident Focus Group: The respondent universe for this collection will include local residents (ages 18 and older) who live on the Fort Monroe peninsula and who use the monument. Park employees, Fort Monroe Authority, and other collaborators will assist in recruiting process. The sampling is estimated to include 64 individuals.

(b) Sampling Plan/Procedures:

This collection will use an on-site questionnaire and focus groups to collect the following information:

- individual characteristics
- trip/visit characteristics
- activities
- evaluation of park services/facilities,
- perceptions of their park experiences, and
- opinions on park management

Park visitors will be randomly selected to participate in one of the survey as they visit the park during the ten-day study period.

Visitor Survey: We will use an on-site interview method following systematic sampling procedures. Each interviewer will contact every n^{th} visitor at one of the six designated intercept site: 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 survey day. To avoid double sampling the interviewer will ask visitors if they are residents of the area and if they plan to attend focus group session. Those who are already committed to the focus group sessions will be excluded from the sampling frame.

Focus Group: Because results of the focus groups will not be used to generalize any user groups outside the park, the sampling and calculation method used for surveys will not be used. Fort Monroe Authority and other collaborators have agreed to assist in recruiting local residents, who are also frequent users of the park. In order to achieve maximum variation in the range of opinions we will ask recruiters to invite individuals who are residents on the Fort Monroe peninsula with a wide range of ages, levels of income, and gender. A letter from the superintendent will be sent to eligible candidates via Fort Monroe Authority to invite them to participate in focus group sessions. Follow-ups will be conducted via

telephone and email to confirm time and location with participants. We plan to hold 8 focus group sessions at a location outside the park in the community.

(c) Instrument Administration:

Visitor survey

The initial contact with visitors will be used to explain the study and determine if visitors are interested in participating. This should take approximately 1 minute. As each group is encountered, the survey interviewer will ask the individual with the next birthday, who is at least 18 years of age, to serve as the respondent for the study. All individuals approached will be asked the non-response bias questions (see item 9e below). The visitors refusing to participate will be asked if they would be willing to take two minutes to respond to the non-response bias questions listed below. The number of refusals will be recorded and used to calculate the overall response rate for the collection.

Visitors selected for participation in the survey will be read the following script:

“Hello, my name is _____. I am conducting a survey for the National Park Service to better understand your opinions about this park's programs and services. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to take a questionnaire and mail it back to us using the self-addressed envelope?”

→If **YES** - then ask, “has any member of your group been asked to participate in this survey before?”

If **“YES”** (already asked to participate) then, “Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study we hope that you will return the questionnaire soon. Have a great day.”

If **“NO”** (have not been previously asked to participate) then,
“Thank you for agreeing to participate. Who in your group is at least 16 years old and has the next birthday? [The surveyor will ask them to start the process by answering the non-response bias questions (listed below). The responses will be recorded in spaces provided on the tracking sheet. The surveyor will hand them a survey packet including the questionnaire and a self-addressed stamp envelope].

→If **NO-** (soft refusal) - ask them if they would be willing to answer the non-response bias questions (listed below) and then thank them for their time. [The surveyor will record responses in spaces provided on the tracking sheet].

→If **NO-** (hard refusal) - end the contact and thank them for their time.

Once the visitor has agreed to participate in the study, we will ask them to provide or personally record their name, address, and phone number or email address on the survey tracking sheet - this information will only be used to follow-up with all non-respondents. At the end of the survey sampling period, all visitors accepting a survey packet on-site will be mailed a thank you/reminder postcard 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 to non-respondents after 35 working days with a stamped, addressed replacement questionnaire.

Focus Group

Focus groups will be administered and moderated by VSP personnel. Each session will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. The sessions will be voice-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Contact information and full transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet. The responses will be coded and participants will be assigned different code names in all analyses and publications to ensure anonymity.

(d) Expected Response Rate/Confidence Levels:

Visitor Survey: The response rate for the survey is based on VSP surveys at similar park sites. Based on the survey sample size, there will be 95% confidence that the survey findings will be accurate to within 5% (Table 1 below). Thus, the proposed sample size will be adequate for bivariate comparisons and will allow for comparisons between study sites and more sophisticated multivariate analysis. Non-response bias will be checked and results will be weighted to counter balance the effects if 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 (Table 1).

