1Supporting Statement A

National Park Service Visitor Survey Card

OMB Control Number 1024-0216

Terms of Clearance: *This ICR is approved for a period of three years. Upon renewal of this ICR, NPS must submit to OMB the results of the non-response bias analysis associated with the data collected under this ICR.*

Response:

In response to this Notice of Action, the Park Service Unit (PSU) proposed a pilot study to determine non-response bias for the VSC study project. The strategy was to select 33 random NPS sites and have park staff perform the non-response check. The goal was to use the information gathered to compare information about participants and non-participants at site level. T-tests were to be used to compare distance from home to the park and overall quality rating. Chi-square tests were to be used to compare participants' and non-participants' gender. Due to insufficient data, the non-response bias analysis was not able to be completed. Since the surveys were distributed by park staff or volunteers, the PSU had limited control of scheduling and the actual distribution process (whether procedures were followed) at the parks. Of the 33 participating sites the following information was gathered:

- *11 sites did not comply and obtained no information for the non-response bias check*
- *7 sites did not record any refusals*
- *8 sites recorded some refusals but didn't collect information (zip code, gender, and overall quality rating) for the non-response bias check*
- *4 sites recorded too few refusals to provide sufficient data for non-response bias check*
- *3 sites had potentially usable data for the non-response bias check*

Our solution is that we will provide better training for interviewers, and we have modified the survey script to gather non-response data for all refusals.

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.

The National Park Service (NPS) is required to provide an understanding of visitor satisfaction and an understanding of the park and agency's performance related to The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) NPS Goals IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and appreciation). The Visitor Survey Card (VSC) was developed to measure each park unit's performance related to these two goals. The Visitor Survey Card contains eight questions regarding visitor evaluations of service and facility quality, awareness of park significance, and basic demographic information. Each year, all NPS units nationwide (approximately 332) are required to collect data using the Visitor Survey Card. Data and information collected through the VSC are used to measure and report performance related to a broad list of GPRA Goals and to provide feedback used by Superintendents and other managers to develop performance improvement plans.

This information allows the park to move beyond the traditional method of reporting expenditures in terms of funding sources, and instead it allows the parks to report expenditures in terms of activities. As a result, the park can communicate its financial situation more clearly to external audiences. Furthermore, using the same program structure at all parks provides a needed measure of comparability across park units. The NPS adopted the Visitor Survey Card as a means for assessing visitor satisfaction across all parks because regular, cost effective surveying efforts are needed by park managers rather than a few select surveys on a park-by-park basis each year. The better-than-expected results from previous surveys are the basis for the continuation of the project. Therefore, we are requesting the renewal of the Visitor Survey Card so that we may continue to fulfill our program specific mission to provide an interdisciplinary approach that ensures the integrated use of social science research in decision making.

This collection will provide information required by the following laws:

- **The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (P.L. 103-62).**
  GPRA goals IIa1 and IIb1:

  <u>IIa1</u>: Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services and appropriate recreational opportunities.

  IIb1: Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

- **National Park Service Organic Act, 16 U.S.C. §a-1**
  "…which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural 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".

- **National Environmental Policy Act of as amended in 1982 (Sec 102 [42 U.S.C. § 4332A])**
  The Federal Government shall utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decision making which may have an impact on man's environment.

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.

Since 1982, the information from this collection has been consistently used park managers to assess visitor services at more than 330 units where the survey has been administered annually. The primary objective of this collection is to provide to information that will be used to improve the visitor services and experiences within the parks. The measures of visitor services are viable indicators of NPS performance and the trend data provided by the survey are the basis for annual performance targets. The studies have answered questions about visitors: who they are, what they do, what they need, and what their opinions are. Park managers and planners have used the results to improve visitor services and facilities. Local businesses have also used the data to determine how visitors are contributing to the area economy.

