



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: April 12, 2015

Project Title: Evaluation of National Park Service Presence in Urban Areas

Abstract (not to exceed 150 words)

The researcher will conduct an evaluation of the NPS' presence in urban areas. The sample for this study will be a NPS-provided list of 600 stakeholders in three urban areas. A partnership map will be developed by conducting an exercise with these stakeholders. This exercise will provide information about the strength and direction of relationships with other NPS-identified partners in the area. Also from this sample, semi-structured interviews will be used to collect information from 72 key stakeholders within the local communities. Interviewees will be asked about their experiences and expectations pertaining to the NPS' local presence. The findings from this collection will be used to document the ability of the NPS to build relevant connections with local, urban communities.

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Project Information

Where will the collection take place? (Name of NPS Site) Boston (MA), Tucson (AZ), and Detroit (MI)

Sampling Period

Start Date: June 1, 2015

End Date: May 31, 2016

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 - 1) Interviews - digital audio recorder; 2) Partnership mapping - computer program

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.

Management Justification: Initiated in April 2015, The NPS' Urban Agenda, was developed to: 1) extend the NPS' relevancy to all Americans, 2) emphasize all NPS parks and programs, and 3) nurture a culture of collaboration. A pilot program has been created to determine how the agency functions in an urban context, what natural connections the agency has with the surrounding communities, what perceptions and preconceived notions the communities have about the agency, and where partnerships may be developed or enhanced to make relevant connection between the agency and the community.

NPS managers are interested in evaluating the outcomes of the Urban Agenda's pilot programs to have information needed to fully deploy the program. This collection is intended to gather information that will be used to describe three urban communities' relationships with NPS programs from the perspective of local stakeholders and community partners. This information is currently unknown. To ascertain this information, we will use dual data collection methods to provide data to the NPS.

We acknowledge that this collection seems to be outside the scope of the programmatic approval process. However, we are requesting consideration for approval based on the following connections to the general spirit of the generic clearance. The information is non-controversial and will provide an awareness of:

- 1) characteristics and knowledge of the stakeholders and communities using the services offered by the NPS in the sample areas;
- 2) current preferences and attitudes about the NPS programs offered by focusing on topics

connected to the Urban Agenda; and

- 3) services and facilities needed to fully implement the NPS Urban Agenda program.

Social science research is needed to provide an understanding of the perceptions and values that are often unarticulated by local residents in urban areas. Interviews with stakeholders will provide the NPS with a point of view that will be immediately applicable to the implementation of the Urban Agenda program.

Survey Methodology

(a) Respondent Universe:

The universe for this collection will be selected stakeholders and community leaders in three urban areas: Boston (MA), Tucson (AZ), and Detroit (MI). The NPS will provide a list of names of 600 (200 x 3 sites) stakeholders and community leaders who are active in NPS programs and knowledgeable about the communities they serve. This list of names will include all partners and comprise the entire universe for the partnership mapping and interviews. Everyone on this list will be asked to participate in the partnership mapping. Additionally, the NPS will select 72 (24 x 3 sites) known partners from this list to participate in the interview and a prioritized set of backup names for each site from this list, in the event that any of the original 24 decline participation. The interviewees will be asked to do the interview at the same time they are asked to do the partnership mapping

(b) Sampling Plan/Procedures:

This study uses two sampling procedures and a modified Dillman approach to recruitment.

Sample 1: Interview and Partnership Mapping

The 72 (24 x 3 sites) NPS-identified interviewees on the list will be asked to participate in the interview and partnership mapping. We will email the 72 people recruited for both activities with details about the study, a request for participation in both activities, and our email and telephone contact information. For those who respond (via email or telephone) to this initial contact and agree to participate, we will use their preferred communication mode (email or telephone) to set up a time to do the activities. If a participant declines participation in the interview or has not responded after 10 days, we will email the next NPS-identified backup name for that site. We will continue down this prioritized list until 24 participants from each site agree to be interviewed. If we exhaust the original and backup lists of potential interviewees without reaching 24 per site, we will systematically call these individuals, encouraging participation. For those who agree to participation during this second contact, we will conduct the partnership mapping and/or interview during this telephone call or schedule a time

to do the activities. We will also ask all individuals declining to participate 1) if they would be willing to

Sample 2: Partnership Mapping Only

Each person on the list will be asked to participate in the partnership mapping. After we have scheduled the interviews and partnership mappings for a site (Sample 1), we will email the remaining uncontacted names on the list for that site to participate in the partnership mapping only. The contact email will contain details about the study, a request for partnership mapping participation, and our email and telephone contact information. For those who respond (via email or telephone) to this initial contact and agree to participate, we will use their preferred communication mode (email or telephone) to set up a time to do the activity. Our goal is for 300 people (100 x 3 sites) to participate in the partnership mapping (including those who participate in both the interview and mapping). If we are unable to reach our goal of 100 people per site through Sample 1 and 10 days after contacting Sample 2, we will call the remaining names on the list for that site, encouraging participation. For those who agree to participate during this second contact, we will use this telephone call to conduct the mapping activity or schedule a time to conduct it. We will continue to make telephone calls until 100 people per site agree to complete the mapping activity. We will also ask all individuals declining to participate to answer three questions that will be used in the non-response bias analysis (see item e below).

(c) Instrument Administration:

The two modes to collect information are described below. The findings from both modes will be summarized in a report for the NPS as well to fulfill the requirement of a doctoral dissertation.

