



## 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: 6/27/2017

**PROJECT TITLE: Research to Inform Visitor Use Management Planning at Theodore Roosevelt National Park**

**ABSTRACT:** (not to exceed 150 words)

Many outdoor recreation activities, such as hiking and wildlife viewing, may cause impacts to the resources and to the visitor experience. Potential impacts to trails include increased muddiness, compaction, rutting, and erosion. Potential social conflicts tend to revolve around shared use with other visitors, and crowding. With an increased use of parks and protected areas, understanding impacts of this increased use, both physically and socially, is of critical importance in order to maintain the resources of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and parks like it. This study was designed to collect data about levels, types, patterns, and impacts of visitor activities at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota, and thus, help inform the ongoing and future planning process related to visitor use management.

### PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR CONTACT INFORMATION:

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**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

Where will the collection take place? Theodore Roosevelt National Park (THRO)

Sampling Period Start Date: August 2017

Sampling Period End Date: August, 2018

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: tablet computer (e.g. i-Pad)
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**SURVEY JUSTIFICATION:**

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*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.*

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Theodore Roosevelt National Park (THRO) managers requested this information because they are interested in having reliable visitor statistics and feedback to address issues concerning the ongoing planning process related to trail erosion and crowding at the following locations :

1. Loop Road – South Unit Entrance Station
2. Oxbow Overlook – North Unit
3. Riverbend Overlook – North Unit

More and more, public land management occurs in a complicated environment that bridges social and environmental factors. While scientists and managers usually make decisions based on scientific evidence, visitors and stakeholders often respond to issues based on emotional attachments, it is equally important to, identify and understand visitors' perceptions and attitudes towards potential management actions that may increase opportunities for conflict. The objective of this study is to provide THRO managers with information that can be use in a very intentional and prescriptive manner to directly inform the planning and design of interpretative and public outreach efforts within the park. Interpretation and outreach efforts are often used to influence beliefs, attitudes, and social norms that can ultimately alter stakeholders' acceptance of management policies.

The overall purpose of this collection is to gather information to support Visitor Use Management (VUM) planning efforts and inform THRO manager’s decisions to provide sustainable and appropriate visitor experiences within the park. This study will use an on-site survey instrument to:

1. Understand current conditions and for comparison to future monitoring efforts;
2. Inform larger visitor use management plans by identifying potential indicators, thresholds that may affect visitor management strategies
3. Update existing plans aimed at providing high quality visitor experiences and protecting ecological and cultural resources.

**SURVEY METHODOLOGY:**

**(A) Respondent Universe:**

The respondent universe for this collection will be a systematic sample of all adult recreation users (age 18 and older), at the following intercept locations during the study periods (August 2017 - June 2018).

Intercept Location	Recreation Users to be Surveyed
Loop Road/Entrance Station	Hikers/Auto Tour
Oxbow Overlook	Hikers/Auto Tour
Riverbend Overlook	Hikers/Auto Tour

**(B) Sampling Plan / Procedures:**

According to the NPS visitor use statistics, approximately 753,888 people visited the park in 2016. Exact number of visitors at each location is not known, however our sample sizes across the Fall, Spring, and Summer seasons, is intended to capture a representative sample for each location. The numbers provided in the tables below are estimates based on previous studies, areas of high, medium and low use, and park manager input.

In order to accurately gauge experiences, all visitors will be approached at the end of their experience as they are exiting the sampling areas. Sampling will occur at the entrance station in the South Unit and the overlooks at each of the locations listed below from 9am to 5pm during the sampling periods (someone will be stationed at each site each day of sampling): Fall (August 9-15 and October 8-14, 2017), Spring (April 12-18, 2018) and Summer (June 15-21, 2018) for a total of 28 sampling days per site. The tables below provide an example of the proposed sampling schedule.

Location	Sampling Days Per Site			
	Fall (Aug,Oct.)	Spring	Summer	Total
Loop Road South Unit Entrance Station	14	7	7	28
Oxbow Overlook	14	7	7	28
Riverbend Overlook	14	7	7	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>84</b>

During the sampling period, we expect to contact 1,800 visitors and based upon our sampling methods we anticipate contacting at least 150 visitors at each site during each seven day sampling period, for a combined total of 600 people at each site at the end of the sampling period.

Location	Estimated Number of Visitor Contacts			
	Fall (Aug & Sept)	Spring	Summer	TOTAL
Loop Road South Unit Entrance Station	300	150	150	600
Oxbow Overlook	300	150	150	600
Riverbend Overlook	300	150	150	600
<b>Total</b>	900	450	450	1,800

A random sample of every 3<sup>rd</sup> visitor will be approached and asked to participate in the collection. Below is an **example** of a typical weekly sampling schedule for this collection.

	Targeted Number of visitors approach (per day, across all sampling locations)	Number of visitor approached per hour (rounded up)	Expected on-site Acceptance Rate	Expected number of People Agreeing to Participate (per sampling period)
1 - Wed.	30	4	50%	15
2 - Thurs.	30	4	50%	15
3 - Fri.	50	6	50%	25
4 - Sat.	150	19	50%	75
5 - Sun.	150	19	50%	75
6 - Mon.	20	3	50%	10
7 - Tues.	20	3	50%	10
Total	450			225

**(C) Instrument Administration:**

The initial contact with visitors will be used to explain the study and determine if visitors are interested in participating (see script below). This should take approximately one minute. If a group is encountered, the survey interviewer will ask the individual within the group with the next birthday to serve as the respondent. At this point, all individuals approached will be asked the non-response bias questions to collect information that will be used in the final analysis (see item E below). The visitors that refuse to participate will be asked if they would be willing to take two minutes to respond to non-response bias questions. The number of refusals will be recorded and used to calculate the overall response rate for the collection.