A total of 370 visitors will be contacted during the sampling period. Based on similar studies conducted by the VSP, 340 (92%) visitors will agree to participate in the survey. The number of refusals will be recorded and reported in a tracking sheet, and will be used in calculating the response rate. We expect that 221 visitors (65%) will complete and return the survey by mail. Based on the survey sample size, there will be 95% confidence that the survey findings will be accurate to within 5 percentage points.

Resident Focus Group: Fort Monroe National Monument is building connections with its local communities via the Fort Monroe Authority and other collaborators. These partnerships will be used to recruit focus group participants. The target audiences are individuals who are at least 18 years old and use the park frequently for recreation purposes. A letter from the superintendent will be distributed to communities. Individuals who agree to participate will receive confirmation of the focus group time and location via phone. It is expected that each focus group will include approximately 6 to 10 participants. We plan to contact 128 individuals to recruit 64 focus group participants for 8 focus group sessions.

Because the design is qualitative and uses purposive samples selected from targeted groups, there is no statistical basis for generalizing the findings to all visitors. Therefore, response rates and confidence levels/intervals do not present the same concerns as they do in quantitative studies based on probability samples and employing inferential statistical analysis. The findings will be used to provide park managers with information that can be used in their collaborative planning process with partners and local communities.

Table 1: Expected/Actual Response Rates/Confidence Levels

	Number of Initial Contacts	Number accepting survey	Expected Response Rate	Expected/ Number of Responses	Margin of Error +/- %
Visitor survey	370	340	65%	221	5%
Resident Focus Group	128	n/a	50%	64	n/a
Total	468			285	

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

During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each visitor four questions taken from the survey. These questions will be used in a non-response bias analysis.

1. Is this your first time visiting Fort Monroe National Monument?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your zip code? (or name of country for international visitor)
4. Is Fort Monroe your primary destination on this trip?

Responses will be recorded on a tracking sheet for every contact. Gender of the participants will also be observed and recorded on the tracking sheet. Results of the non-response bias check will be described in a report and any 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 254 previous VSP survey instruments. The questions are taken from the currently approved list of questions in NPS Pool of Known Questions (OMB Control Number: 1024-0224; Current Expiration Date: 8-31-2014). Variations of the questions have been reviewed by NPS managers and University of Idaho professors.

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Burden Estimates:

Visitor Survey

We plan to approach 370 random visitors at selected locations as they enter the national monument. The initial contact time is approximately 3 minutes in total (one minute will be used to explain the purpose of the survey and determine visitors' willingness to participate; and another two minutes will be used to ask and record information for non-response bias checking). We estimate that 30 individuals (8%) will completely refuse to participate. For those individuals we will record their reason for refusal if given. For those who agree to participate (n= 340), we expect that 221 will complete and return the survey. With that an additional 20 minutes will be required to complete and return the questionnaire (221 x 20 minutes=74 hours).

Resident Focus Group

We plan to approach 128 individuals during the recruitment process. A letter from superintendent will be sent to eligible community members (at least 18 years old and frequently use the park) and follow up by email or telephone will be conducted to confirm time and meeting location. The list of contact will be provided by Fort Monroe Authority. We expect that the initial contact time will be five minutes per person (128 x 5 minutes = 11 hours). We expect that based on the selection process, 64 people will agree to participate. Each focus group session is estimated to take 60 minutes to complete (64x60 minutes = 64 hours).

The total burden hour for this collection will be 167 hours.

Table 2: Estimation of Burden

Estimated Number of Contacts		Estimation of Time (minutes)		Estimation of Respondent Burden (hours)	
Initial contact	370	Initial contact for survey	3	Estimated Burden	18
Expected to complete survey	221	Complete survey	20	Estimated Burden	74
Number of initial contact for focus group	128	Initial contact for focus group	5	Estimated Burden	11
Expected number of focus group participants	64	Time to complete focus group session	60	Estimate Burden	64
				Total Burden	167

11. **Reporting** The study results will be presented in an internal agency report for NPS managers.
- Plan:** Response frequencies will be tabulated and measures of central tendency computed (e.g., mean, median, mode, as appropriate). The report will be archived with the NPS Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection as required by the NSP Programmatic Approval Process; and 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 in a report for the NPS covering overall use estimates and local economic impacts.