



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: 8/25/2017

PROJECT TITLE: Evaluating Visitor Preferences for Social Media and Access to Technology at Shenandoah National Park

ABSTRACT: (not to exceed 150 words)

With the increasing levels of NPS visitation, and diversity of visitors, park managers feel it is important to understand visitor perceptions of mobile technology and the role social media (e.g., apps) will play in long-term strategic management of natural and social resources of Shenandoah National Park. This study is designed to collect data about current and desired preferences for access to social media, and interpretive opportunities through technology; and natural and social resource impacts of mobile technology. Data will be used to help inform ongoing and future planning processes related to visitor use management and the creation of an App at SHEN.

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PROJECT INFORMATION:

Where will the collection take place? Shenandoah National Park (SHEN)

Sampling Period Start Date: October 5, 2017 Sampling Period End Date: October 18, 2017

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): online survey

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:

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. NPS Research Mandate (54 USC 100702) states 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.

Managers at Shenandoah National Park (SHEN) have requested this information because they are interested in addressing issues related to mobile technology use and development as a part of park planning and management. Park managers will use the information from this collection to understand how park visitors access social media and utilize technology during their visit. This information will assist in the decisions to provide access to Wi-Fi and a mobile app that may be used to enhance the visitor experience.

This collection will provide empirical data to evaluate visitor preferences for how, when, and where they would use the technology while visiting SHEN. The data will provide information on what visitors consider high quality technology-based experiences, because it is assumed that the possible increase in access to technology will have the potential to impact social and natural conditions. For example, the proliferation of access to technology in SHEN could lead to large pulses of people in sensitive areas (cultural and natural) by publicizing them in real time on social media sites. This could, in turn, impact the desired experiential conditions that people may be coming to the park enjoy (e.g., the perceived incompatibility of the use of technology in a wilderness or backcountry experience). Additionally, by understanding visitors' perceptions of technology and the use of social media, park managers may be able to develop technology-based interpretive opportunities that can help preserve the desired conditions of SHEN while still providing opportunities for visitors to connect to the park in the best way they see fit. The results of this study can also assist in forecasting for infrastructure and facility improvements related to mobile technology access, and clearly understand what features and

experiences related to the social media and technology are most desirable to visitors. Finally, all of the information gathered from this study can assist the park in the creation of a park-wide mobile app that is currently in development.

To achieve these results, this project has three key objectives which are to:

1. Evaluate current and desired visitor preferences for features, uses, and access to social media and technology.
2. Identify current and desired interpretive opportunities related to social media and technology.
3. Assess experiential, managerial, and resource impacts associated with visitors' use of social media and technology.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY:

(A) Respondent Universe:

The respondent universe for this collection will be a systematic sample of all adult visitors (age 18 and older), at the following intercept locations within SHEN during the study period (October 5-18, 2017).

- North District (Dickey Ridge Visitor Center and Elkwallow Wayside)
- Central District (Byrd Visitor Center and Pinnacles Picnic Area)
- South District (Loft Mountain Wayside)
- Old Rag Area

Sampling Plan / Procedures:

According to the NPS visitor use statistics, approximately 1,437,341 people visited SHEN in 2016, with almost 20% of the visitation occurring in October (263,082 in 2016). Our sample sizes across the 4 locations are intended to capture a representative sample of SHEN visitors during this time. Our estimates are based on previous studies and park manager input.

During the sampling period, we expect to contact at least 900 visitors. Based upon our sampling methods we anticipate that we will have to contact at least 300 visitors at the North and Central Districts and 150 at the South District and the Old Rag Area during the 14 day sampling period, for a combined total of 900 people across all the areas for the sampling period. A random sample of every 3rd visitor will be approached and asked to participate in the collection. Below is the sampling schedule for this collection.

Number of Sample Days Per Area	
Location	October 5-18, 2017
North District	10
Central District	10
South District	5
Old Rag Area	5
Total	30

Estimated Number of Visitor Contacts Per Area	
Location	October 5-18, 2017
North District	300
Central District	300
South District	150
Old Rag Area	150
Total	900

(B) Instrument Administration:

The initial contact with visitors will be used to explain the study and determine if visitors are interested in completing a questionnaire (see script below). This initial contact will take less than 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. All visitors that refuse to participate will be asked if they would be willing to take 1 minute 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. Additionally, all individuals approached (respondents and non-respondents) will be asked the non-response bias check questions to collect information that will be used in the final analysis (see item E below).

Visitors choosing to participate 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 technology and how it may have impacted 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 your participation in this study. 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 the survey to the participant and ask to return it to the administrator upon completion.

➔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.*

(C) Expected Response Rate / Confidence Level:

The expected response rate for 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 900 visitors assuming a 60% 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 60%	Non-respondents (Soft refusals) 40%	Non-response survey 20%	Hard Refusals 80%
North District	300	180	120	24	96
Central District	300	180	120	24	96
South District	150	90	60	12	48
Old Rag Area	150	90	60	12	48
TOTAL	900	540	360	72	288

(D) 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 old is the person who will complete the questionnaire?*
- 4) *How important to you is the ability to get real time information about Shenandoah NP?*

Extremely unimportant, unimportant, neither unimportant nor important, important, extremely important

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.

(E) 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 submitted by researchers at Kansas State University and subsequently 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 SHEN managers and professors from Kansas State 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.

BURDEN ESTIMATES:

Overall, we plan to approach a total of 900 individuals across all sites during the sampling periods. Among which we anticipate that 540 individuals will agree to participate and complete a survey while on site which will take about one minute to complete the on-site contact and agreement to take the survey. We expect that 360 (40%) visitors will refuse to participate and for those individuals, we attempt to record their reason for refusal.

Of all the visitors refusing to accept the invitation (n= 360) we will ask if they would be willing to answer the four questions (above) that will serve as the non-response bias check for this collection. We expect that 20% (n=72) 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 1.2 hours for the non-response survey (72 x 1 minutes = 1.2 hours).

The remaining 288 visitors completely refusing to accept any part of the invitation to participate will not incur a respondent burden and for those individuals, we will also 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 (540 responses x 10 minutes = 90 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 100 hours.

	Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Burden Hours
		<i>Contact time added to completion time</i>	
Completed questionnaire	540	11	99
Non-response survey	72	1	1
Total burden requested:	612		100

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 request, 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.