



## 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: 2/12/18

### PROJECT TITLE: Visitor Use Study at Cumberland Island National Seashore (CUI) to Support Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Plan

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

Although previous studies have evaluated crowding thresholds at various island attraction sites (see Hallo, Manning, Brownlee, & Smith, 2012), the island (CUI) lacks information about how current conditions align with (or violate) visitors' desired thresholds. Furthermore, the relationship between current conditions, visitor thresholds for crowding, and the timing and capacity of the ferry service has not been evaluated. These information gaps make it difficult to effectively plan for potential changes in concessionaire services and potential alterations to the island's social or experiential capacity. As described below, this information is necessary to ensure that visitor use management, infrastructure, and management decisions at CUI are sensitive to constituent needs, and incorporate future visitor use projections while preserving desirable island conditions.

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**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

Where will the collection take place? Cumberland Island National Seashore (CUIS)

Sampling Period Start Date: 3/17/18

Sampling Period End Date: 3/31/18

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. iPad)
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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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Cumberland Island National Seashore (CUIS) managers requested this information because they are interested in having reliable visitor statistics related to travel patterns and densities, along with feedback on visitor experiences to address issues concerning the ongoing planning process related to visitor use impacts at CUIS. As informational gaps regarding said visitor travel patterns and densities exist at CUIS, the information generated from the proposed visitor study will provide CUIS managers with preliminary data in which to fill in these gaps. This information request is an important first step in understanding overall use at CUIS. CUIS is a non-traditional park management situation, in that the vast majority of the visitors reach the island via a 45-minute concession run ferry ride. The survey for this study will help to inform the preliminary alternatives development for the park as part of their larger Concessions Management Plan. The information gathered in this study will directly inform this planning effort by providing a clear picture of visitors likes, dislikes and reasons for visiting.

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. Therefore, 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 survey is to provide CUIS 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

area. These efforts are often used to influence beliefs, attitudes, and social norms that can ultimately alter stakeholders' acceptance of management policies.

As outlined in the *Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework, Edition One (VUM)*, ecological conditions, visitor use, visitor preferences, management decisions, and resulting outcomes are intricately linked and interdependent (VUM, 2016). To help better understand this relationship between visitor experience and management actions, this study will use an on-site survey instrument to:

1. Understand current visitor experiences at CUIS and use for comparison to future monitoring efforts;
2. Inform alternatives development as part of the concession management planning process by identifying potential indicators and thresholds regarding visitor travel patterns and densities that may affect visitor management strategies.
3. Update existing plans aimed at providing high quality visitor experiences and protecting ecological and cultural resources.

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## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY:**

### **(A) Respondent Universe:**

According to the NPS visitor use statistics, approximately 61,896 people visited Cumberland Island National Seashore in 2016. 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 proposed study period (March 17-31, 2018).

<b>Intercept Location</b>	<b>Recreation Users to be Surveyed</b>
Dungeness Dock	Hikers/Cyclists/Campers/General Sightseers
Sea Camp Dock	Hikers/Cyclists/Campers/General Sightseers

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

Our sample sizes during the spring season is intended to capture a representative sample of visitors within the park during this season. The sampling is occurring during this time, as it is one of the busiest and most popular times to visit the park. Additionally, this information will be used to directly inform alternatives development in the late spring as part of the ongoing concession management planning process. The numbers provided in the tables below are estimates based on previous studies, areas of varying levels of use, and park manager input.

In order to accurately gauge experiences, visitors will be approached at Sea Camp and Dungeness Dock (the only two exits for visitors riding the ferry off the island) at the end of their experience as they are exiting the island. These locations were chosen because they are the only two points of entry and exit to the island, thus all visitors will pass through these two areas. Sampling will occur at each of the locations from 1pm to 5pm (ferry leaves at 2:45 and 4:45),

and someone will be stationed at each site, each day of sampling: Spring (March 17-31) for a total of 14 sampling days per site.

