



## 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 26, 2016

**Project Title:** Study of Media Perceptions and Usage In Yellowstone National Park

### **Abstract** (not to exceed 150 words)

The purpose of this project is to conduct an electronic survey of Yellowstone National Park (YELL) visitors during the peak of the summer visitation season (July, 2016). The survey is designed to describe visitors' perceptions of and use of Park media, focusing on the park's newspaper: *Yellowstone Summer*, 2016 edition, as requested by managers. The results will be used by Park managers to assess the current status of Park media and to improve visitor experiences through improved media. The study will include recommendations to help to make Park media more relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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### **Project Information**

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

Sampling Period

Start Date: July 18, 2016

End Date: July 29th, 2016

Type of Information Collection Instrument (Check ALL that Apply)

Mail-Back Questionnaire

Face-to-Face Interview

Focus Groups

On-Site Questionnaire

Telephone Survey

On-line survey

Other (list)-

Will an electronic device be used to collect information?

No

Yes - type of device: Computer/server employing Qualtrics survey software

### 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.*

As the National Park Service enters its second century of service to visitors from the United States and the world, the managers at Yellowstone National Park (YELL) concluded that it is time to assess visitor opinions of, perceptions of, and use of park media, especially the park's newspaper which is their primary on-site outreach and communication effort. This will be first effort at Yellowstone to survey visitors to learn about their responses to the park's newspaper. During summer, 2016, Yellowstone will print and distribute approximately 450,000 newspapers. This expense is expected to be about \$100,000 for the summer. The one question the park managers is most interested in understanding is if this expenditure is a good investment for Yellowstone? Yellowstone managers need to know more about the effectiveness of the newspaper as they consider media impact and the cost to the Park.

This survey, then is necessary because it will collect data that will be used to:

- Provide data on visitor characteristics, activities, and satisfaction with park media.
- Provide data on visitor opinions, perceptions, and use of the park newspaper.
- Evaluate impact of the park newspaper.
- Write recommendations for park managers on park media.

## Survey Methodology

**Respondent Universe:** All adults (age 18 or older) in Yellowstone National Park during the sampling period (July 18th, 2016 and July 29th, 2016). According to the NPS Visitor Statistics, more than 4,097,710 people visited Yellowstone in 2015. Over 2.6 million (65%) visitors visit Yellowstone during the three summer months: June (260,878), July (321,332) and August (286,097).

**Sampling Plan/Procedures:** The areas between the Old Faithful viewing area and the OFVEC will serve as the primary sampling site for this collection. This site was selected in 2015, where over one third of the summer season (June-August) visitors (n=868,307) were counted at the Old Faithful Visitor Education Center (OFVEC).

Sampling will take place for 8 hours every scheduled day during the 12 day sample period (July 18<sup>th</sup> -29). Sampling will begin at 9 a.m. each day and conclude at 4 p.m. each day. Estimating seven hours per day over 12 days there will be 84 hours of sampling for this collection. The table below depicts an example of the proposed sampling schedule.

Sampling Days	Targeted Number of visitors approach per day	Number of visitor approached per hour	Expected on-site Acceptance Rate	Expected number of People Agreeing to Participate
1 - Monday	1,000	125	60%	600
2 - Tuesday	1,200	150	60%	720
3 - Thursday	1,200	150	60%	720
4 - Friday	1,500	187	60%	900
5 - Saturday	2,000	250	60%	1200
6 - Sunday	1,300	162	60%	780
7 - Tuesday	1,200	150	60%	720
8 - Wednesday	1,100	137	60%	660
9 - Thursday	1,300	162	60%	780
10 - Friday	1,500	187	60%	900
11 - Saturday	2,000	250	60%	1200
12 - Sunday	1,500	187	60%	900
<b>Total</b>	0			0

As visitors are waiting for the Old Faithful eruption, researchers will randomly select every 5<sup>th</sup> adult to participate in the survey.

All visitors contacted on-site will be read the following script:

*Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Today we are conducting a survey for the Yellowstone National Park to better understand your opinions of and use of Park media. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to participate in 10 minute survey that you would complete electronically after you have returned home?"*

⇒If **YES** - then ask, "have you already been asked to participate in this survey?"

If "**YES**" (previously agreed to participate) then, "Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, we hope that you will be willing to complete the survey once you return home. Thanks again and have a great day."

If "**NO**" (have not previously agreed to participate) then,

"Thank you for agreeing to participate. Although this will be a survey that you will complete once you return home, I do have a few questions I need to ask you now." [The surveyor will start the process by asking them to record the information on a card and answering the non-response bias questions].

⇒If **NO-** (soft refusal) then, "That's fine; we won't bother you with asking you to complete the electronic survey, however, would you be willing to take one minute and answer a couple of questions for me now, to help us learn a little something about all of the visitors we approach today? [The surveyor will record responses in spaces provided on the card and then thank them for their time].