The Visitor Survey Card contains eight questions regarding visitor evaluations of service and facility quality, awareness of park significance, and basic demographic information. The information will be collected on-site using a mail-back format.

The measures of visitor services listed below serve as viable indicators of NPS annual GPRA performance measures:

- park personnel
- visitor centers
- directional signs
- restrooms
- campgrounds
- picnic areas
- ranger led/conducted programs
- exhibits
- park brochures
- lodging
- food services
- gift shops

<u>Question Justification</u>

The Visitor Survey Card contains three categories of questions: *park facilities visitor services*, and *recreational opportunities*; one question concerning the quality of services offered; followed by two demographic questions, and two open-ended questions.

The variables rate the services using a five-point scale ranging from "very good" to "very poor," with an "average" mid-point.

Park facilities: The responses to the questions in this section are used to assess the condition of facilities allowing the NPS to mitigate costs, improve visitor satisfaction and increase safety awareness. The following five items are used to determine visitor satisfaction with park facilities:

- Visitor center
- Exhibits (indoor and outdoor)
- Restrooms
- Walkways, trails, and roads
- Campgrounds and/or picnic areas.

Visitor services: The ratings in this section are used to understand visitor satisfaction about services offered within the park. Because of previous survey responses, park visitors are now provided with an orientation of services to ensure a safe and enjoyable visit while minimizing visitor related accidents and damages. The following five topic areas are used to rate park services:

- Assistance from park employees
- Park map or brochure
- Ranger programs
- Commercial services in the park (food, lodging, gifts, rentals, etc.)
- Value for entrance fee paid.

Recreational opportunities: The following two items are used to determine visitor satisfaction with the recreational and educational experiences available in a park. Tracking these ratings over time allows managers to understand the scope of appreciation for the cultural and outdoor recreational opportunities available in parks. The experiences include:

- Learning about nature, history, or culture
- Outdoor recreation (sightseeing, camping, bicycling, boating, hiking, etc.)

The final section of the survey includes a question about the overall quality of the services offered, two demographic questions (gender and age). Two open-ended questions prompt the respondent to explain the national signification of the park and to provide any additional comments concerning aspects of their experience not previously covered.

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.

The survey instrument is designed as a self-addressed and postage paid mail back postcard. The visitor will have the option of returning the card via postal mail or using a designated on-site survey drop-box. No automated data collection will take place.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information

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.**

This information collection will not impact 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.**

This request correlates with the goal in the NPS and Department of the Interior's Strategic Plans used to measure specific GPRA Goals IIa1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIb1 (visitor understanding and appreciation) and complies with P.L. 103-62. Visitor responses are used, by park managers, to compare to the significance statements identified in the park's GPRA plans. Without this survey park managers will not have fundamental information needed to meet their management goals.

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.**

No special circumstances apply to this information collection.

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 10, 2014, a 60-day Federal Register notice (79 FR 7697) was published stating an intention to request OMB approval for an information collection associated with the *National Park Service Visitor Survey Card*. In this notice, public comment was solicited for 60 days ending April 11, 2014. No public comments concerning this notice were received.

In addition to our Federal Register notice, comments were solicited from several experts knowledgeable of customer satisfaction surveys. The individuals listed below provided editorial suggestions and feedback concerning the clarity of the process and approximate length of time it would take to complete the questionnaire, based on their previous experiences with similar collections. Their suggestions were incorporated to provide minor improvements to the grammatical clarity of the instruments. The reviewers also said that the process was straightforward and that the instructions were very helpful. The respondents suggested that, based on their review of the final version of the surveys, the estimated burden time to complete the questionnaire will take three minutes per respondent as we suggested in the 60 day notice. This estimate reflects the time it takes each respondent to read the instructions and complete the questionnaire.

Individuals Contacted Outside the Agency:

Jim Gramann, Ph.D., Professor
Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences
Email: jgramann@tamu.edu

Alan Graefe, Professor
Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Management
Email: gyu@psu.edu

C. Scott Shafer, Professor
Department of Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences
Email: sshafer@tamu.edu

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

remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts will be given to respondents.