Visitors selected for participating in the survey will be read the following script:

*“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am conducting a survey for the National Park Service to better understand your opinions related to your experience at the park today. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to take a 10-minute survey and give it back to the interviewer?”*

→If **YES** – then ask, “has any member of your group been asked to participate in this survey before?”

If **“YES”** (already asked to participate) then, *“Thank you for agree to participate in this study we hope that you will return the questionnaire soon. Have a great day.”*

If **“NO”** (have not been previously asked to participate) then,

*“Thank you for agreeing to participate. Who in your group is at least 18 years old and has the next birthday? Ask them to start the process by answering the non-response bias questions (listed below). Record responses in spaces provided on the tracking sheet. Hand them a survey packet including the questionnaire and a self-addressed stamp envelope.*

→If **NO-** (soft refusal) - ask them if they would be willing to answer the non-response bias questions (listed below) and then thank them for their time. *Record responses in spaces provided on the tracking sheet.*

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

**(D) Expected Response Rate / Confidence Level:**

The response rate for each of the collections is based on surveys at similar park sites. Based on the survey sample sizes, there will be 95% confidence that the survey findings will be accurate to within 3-5 percentage points. To achieve this, we will likely have to contact approximately 1,800 visitors assuming a 50% response rate. The proposed sample sizes will be adequate for bivariate comparisons and will allow for comparisons between study sites and more sophisticated multivariate analysis. For dichotomous response variables, estimates will be accurate within the margins of error and confidence intervals will be somewhat larger for questions with more than two response categories.

The number of refusals at each location will be recorded and reported in a survey log, and will be used in calculating the overall response rate.

Location	Initial Contacts	Acceptance 50%	Non-respondents (Soft refusals) 50%	Non-response survey 20%	Hard Refusals 80%
Loop Road South Unit Entrance Station	600	300	300	60	240
Oxbow Overlook	600	300	300	60	240
Riverbend Overlook	600	300	300	60	240
TOTAL	1,800	900	900	180	720

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

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

- 1) *What type of group are you traveling with today?*
- 2) *How many people are in your group?*
- 3) *How did this visit fit into your travel plans (i.e., primary destination, one of several destinations, or not a planned destination)?*
- 4) *How old is the person who will complete the questionnaire?*
- 5) *How crowded did you feel in the park today? 1= not crowded to 9= extremely crowded.*

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

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

The questionnaire format and many of the questions have been used in many survey instruments previously approved by OMB. The questions are taken from the currently approved list of questions in NPS Pool of Known Questions (OMB 1024-0224; Current Expirations Date: 5-31-2019). Variations of the questions have been reviewed by THRO managers and professors from Kansas State University and Clemson University. The questionnaire was tested on eight voluntary members of the general public for burden length and clarity of the questions. Feedback from the volunteers was incorporated in the final questionnaire.

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**BURDEN ESTIMATES:**

Overall, we plan to approach a total of 1,800 individuals at all sites during the sampling periods. Among which we anticipate that 900 individuals will agree to participate and complete a survey while on site. We expect that 900 (50%) visitors will refuse to participate and for those individuals, we record their reason for refusal.

Of all the visitors refusing to accept the invitation (n=900) we will ask if they would be willing to answer the four questions that will serve as the non-response bias check. We expect that 20% (n=180) of the on-site refusals will answer the non-response bias questions. We anticipate that it will take one minute resulting in a total of 3 hours for the non-response survey (180 x 1 minutes = 3 hours).

The remaining 720 visitors refusing to accept any part of the invitation to participate not incur a respondent burden and for those individuals, we will attempt to record their reason for refusal..

We expect that an additional 10 minutes will be required to complete and return the on-site questionnaire (900 responses x 10 minutes = 150 hours). The burden for the on-site survey combines the initial contact plus the non-response survey with the time to completed surveys this is estimated to be 153 hours.

	Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Burden Hours
		<i>Contact time added to completion time</i>	
Completed questionnaire	900	10	150
Non-response survey	180	1	3
<b>Total burden requested under this ICR:</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>153</b>

**REPORTING PLAN:**

The study results will be presented in internal agency reports for NPS managers at the park. Response frequencies will be tabulated and measures of central tendency computed (e.g., mean, median, mode, as appropriate). The reports 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. Hard copies will be available upon request.

## NOTICES

### Privacy Act Statement

**General:** This information is provided pursuant to Public Law 93-579 (Privacy Act of 1974), December 21, 1984, for individuals completing this form.

**Authority:** National Park Service Research mandate (54 USC 100702)

**Purpose and Uses:** This information will be used by The NPS Information Collections Coordinator to ensure appropriate documentation of information collections conducted in areas managed by or that are sponsored by the National Park Service.

**Effects of Nondisclosure:** Providing information is mandatory to submit Information Collection Requests to Programmatic Review Process.

### Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

We are collecting this information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501) and is authorized by the National Park Service Research mandate (54 USC 100702). This information will be used by The NPS Information Collections Coordinator to ensure appropriate documentation of information collections conducted in areas managed by or that are sponsored by the National Park Service. All parts of the form must be completed in order for your request to be considered. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to, this or any other Federal agency-sponsored information collection unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has reviewed and approved The National Park Service Programmatic Review Process and assigned OMB Control Number 1024-0224.

### Estimated Burden Statement

Public Reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 60 minutes per collection, including the time it takes for reviewing instructions, gathering information and completing and reviewing the form. This time does not include the editorial time required to finalize the submission. Comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form should be sent to the Information Collection Clearance Coordinator, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Dr., Fort Collins, CO 80525.