



Programmatic Review and Clearance Process for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

The scope of the Programmatic Review and Clearance Process for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys is limited and will only include individual surveys of park visitors, potential park visitors, and residents of communities near parks. Use of the programmatic review will be limited to non-controversial surveys of park visitors, potential park visitors, and/or residents of communities near parks that are not likely to include topics of significant interest in the review process. Additionally, this process is limited to non-controversial information collections that do not attract attention to significant, sensitive, or political issues. Examples of significant, sensitive, or political issues include: seeking opinions regarding political figures; obtaining citizen feedback related to high-visibility or high-impact issues like the reintroduction of wolves in Yellowstone National Park, the delisting of specific Endangered Species, or drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Submission Date: November 15, 2014

Project Title: Monitoring the Visitor Experience at Isle au Haut, Acadia National Park

Abstract (not to exceed 150 words)

Acadia National Park (ANP) proposes to survey visitors to the Isle au Haut (IAH) district of the park to compare the current condition of the hiking experience to a standard established in a recently completed Visitor Use Management Plan. This standard is based on a daily encounter rate with other hikers along trails. Visitors will be approached at the end of their experience as they wait for the ferry back to the mainland. The goal is to obtain 250 usable surveys.

Principal Investigator Contact Information

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Project Information

Where will the collection take place? (Name of NPS Site) Acadia National Park

Sampling Period Start Date: July 1, 2015 End Date: August 31, 2015

Type of Information Collection Instrument (Check ALL that Apply)

- Mail-Back Questionnaire Face-to-Face Interview Focus Groups
 On-Site Questionnaire Telephone Survey
 Other (list)

Will an electronic device be used to collect information?

No Yes - type of device

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, 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 and development.

The National Park Service (NPS) is charged with understanding and managing visitor experiences as part of its mission. This survey is needed now because visitor experiences at IAH have not been assessed since 2002 when social science research (Bacon et al 2004) was conducted to help inform the management of IAH, especially hiking along park trails.

This survey is also needed now to help ANP comply with P.L. 97-335 which provided specific guidance to ANP staff about managing IAH. The law stated that visitation shall be strictly limited, that a carrying capacity be established, and that the capacity be reviewed on a regular basis and revised as needed. To comply with this law, a Visitor Use Management Plan was recently completed establishing a revised capacity of 128 persons per day that is tied to a daily encounter rate (standard) of no more than six groups per day. ANP has limited control over access to IAH, and counting or estimating daily visitation is a challenge. Thus, periodic visitor surveys are necessary to monitor encounter rates to ensure the encounter standard is met (and therefore the visitor capacity and P.L. 97-335 as well), rather than assuming it is met if use is kept at 128 persons or less. Monitoring encounter rates is a better and more direct measure of the visitor experience.

ANP shares the island of IAH with the Town of IAH and its residents, who are keenly interested in ANP visitor management due to a history of conflict with visitors and their concerns about visitor numbers, all of which led to the enactment of P.L. 97-335. Thus this survey is needed now to demonstrate to the IAH community the NPS commitment to P.L. 97-335 and managing IAH proactively.

References: Bacon, J., D. Laven, S. Lawson, R. Manning, and W. Valliere: Research to Support Carrying Capacity Analysis at Isle au Haut, Acadia National Park, February 2004. Park Studies Laboratory, Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Vermont,

Survey Methodology

(a) Respondent Universe:

The respondent universe for this collection will be all adults (18 years or older) leaving IAH on the 4:30 p.m. ferry during the sampling period (July -August 2015) This ferry picks up park visitors in the park at Duck Harbor and at the Town Landing. These visitors will have spent a half day to a full day visiting the island and have typically been hiking in the park.

(b) Sampling Plan/Procedures:

Twenty summer days (ten each in July and August) will be randomly selected for this collection. We will approach a total of 265 visitor groups during the sampling period. Visitor parties will be contacted as they are waiting for the ferry at Duck Harbor and the Town Landing. The interviewer, a uniformed ranger or volunteer, will first ask if they have been hiking in the park today. If the answer is no (most likely at the Town Landing for residents, workers, or casual visitors), they will move on to the next group. One adult 18 years or older with the closest birthdate will be selected for participation. We expect about 95%, or a total of 250 individuals to agree to complete the survey. We anticipate that the total number of daily participants contacted will be 13-14. We will not exceed 265 contacts for the sampling period.

