

Supporting Statement A

NPS Study of Value of Natural Sounds: A Pilot Study

OMB Control Number 1024-NEW

Terms of Clearance: None

General Instructions

A completed Supporting Statement A must accompany each request for approval of a collection of information. The Supporting Statement must be prepared in the format described below, and must contain the information specified below. If an item is not applicable, provide a brief explanation. When the question "Does this ICR contain surveys, censuses, or employ statistical methods?" is checked "Yes," then a Supporting Statement B must be completed. OMB reserves the right to require the submission of additional information with respect to any request for approval.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection.

Due to the impacts of human-caused sounds, the National Park Service (NPS) is developing sound management policies for a number of national parks. Examples of possible sound management actions or policies include installing electrical hookups at campsites to replace noisy generators, installing noise barriers to contain noise, and implementing flight paths that may require more fuel burn in order to avoid sensitive parts of the park.

Currently, the NPS has no information about the value that visitors hold for preserving natural sound conditions in national parks; nor does NPS have any information of how human-caused sound conditions affect the likelihood of visitation to national parks. At this point, the NPS is requesting permission to conduct focus groups that will be used to pilot test the central questions that will be used in a subsequent survey to estimate the general public's value for natural sounds in national parks. Once the focus group sessions are completed, a separate package, including a pilot study and potentially a final survey will be developed and submitted to OMB for review and consideration for approval.

This collection is justified and authorized by the following laws and regulations:

- **16 U.S.C. §a-1 NPS Organic Act**
"This act establishes and authorizes the National Park Service "to conserve the scenery and the national and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

This collection is justified by the following National Park Service Policies:

- **NPS Soundscape Management Policy 4.9**
"Using appropriate management planning, superintendents will identify what levels of human-caused sound can be accepted within the management purposes of parks...in and adjacent to parks, the Service will monitor human activities that generate noise that adversely affects park soundscapes, including noise caused by mechanical or electronic devices. The Service will take action to prevent or minimize all noise that, through frequency, magnitude, or duration, adversely affects the natural soundscape or other park resources or values, or that exceeds levels that have been identified as being acceptable to, or appropriate for, visitor uses at the sites being monitored."
- **NPS Director's Order #47: Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management**
"It directs park managers to (1) measure baseline acoustic conditions, (2) determine which existing or proposed human-made sounds are consistent with park purposes, (3) set acoustic management goals and objectives based on those purposes, and (4) determine which noise sources are impacting the park and need to be addressed by management."
- **NPS Cultural Soundscape Management Policy 5.3.1.7**
"This section of the 2006 Management Policies states that, "The Service will preserve soundscape resources and values of the parks to the greatest extent possible to protect opportunities for appropriate transmission of cultural and historic sounds that are fundamental components of the purposes and values for which the parks were established."

2. **Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.**

This is a new collection. We will use the results of this pilot study to:

- improve the clarity of the survey instructions and responses to key variables/questions,
- chose a method for describing sound conditions using audio clips, and

- refine the computerized method of collection (i.e., using a tablet computer for fielding the questionnaire).

This collection will consist of three separate efforts (two will be on-site with park visitors and one will be with the general public in 3 different cities).

Visitor Survey and Focus Groups: We will recruit 36 adults (18 years old and older) to complete and provide feedback on the central questions of the paper version of the visitor surveys. These types of focus groups typically involve eight to 10 participants. Our past experience indicates that by the fourth focus groups, recurrent themes begin to emerge – when using a single instrument. Therefore we have found that additional focus groups (>4) have not yielded any new insights. Therefore we will host four separate focus groups with nine participants per group. Moderators will be used to facilitate each focus group. A moderator's guide will be used to gather feedback about the survey that includes: the clarity of the instructions; the use of the text only method to describe sound conditions; responses to the contingent valuation question; and the effectiveness of using audio clips to describe sound conditions.

General Population Survey and Focus Groups: Focus groups for the general population survey will be conducted in three different US cities. We will recruit 54 adults (18 years old and older) to provide feedback on the proposed general population survey. We only will host six focus groups (two focus groups in each city) because limited project funds prevent us from conducting more than six focus groups to test the general population survey. In each city, one group will be composed of people who have never visited a “natural” national park¹, and the other will be composed of people who have visited a natural national park in the past. Moderators will be used to facilitate each focus group.

Visitor Survey using Tablet Computer and Debriefing Interviews: We will recruit 16 adults (18 years old and older) to complete the draft version of the on-site visitor questionnaire using tablet computers (audio clip version). The primary purpose of the debriefing interviews will be to gather feedback about the use of the tablet computer to conduct the survey and the use of headphones to

¹ A natural national park is a park that has a focus on natural aspects as opposed to historical or cultural aspects. As an example, Sequoia National Park would be considered a “natural” national park while the National Mall would not.

play the audio clips used to describe the sound conditions. Interviewers will conduct the debriefing session on-site at the selected park. Each interview will be recorded. We anticipate that the 16 interviews will be sufficient to test the functionality of the tablet computer as a method to complete the survey and hear the sound clips.

