



## 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:** January 21, 2021

**PROJECT TITLE:** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SAMO) Recreational Trail use Survey

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

The UCLA Luskin Center for Innovation proposes a recreational trail use survey to be conducted within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SAMO). An on-site survey will be administered over the course of two weekend days and two weekdays at 45 trailheads. The purpose of the survey is to obtain trail user information that will be used to inform future park investments in on-site visitor services and management plans. Demographic data about trail user characteristics, visitation rates, recreational activity patterns, attitudes towards the protection of the Santa Monica Mountains, travel distance and time spent in parks, and visitor ratings and rankings of park amenities and services will be the subjects of this collection.

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**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

Where will the collection take place? Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Sampling Period Start Date: June 21, 2018 Sampling Period End Date: June 30, 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

#### **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.*

Located adjacent to one of the most densely populated areas in the United States, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SAMO) has the potential to provide open space and recreational opportunities to diverse populations. The County of Los Angeles alone is home to almost ten million people. SAMO trailheads serve as gateways to the park's many resources and could function as distributed visitor centers for hundreds of thousands of park users annually. The National Park Service (NPS) seeks to utilize trailheads in SAMO to provide amenities and use information, such as water fountains, restrooms, benches, and trail maps. To inform future investment decisions at trailheads, NPS is commissioning a visitor-use survey to determine park visitor characteristics, activities, preferences, and frequency of visitation.

Currently, NPS is also finalizing a Trail Management Plan (TMP). The plan has many goals, including:

- Present a long-term trail system vision for SAMO that partner agencies can support.
- Protect natural and cultural resources from the impacts of trails and trail use.
- Provide a plan for the construction of new trails and to realign, repair, or remove existing trails.
- Resolve questions about trail use designation.
- Outline a process for evaluating and prioritizing trail network actions.
- Support and substantiate partner agencies' efforts to secure funding for new trail construction and maintenance needs.

- Support and substantiate partner and other agencies' efforts to secure public trail access through land acquisition, trail easement dedications, and involvement in local land use planning efforts.

The proposed visitor-use survey will provide much-needed information to guide the TMP's development this year and to help address some but not all of the TMP goals outlined above. The TMP will likely be released at the end of 2018 and implementation will begin in 2019. Therefore, it is critical to move forward with the proposed survey in 2018, so as not to miss the opportunity to inform the upcoming TMP.

In 2002, NPS worked with the University of Southern California to conduct a visitor-use survey at 33 trailheads in SAMO. The study found that the dominant trail users were white, middle-aged men, born in the United States, college-educated, and relatively affluent. In an effort to achieve the NPS mission to preserve natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the *enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations*, managers and planners at SAMO aim to make their parks more approachable and valued as a recreational option to the diverse communities in the Southern California region.

The proposed study has been updated to evaluate changes in park visitor use at sites last surveyed in 2002 and to provide a benchmark for sites not covered in that survey. The new survey seeks to capture some of the same information as in 2002, (e.g., user demographics, visitation and recreational activity patterns, attitudes, etc.) as well as collect new information regarding use of park amenities and trailheads.

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## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY:**

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

All adult visitors (over the age of 18) who are arriving or leaving one of the 45 selected sites at which the survey is being implemented on the assigned survey administration days.

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

The survey will take place over two weekend days and two weekdays (four days total) at 45 trailheads in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. All 45 trailheads will be sampled on each of the four days. The trailheads selected are the same ones that were included in a visitor count in 2014 and represent a variety of trailhead types.

The survey will be administered between 8am and 1pm and also between 4pm and 8pm on the survey implementation dates. During the morning sessions, people arriving at the trailheads will be surveyed, and during the afternoon sessions, people leaving the trailheads will be surveyed. The dates will be distributed over the survey period in late June, 2018.

Due to budget and staffing constraints, the team has opted to survey during the peak season because it will be the most

cost effective way to capture the greatest variability in visitors due to the crowding effect on peak days. For this reasons, the survey administration dates will be selected based on feedback from park staff regarding the best days to reach a significant number of visitors for the time we have allotted. The two weekend days will be used to collect information from visitors that typically travel further and may visit less frequently; and the two weekday will be used to collect information from local, perhaps daily users of the sites. Randomization will be ensured by A survey team leader will monitor the survey administration to determine the randomization intervals. In low-flow scenarios, when there are periods up to 10 minutes with no visitors, interviewers will select the next person that arrives at the site (or is leaving depending on the time of day for survey administration). If there are two or more people arriving at the same time, the survey administrator will alternate approaching the first (or last) person or the person closest (or most distant) from a designated spot at the survey location. During a period when there is a constant flow of visitors, as the survey administrator finishes one survey, they will automatically ask the next person they see arriving (or leaving) the trailhead.