(c) Instrument Administration:

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. If a group is *interested*, the survey interviewer will ask the *adult* individual within the group who has the next birthday to serve as the respondent. Visitors that refuse to participate will be asked if they would be willing to take one minute to respond to three non-response bias questions(see item 9e below). The number of refusals will be recorded and used to calculate the overall response rate for the collection.

If the answer is yes, they will state that the NPS is conducting a brief visitor survey about their experience on IAH, that it is voluntary and will take about three minutes, and that we would very much like to have their participation. If a visitor refuses to participate, the interviewer will ask for and/or record their age, gender, *and the number of persons in their group* on nonresponse bias data sheet. If they agree to participate, the interviewer will give them a clipboard and questionnaire, and contact the next visitor group for participation and so on, always remaining available to collect the completed surveys as they are finished.

Sample Script: Hi. My name is Charlie Jacobi and I'm a ranger at the park. Have you folks been hiking in the park today?

→ *If YES then - The interviewer will say: We're conducting a brief visitor survey about your hiking experience on Isle au Haut today. It's voluntary, takes about three minutes to complete. We would really appreciate your help today. Has any member of your group been asked to take this survey before?"*

→ *If "YES" (already asked to participate) then, the interviewer will say: "Thank you for participating in this study. Have a great day*

→ *If "NO" (have not been previously asked to participate) then, the interviewer will ask: "Who in your group is at least 18 years old, with the next birthday and is willing to complete the questionnaire? The interviewer will give them a clipboard and questionnaire. After that the interviewer will proceed to contact the next visitor group for participation and so on, always remaining available to answer questions and collect the completed surveys as they are finished.*

→ *If No one in the group agrees to participate- (soft refusal) - the visitor (person 18 years or older) will be asked 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 on the tracking sheet].

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

(d) Expected Response Rate/Confidence Levels:

A total of 265 visitors will be contacted during the sampling period. We estimate that 250 (95%) visitors will agree to participate and return a completed questionnaire. The refusals will be recorded and reported in a survey log, and will be used in calculating the response rate. This response rate was estimated based on previous surveys conducted in other areas of this unit. Based on the survey sample size, there will be 95% confidence that the day-use survey findings will be accurate to within 5 percentage points.

The sample for this collection will be stratified because the majority of visitors leave from Duck Harbor. We will attempt to obtain 200 surveys (80%), from Duck Harbor, and 50 surveys (20%) from the Town Landing. We will approach a total 212 visitor groups at Duck Harbor and 53 at the Town Landing.

Location	Number of Initial Contacts	Expected Response Rate	Expected Number of Responses	Margin of Error +/- %	Confidence Level
Duck Harbor	212	95%	200	6.5%	95%
Town Landing	53	95%	50	6.5%	95%
TOTAL	265	95%	250	6.5%	95%

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

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

- 1) What is your gender (will be observed)?
- 2) How many people are in your group?
3. How did this visit fit into your travel plans? (primary destination, one of several destinations, not a planned destination).
- 4) How old is the person who -might have completed the questionnaire?

Responses will be recorded on a log for every survey contact. Results of the non-response bias check will be reported and any implications for planning and management will be discussed.

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

All of the questions in this survey have been used in prior OMB approved surveys at Isle au Haut and other surveys in Acadia National Park. All questions are taken from the currently approved NPS Pool of Known Questions.

Burden Estimates

Overall, we plan to approach at least 265 groups during the sampling period. With an anticipated 95% response rate, we expect 250 individuals to return a completed survey instrument.

We expect that the initial contact time for all visitors will be one minute. This time will be used to explain the purpose of the survey and to solicit participation (265 visitors x 1 minute = 4 hours).

We expect that 15(6%) visitors will refuse to participate in the survey. For those individuals we will record their reason for refusal if given and an additional minute will be required to complete the non-response bias check for this group (15 refusals x 1 minutes = <1 hour).

For those who agree to participate (n= 250) we expect that, an additional 3 minutes (beyond the initial contact) will be required to complete and return the questionnaire (13 hours).

The total burden for this collection is estimated to be 17 annual hours.

Estimated Total Number		Estimation of Time (minutes)		Estimation of Burden (hours)	
Initial Contacts	265	Initial Contact	1	Initial Contact	4
On-site Refusal/ nonresponse	15	On-site Refusal/ nonresponse	1	On-site Refusal/ nonresponse	<1
Responses	250	To complete response	3	To complete response	13
Total				Total	17

Reporting Plan

The study results will be presented in an internal report. 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.