Interviews

One-on-one interviews will be used to provide information. We will solicit participation as described in item b above. During the communication to confirm participation, we will establish a location and time for an interview. We will be on-site in each of the three study locations for two, two week periods and will provide respondents with these dates. For on-site interviews, a mutually agreed upon location (e.g., participant's office, public library, public park) and time will be used for the interview. In the event that we cannot schedule a face-to-face interview (primary mode) during the on-site sampling periods, we will schedule a time to conduct a telephone interview (secondary mode). If an interview cannot be scheduled, we will ask the three non-response bias check questions at that time. For both modes will be guided by a set of interview questions. We will begin each interview by explaining the purpose of the data collection and asking permission to record the interview for accurate data transcription. We will also take written notes during the interview. The interview is expected to last up to 90 minutes. We will ask the participant about their experiences with the NPS in the urban area and related topics of importance to NPS managers. The interview will conclude at the end of 90 minutes or when all questions on the interview guide have been answered, whichever comes first. At the end of the interview, we will ask if the interviewee has any questions for us, thank them for their

participation, and provide our contact information again for any participant-initiated follow-up. Once the information collection process for the study is complete and all interviews have been transcribed, the audio recordings and contact information from each interview will be deleted.

Partnership Mapping

Partnership mapping has been used successfully to provide stakeholder analyses in a variety of decision-making contexts, such as describing NPS National Heritage Area community partnerships, Chicago-area wetland conservation networks, and environmental stewardship group connections in Seattle and Baltimore. This mapping exercise will create a visual representation of urban NPS partnership networks based on the perceptions of local community stakeholders. It uses an interactive, on-line tool to plot the perceived characteristics of NPS-partner relationships. We will solicit participation as described in item b above. During the communication to confirm participation, we will establish a time for the mapping activity and email each participant a unique *url* that will be required to access the tool. The exercise will be conducted during a telephone call or in-person following the interview process. It will begin with the researcher and participant accessing the tool via the interactive and shared-view *url* on their personal computers. The researcher will describe the tool and exercise. The participant will be asked to consider their organization’s relationship with the site-specific NPS partners listed on the left and move each partner to one of three general places on the right: 1) one of 15 boxes indicating the strength and direction of the relationship; 2) one of two boxes indicating the potential for a future relationship; or 3) a box indicating that they are unfamiliar with that partner. While explaining the process, it will be simultaneously demonstrated using split screens. The activity will take about 20 minutes to complete. We will then ask if the participant has any questions for us, thank them for their participation, and provide our contact information again for any participant-initiated follow-up. The results will be saved using a dedicated *url* for this study.

(d) Expected Response Rate/Confidence Levels:

We expect to contact a total of 600 individuals (approximately 200/site) for the interviews and partnership mapping. We anticipate that a total of 360 individuals (120/site) will agree to participate during the sampling period. We will not attempt to generalize the results beyond the sample population.

	Number of Initial Contacts	Expected Response Rate	Expected Number of Responses
Interviews and Partnership Mapping	600	60%	360

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

Although non-response bias is a lesser issue in qualitative methodologies, it may still occur. Therefore, we will attempt to ask all individuals contacted for an interview to answer the following questions that will be used for respondent/non-respondent bias comparison.

1. *Would you please describe your experience working with your organization?*
2. *Would you please describe your experience working with the NPS?*
3. *What do you consider to be your organization's greatest strength to lend to collaborations?*

All individuals contacted for the partnership mapping will be asked:

1. *Would you please characterize the strength (not at all strong, medium strong, or very strong) and direction (all giving, mostly giving, equal mix, mostly receiving, or all receiving) of your relationship with the NPS?*
2. *Which, if any, NPS programs have you heard about in this urban area?*
3. *What would you consider your organization's main area of focus?*

If bias is detected in either mode of data collection, we will describe the characteristics and potential implications of the bias, if any, in the report and dissertation.

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

This study is part of a student's doctoral dissertation research and as such this form and the study design (methods and instruments) have been reviewed, commented on, and approved by four interdisciplinary University of Vermont faculty members and the NPS Stewardship Institute staff. The NPS staff have also reviewed and approved the overall management relevance and applicability of the study design.

Burden Estimates

We expect that the total burden for this collection to be 350 total burden hours.

Interviews: Overall, we expect that 72 individuals will agree to participate in the interview. Individual interviews will last up to 90 minutes (72 x 90 minutes = 108 hours). For those completing both an interview and a partnership map, we will offer the option of separate sessions (at the discretion of the respondent) as effort to not over burden the respondent in one sitting.

Partnership Mapping: We would like 300 completed maps at the end of this study, including those from participants completing both interviews and maps. For the 300 individuals agreeing to participate in the mapping exercise, it will take about 20 minutes to complete the process (300 x 20 minutes = 100 hours).

Estimated Total Number		Estimation of Time (minutes)		Estimation of Burden (hours)	
Initial Contact and non-response bias check	600	Initial Contact and non-response bias check	5	Initial Contact and non-response bias check	50
Completed Responses		To complete response		To complete response	
Interviews	72	Interviews	90	Interviews	108
Partnership mapping	300	Partnership mapping	20	Partnership mapping	100
				Total	358

Reporting Plan

This information collection activity will result in a doctoral dissertation at the University of Vermont. Data will be examined using qualitative open coding of themes (interviews) and quantitative social network analyses of interconnectedness (partnership mapping). The results of these will be synthesized to provide information on site-specific findings and cross-site comparisons relevant to the NPS Urban Agenda initiative. A summary report (< 10 pages) will be submitted as the final project report to the NPS. It will be archived with the Social Science Program of the National Park Service for inclusion in the Social Science Studies Collection. In addition, the study findings may be published in a peer-reviewed journal article(s), internal agency report(s), and/or other formats.