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

We will not provide any assurance of confidentiality to any respondents. Data collected will only be reported in aggregates and no individually identifiable responses will be reported.

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.

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked.

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."**

We estimate that the total burden for this collection will be 4,062 hours. Our estimate is based upon our own experience with previous iterations of this collection plus the outreach described in item 8. For this collection we have considered the time to contact the visitors, and for each respondent to read and complete the survey.

The initial contact will be used to explain the study and determine if the visitor is interested in participating in the study. This contact should take approximately 1 minute. All visitors agreeing to take the survey will be given an instrument and asked to complete it on site or mailing it back at a later time. A total of 132,000 visitors will be approached during the initial contact. It is estimated that 27% (n=35,640) will be willing to complete the survey. The time to complete and return the survey instrument is estimated to be 3 minutes per respondent.

All visitors refusing to participate in the survey during the initial contact will be asked if they would be willing to answer a non-response bias survey. We believe that 5% (n=4,818) of all the visitors refusing to complete the full survey (n=96,360) will agree to complete the non-response survey. The time to complete the non-response survey is estimated to take less than one minute.

The estimated response rates for this collection are based on previous VSC surveys efforts. The projected number of respondents and the estimated burden for the VSC are indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Total Estimated Burden

	Annual Number of Responses	*Estimated Completion Time per Response*	*Total Annual Burden Hours*	*Dollar Value of Burden Hour Including Benefits*	*Total Dollar Value of Annual Burden Hours**
Initial contact	132,000	1 minute	*2,200*	$29.63	$65,186
Completing the Visitor Survey Card	35,640	3 minutes	*1,782*	$29.63	$52,800
Completing the Non-Response Survey	4,818	1 minute	*80*	$29.63	$2,370
TOTAL	**0**		**0**		**0**

**Total is rounded*

We estimate the total annual dollar value of the burden hours will be $120,356. The hour cost is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) news release USDL-14-0390 of March 12, 2014, to obtain the individual/household average hourly wage using the average full compensation per hour including benefits for private industry (http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf). According to this news release, the private industry hourly wage is $29.63. We used this information to calculate the value of respondent burden hours.

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 is no non-hour cost burden, record keeping nor any fees associated with collection of this information.

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 estimated cost to the Federal Government for collecting data, analyzing result and preparing reports as a result of this collection of information is $196,500. This includes non-federal FTE, travel, equipment and operating costs associated with this information collection (Table 2).

Table 2. Costs associated with this information collection

Expense	Annual Cost
Non-federal Personnel FTE	
Research Scientist	$64,000
Technical Reports Specialist	$9,000
Part--time Assistant	$5,000
Travel	$6,000
Operating Expenses	
Printing/Shipping materials	$35,000
Equipment	$2,500
Miscellaneous (VISA subcontract)	$75,000
TOTAL	**196,500**

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments in hour or cost burden.

We have restructured the study in such a way that the non-response survey will be administered immediately following the first refusal during the initial contact with all visitors contacted rather than a subset. Therefore, we are reporting an anticipated increase in the number of completed non-response surveys. We have also reduced our estimate of the time it takes to complete the non-response survey from three minutes to one minute.

16. 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.

All returned surveys will be electronically scanned and the data analyzed. Frequency distributions will be calculated for each indicator and category. All percentage calculations will be rounded to the nearest percent.

All survey results will be computed and individual data reports will be created for each participating National Park. A separate System-wide Report will provide information for all participating sites. These reports will be produced in a printable PDF format and will have formats and tables familiar to park mangers. Copies of the reports will be archived with the National Park Service Social Science Program for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection.

The sampling period each for year will begin in February and end in August. Reports are typically available by mid-October of each year.

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

We will display the OMB control number and expiration date.

18. 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.