⇒If **NO-** (hard refusal) - "Thank you for your time. Have a great day."

Once the visitor has agreed to participate in the study, we will ask them to provide or personally record their email address on a survey tracking sheet - this information will only be used to email correspondences related to the survey. Within three weeks all visitors agreeing to participate on-site will receive letter (via email) explaining the survey and a URL that will link them to the electronic version of the survey A reminder letter will be sent to non-respondents 10 working days after the initial mailing. Each interviewer will be trained in aspects of on-site surveying including avoiding sampling bias, how to handle all types of interviewing situations, as well as safety concerns. Quality control will be ensured by monitoring interviewers in the field and by checking forms at the end of each day.

### **Instrument Administration:**

The survey will be administered electronically using Qualtrics software. Within three weeks after the on-site contact, all individuals that provided a valid email address will be sent a cover letter (via email) that will describe the purpose of the survey, instructions for completion, and the URL that will automatically direct the respondent to the survey instrument. The survey is designed to be easy to read and simple to navigate. The Qualtrics program will provide prompts to help the respondent to proceed through the survey without complication. Once the survey has been completed, the data will be stored in Qualtrics and then downloaded for analysis.

**Expected Response Rate/Confidence Levels:**

The same methodology for this collection has been applied in similar studies at other NPS site with similar resources or in the same geographical area. A total of 16,800 visitors will be contacted during the sampling period. We estimate that 10,080 (60%) visitors will agree to participate in the survey. The number of refusals will be recorded and reported in a survey log, and will be used in calculating the response rate. Of the 10,080 visitors that agree during their visit in the park, we anticipate that only 40% (n=4,032) will complete and return the survey once they return home. This response rate was estimated based on similar survey at high visitation NPS units. Based on the survey sample size, there will be 95% confidence that the day-use survey findings will be accurate to within 3 percentage points.

Location	Total number of onsite acceptance	Expected Response Rate	Expected Number of Responses	Margin of Error +/- %
Old Faithful Viewing Area	10,080	40%	4,032	3.0%

**Strategies for dealing with potential non-response bias:**

During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each visitor the following questions taken from the survey. The five questions listed below will be used in a non-response bias analysis.

- (1) What is your city and state of residence?
- (2) What is your zip code (U.S. residents only)?
- (3) During this visit you received or read a copy of the park’s newspaper?
- (4) During this visit what has been or will be your length of stay at the Park
- (5) Is this your first trip to Yellowstone?

Responses will be recorded for every survey contact. Weighting of data will be addressed if any significant differences are discovered between non-respondents and respondents. Results of the non-response bias check will be reported and any implications for planning and management will be discussed.

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

The survey instrument has been reviewed by appropriate managers in Yellowstone National Park, including the research sponsor. Many questions were drawn from the NPS Pool of Known Questions (1024-0224), however because many questions were unique to this study, upon consultation with the NPS Information Collection Coordinator these questions were considered appropriate for the purposes of this survey and were granted provisional NPS approval to be submitted to OIRA/OMB for final review and consideration. The survey instrument was pretested using Qualtrics for demonstration purposes with six volunteers from the general public. Editorial corrections were made based upon the review to improve the flow of the questions.

## Burden Estimates

Overall, we plan to approach 16,800 visitors during the sampling period. We estimate that 10,080 (60%) visitors will agree to participate in the survey; we will ask these individuals to answer the non-response bias questions during the initial contact. We expect that approximately 4,032 (40%) will return a completed survey.

Based upon similar on-site studies, it is expected that at least 60% (n=10,080) will agree to participate in the study when approached. With that we anticipate that at least three minutes will be needed to complete the initial contact, explain the study and fill out the information card  $10,080 \times 3 \text{ minutes} = 504 \text{ hours}$ . Of all the visitors contacted, we expect that 6,720 visitors will immediately decline to participate without any interaction with the researcher. For those individuals we have not included their burden.

We expect that 4,032 will complete and return the survey, with that, an additional 10 minutes will be required to complete and return the questionnaire ( $4,032 \text{ responses} \times 10 \text{ minutes} = 672 \text{ hours}$ ). The total annual burden for this one-time collection is estimated to be 1,176 hours.

Estimated Total Number		Estimation of Time (minutes)		Estimation of Burden (hours)	
Initial Contacts	10,080	Initial Contact	3	Initial Contact	504
Completed Surveys	4,032	To complete the online survey	10		672
				<b>Total</b>	<b>1,176</b>

## Reporting 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; oral and written reports will be provided to appropriate staff at Yellowstone National Park, including the manager and the Deputy Chief, Resource Education Media Branch. An initial report will be sent to appropriate Yellowstone staff for their review and intermediate reports will be provided as needed or requested. In addition, the authors may seek other presentation and publication opportunities to disseminate the study to other natural resource professionals.