3. **Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden and specifically how this collection meets GPEA requirements.**

Tablet computers will be used by 16 participants completing the electronic version of the visitor survey (audio clip version) prior to the debriefing interview. Each focus group session will be recorded to allow for transcription.

4. **Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information is already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

There is no known duplication of efforts.

5. **If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

There will be no impacts on small businesses or other small entities.

6. **Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

There are no consequences if this pilot study is not conducted. However, the results of this pilot study are necessary to develop the final instruments required by park service managers with regards to the *NPS Soundscape Management Policy 4.9*, *NPS Director's Order #47: Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management*, and *NPS Cultural Soundscape Management Policy 5.3.1.7*.

7. **Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:**

- * **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- * **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

- * requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
- * requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;
- * in connection with a statistical survey that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- * requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;
- * that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or
- * requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information, unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

There are no special circumstances

8. **If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years, and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

On February 4, 2011, we published a 60 day Federal Register notice (76 FR 6495) stating that we intended to request OMB approval for this activity. We did not receive any comments that required that we make any changes to the survey instruments or to the burden estimates for this collection.

During 2011, the survey team worked with researchers who had completed other NPS surveys investigating the opinions of visitors regarding sound and/or crowding conditions. In addition we consulted with the acoustic researchers listed below to better understand how visitors responded to different sound conditions in similar research. The discussions with these researchers led us to

further development of the survey that now includes audio clips.

- 1) Frank Turina, NPS Natural Sounds Program
- 2) Kurt Fristrup, NPS Natural Sounds Program
- 3) Gretchen Nurse, the University of Arizona
- 4) Peter Newman, Colorado State University

We also requested a review of the survey instruments by the five economists listed below. That review required significant revisions for the section introducing the choice exercises, the wording of the contingent valuation (CV) question, and the dollar values used for the changes in costs for the choice exercises. The economists included:

- 1) Lynne Koontz, Economist, USGS
- 2) John Loomis, Economist, Colorado State University
- 3) Robert “Chip” Patterson, Economist, Industrial Economics
- 4) John Duffield, Economist, University of Montana
- 5) Joseph Cooper, Economist, USDA

The following recommendations and changes were made regarding the instruments that we will use during the focus groups and interviews.

<p>Recommendation #1. Make the visitor survey and the general population survey as comparable as possible (wanted the visitors and general population to value the same sound conditions).</p> <p>Response: Except for minor wording differences, the valuation questions (conjoint and CV) are the same between the visitors survey and the general population survey. Additionally, a text-based visitor survey was created in addition to the sound clip-based survey in order to have a high degree of comparability between the visitor and general population surveys.</p>
<p>Recommendation #2. Add a no cost /no change scenario to each version of the survey. This will help to acknowledge that visitors may have different experiences during their park visit.</p> <p>Response: The choice exercises now include a no cost/no change scenario.</p>
<p>Recommendation #3: Include a CV question in case the more complicated choice exercises do not yield usable results.</p> <p>Response: A CV question was added.</p>

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of

contractors or grantees.

There will be no gift or payments for the park visitors who participate in the focus groups or debriefing interviews. However, for the participants recruited for the general population focus groups, we will offer \$75 as compensation for travel costs to and from the focus group. Following the OMB memo (*Guidance on Agency Survey and Statistical Information Collections - 2006*) concerning the use of incentives for focus group participants, we are requesting the use of an incentive to support this activity.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality will be provided during this study. We will explain to respondents that all comments in our written summary of findings will remain anonymous and we will not include the names of any study participants with the results or the findings from this study.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This study does not include questions that are considered sensitive in nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:

- * Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.
- * If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.
- * Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included under "Annual Cost to Federal Government."

This collection will involve three efforts:

Visitor Survey and Focus Groups: We anticipate that we will need to contact 144 on-site visitors in order to have at least 36 adults who will agree to participate in a 90 minute focus group session to provide feedback on the questionnaire. There will be four different focus groups with approximately nine participants per group. The initial contact with visitors will be used to explain the purpose of the focus group and to determine their availability to participate. The initial contact should take approximately five minutes. Each focus group will take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

General Population Survey and Focus Groups: We anticipate that we will need to contact 216 adults in order to have at least 54 adults to participate in the focus groups for the general population survey. The initial contact will take about five minutes. There will be a total of six different groups held in three different US cities, with two focus groups per city (n=9 people per group). The focus groups will take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

Visitor Survey using Tablet Computer and Debriefing Interviews: We will contact a total of 32 on-site visitors in order to have at least 16 adults participate in the study. The initial contact will take two minutes to explain the survey and to ask for participation. Those agreeing to participate will be asked to complete the electronic version of the survey using a tablet computer and to provide feedback during an on-site interview. The time to complete the survey and on-site interviews will take about one hour (20 minutes to complete the survey exercise and 40 minutes to complete the debriefing interview).