During the sampling period, we expect to contact a total of 600 visitors and based upon our sampling methods we anticipate contacting at least 300 visitors at each site during the 14-day sampling period. During the week (M-F) we expect that we will contact at least 10 visitors at Dungeness Dock and 10 at Sea Camp each day. If the sample quota is not met on a given day, the balance will be evenly distributed, for each day forward. On the weekend when visitation rates are higher we anticipate that we will contact at least 50 visitors at Dungeness Dock and 50 at Sea Camp each day (Table 1).

**Table 1. Estimated number of contacts during sampling period**

Location	Week 1			Week 2		
	Weekday (5 days)	Weekend (2 days)	TOTAL	Weekday (5 days)	Weekend (2 days)	TOTAL
Dungeness Dock	10	50	150	10	50	150
Sea Camp	10	50	150	10	50	150
	100	200	300	100	200	300

A random sample of every 3<sup>rd</sup> visitor will be approached and asked to participate in the collection. Visitation to the island is controlled and limited to 300 people per day. On week days this quota is not typically met and our expected number of contacts per day reflect this. Additionally, the weekends are busier, and our expected numbers reflect this as well. Below is the expected number of people who will be completing the survey, based on a 50% response rate (Table 2).

**Table 2. Expected number of people completing the survey during the sampling period**

Location	Week 1			Week 2		
	Weekday (5 days)	Weekend (2 days)	TOTAL	Weekday (5 days)	Weekend (2 days)	TOTAL
Dungeness Dock	5	25	75	5	25	75
Sea Camp	5	25	75	5	25	75
	50	100	150	50	100	150

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**(C) Instrument Administration:**

The survey administrator will approach every 3<sup>rd</sup> visitor at the conclusion of their visit at the two sampling locations listed above (both docks for the ferry leaving the island) 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 a minute to respond to non-response bias questions (which will be recorded by the survey administrator). 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 and why you chose to come to this location. 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 agreeing to participate 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). Surveys will be completed on a tablet which will be handed to the participant.*

→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 this collection 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 600 visitors assuming a 50% response rate (Vaske, 2008). 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%
Dungeness Dock	300	150	150	30	120
Sea Camp	300	150	150	30	120
TOTAL	600	300	300	60	240

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

During 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) *Have you visited Cumberland Island National Seashore more than once in the last five years?*
- 2) *Would changes in visitor services, facilities, and recreational opportunities make your park experience enjoyable?*
- 3) *The ferry ride was an important part of my experience (strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know)*

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 any implications for park planning and management will be discussed.

**(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 CUIS managers and faculty 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.

**BURDEN ESTIMATES:**

Overall, we plan to approach a total of 600 individuals at all sites during the sampling periods. Among which we anticipate that 300 individuals will agree to participate and complete a survey while on site. We expect that 300 (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=300) we will ask if they would be willing to answer the three questions that will serve as the non-response bias check. We expect that 20% (n=60) of the on-site refusals will answer the non-response bias questions. We anticipate that the time to complete the non-response bias check will take about two minutes, resulting in a burden of 2-hours for the non-response survey (60 x 2 minutes = 120 minutes). We expect that an additional 10 minutes (not including the 1-minute for initial contact) will be required to complete and return the on-site questionnaire (300 responses x 11 minutes = 55 hours). The remaining 240 visitors refusing to accept any part of the invitation to participate will not incur a respondent burden and for those individuals, we will attempt to record their reason for refusal.

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 57 hours.

	Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Burden Hours
		<i>Contact time added to completion time</i>	
Completed questionnaire	300	11	55
Non-response survey	60	2	2
<b>Total burden requested under this ICR:</b>	<b>360</b>		<b>57</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.

**REFERENCES:**

Vaske, J. J. (2008). *Survey research and analysis: Applications in parks, recreation and human dimensions*. State College, PA: Venture Publishing.

## 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.