Table 1. Total Estimated Burden Hours

Activity	Respondents	Completion Time (minutes)	Burden Hours
Visitor Surveys Focus Groups			
Initial Contact	144	5	12
Sessions	36	90	54
General Population Survey Focus Group			
Initial Contact	216	5	18
Sessions	54	90	81

Visitor Survey Tablet Computer Initial Contact	32	2	2
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Activity	Respondents	Completion Time (minutes)	Burden Hours
Survey Exercise	16	20	5
Debriefing Interview	16	40	11
Total	0		0

We estimate the total annual hour burden for this collection will be 183 hours. As shown in Table 2, we estimate the total annual dollar value of this collection to be \$5,691. We multiplied the estimated burden hours by \$31.10 (for individuals or households). This wage figure includes a benefits multiplier and is based on the National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupation and Wages, (BLS news release USDL-13-1140 for Employer Costs for Employee Compensation—March 2013 at - <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecec.nr0.htm>), dated June 12, 2013).

Table 2. Estimated Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours

Activity	Annual Number of Responses	Total Annual Burden Hours	Dollar Value of Burden Hours (Including Benefits)	Total Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours
Visitor Surveys Focus Groups Initial Contact	144	12	\$31.10	** Expression is faulty **
Sessions	36	54	\$31.10	** Expression is faulty **1,679
General Population Survey Focus Group Initial Contact	216	18	\$31.10	** Expression is faulty **
Sessions	54	81	\$31.10	** Expression is faulty **
Visitor Survey Tablet Computer Initial Contact	32	2	\$31.10	\$62
Survey Exercise	16	5	\$31.10	\$156
Debriefing Sessions	16	11	\$31.10	\$342
Total	0	183		0

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual non-hour cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected in item 12.)

- * **The cost estimate should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component (annualized over its expected useful life) and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component. The estimates should take into account costs associated with generating, maintaining, and disclosing or providing the information (including filing fees paid for form processing). Include descriptions of methods used to estimate major cost factors including system and technology acquisition, expected useful life of capital equipment, the discount rate(s), and the time period over which costs will be incurred. Capital and start-up costs include, among other items, preparations for collecting information such as purchasing computers and software; monitoring, sampling, drilling and testing equipment; and record storage facilities.**
- * **If cost estimates are expected to vary widely, agencies should present ranges of cost burdens and explain the reasons for the variance. The cost of purchasing or contracting out information collection services should be a part of this cost burden estimate. In developing cost burden estimates, agencies may consult with a sample of respondents (fewer than 10), utilize the 60-day pre-OMB submission public comment process and use existing economic or regulatory impact analysis associated with the rulemaking containing the information collection, as appropriate.**
- * **Generally, estimates should not include purchases of equipment or services, or portions thereof, made: (1) prior to October 1, 1995, (2) to achieve regulatory compliance with requirements not associated with the information collection, (3) for reasons other than to provide information or keep records for the government, or (4) as part of customary and usual business or private practices.**

There are no non-hour cost burdens associated with this collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The total annual cost to the Federal Government is \$120,661. This total cost estimate includes the cost to the Federal Government for salaries and benefits for administering this information collection (\$38,111) and operational expenses (\$82,550) including travel. Table 3 below shows Federal staff and grade levels associated with this information collection. We used the Office of Personnel Management Salary Table 2012-DCB (http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2013/general-schedule/dcb_h.pdf) to determine the hourly rate. We multiplied the hourly rate by 1.5 to account for benefits (as implied by the previously referenced BLS news release).

Table 3. Annual Cost to the Federal Government

Position	Grade/Step	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate incl. benefits (1.5 x hourly pay rate)	Estimated time (hours)	Annual Cost
Economist	13/6	\$49.77	\$74.66	172	\$12,842
Social Scientist	13/4	\$46.93	\$70.40	172	\$12,108
Economist	9/4	\$27.21	\$40.82	180	\$7,348
Community Planner (facilitator)	12/1	\$35.88	\$53.82	108	\$5,813
Total					0

This total cost estimate also includes the operational expenses associated with this collection (Table 4). These costs are largely for travel, facilities for focus groups, federal administrative costs, and supplies.

Table 4. Operational Expenses

Operational Expenses	Estimated Costs
Travel	\$23,000
Focus group facilities (general population survey)	\$30,000
Incentive (\$75 payment x 54 respondents)	\$4,050
Volpe Center Administrative Costs	\$24,500
Survey printing	\$1,000
Total	0

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

This is a new collection. We will not use this information to conduct any statistical analysis. The responses will only be used to create the final versions of the survey instruments.

16. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

No such approval is sought.

17. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

There are no exceptions to the Certification Statement.