An estimated 2,284 visitors will be contacted during the sampling period. There will be at least one and no more than 10 survey administrators at each of the trailheads. The team expects that each administrator will complete at least 4-6 interviews per day

To derive the estimated number of visitor contacts per site, the following assumptions were made:

- The number of visitors per site will be equivalent to that counted by NPS in 2014 during similar circumstances.
- The distribution of respondents per site in 2018 will be equivalent to the distribution of total visitors per site in 2014.
- 82% (n=1,821) of the visitors contacted will agree to complete the survey (equivalent to the findings in the 2002 survey report).
- The number of visitors contacted will be 7% of the total number of visitors per site.
- The 2014 Visitor Count results were used to estimate the number of potential visitors to each site in 2018, because it is the most thorough, recent visitor count conducted at the designated trailhead sites. Thus, the team expects the numbers to closely reflect anticipated visitor counts in 2018. The 2014 count did not, however, include a survey component. Therefore, estimates to determine the number of visitor contacts needed in order to reach survey goals in 2018, are identified using the results from the 2002 survey.

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### **(C) Instrument Administration:**

The Luskin Center will work closely with NPS and NPS volunteers to administer the visitor survey. Volunteers will be from a variety of backgrounds, some with survey administration experience and others without. The Luskin Center will provide a training session for all volunteers and make that session available online to ensure consistency in survey administration. Surveys will be given either via paper or tablets depending on tablet availability and which is more convenient for participants and volunteers. Survey

administrators will be stationed near trailheads in locations that have seating and/or shade for survey respondents and will be available to answer questions that may arise as survey respondents fill out the surveys.

The initial contact with visitors at trailheads 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 30 seconds. The survey administrator will follow survey sampling rules to ensure randomization. In general, they will approach the second person to arrive (or leave) a site. If a group is encountered, the survey interviewer will ask the individual within the group that is second from the left or just behind the first person to arrive (or leave) the trailhead. 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 visitor’s opinions about the trail and trailhead. Mostly, we would like to know about your visit today. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to take a 15-minute survey and give it back to the interviewer?”

- ➔ If **YES**- then ask “have you 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. Are you at least 18 years old?*” If yes, invite them to sit on bench and ask them to start the process by answering the non-response bias questions (listed below). Record responses in spaces provided on 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.*

Survey enumerators will also collect basic demographic data on non-participants.

The survey will be administered using either paper copies or digital tablets, depending on the availability of digital tablets during sampling days.

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

The expected response rate (82% of the 10% of people that are approached) for the collections is based on the visitor-use survey implemented in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in 2002<sup>1</sup>. The team expects to approach 10% of the total visitors at the site. Of those approached and asked to participate in the survey, the expected number to complete the survey is 82%. To reach the targeted number of completed surveys for this project, the team needs to approach approximately 7% of all visitors at each site (assuming 82% of those visitors complete the survey).

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 2,284 visitors assuming an 82% 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.

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.

Sample Sites	Initial Contacts	Acceptance (82%)	Non-respondents (soft refusals - 18%)	Non-response survey (20%)	Hard Refusals (80%)
Rancho Sierra Vista	140	110	30	6	24
Circle X Ranch	40	30	10	2	8
Point Mugu State Park	142	115	27	6	21
Leo Carrillo State Park	6	5	1	1	0
Zuma/Trancas Canyons	66	49	17	4	13
Charmlee Natural Area	18	13	5	1	4
Rocky Oaks	6	4	2	1	1
Paramount Ranch	70	55	15	3	12
Cheeseboro Canyon/Simi Hills	64	49	15	3	12
Upper Las Virgenes Cyn	58	47	11	3	8
Stunt Ranch	10	6	4	1	3
BBT/Topanga Rdige Mtwy	70	55	15	3	12
Malibu Creek State Park	180	145	35	7	28
Malibu Creek State Park/Castro Crest	84	67	17	4	13
Point Dume	132	107	25	5	20
Escondido Canyon	42	34	8	2	6
Solstice Canyon	78	64	14	3	11

<sup>1</sup> Wolch, Jennifer, et al., Recreational Trail Use Survey, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Report to the National Park Service, 2003.

Corral Canyon	16	12	4	1	3
Topanga State Park	170	135	35	7	28
Will Rodgers SHP	84	68	16	4	12
Temescal Gateway Park	136	111	25	5	20
Top of Reseda Blvd.	60	48	12	3	9
Caballero Canyon TH	70	55	15	3	12
San Vicenete Park - dirt Mulholland	78	64	14	3	11
Wilacre Park	130	105	25	5	20
Franklin Canyon	60	47	13	3	10
Fryman Canyon	18	14	4	1	3
Runyon Canyon	256	207	49	10	39
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,284</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>363</b>

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

During the initial contact, the survey administrator 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) *What is your age?*
- 4) *Is this your first visit to this trail or trailhead?*

Responses will be recorded to these questions will be recorded for every survey contact. In addition, at each survey site the Luskin Center and NPS team will count and record all people that enter or leave (depending on the shift for survey implementation – morning or afternoon) the trailhead. The survey log will be used by administrators to document all non-respondents. The log includes the number of people in the non-respondent’s group, animals present (e.g. walking a dog, riding a horse, etc.), gender, race/ethnicity estimate, age estimate, expected activity (e.g. biking, hiking, running, etc.), and whether or not the person was approached to take the survey. 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 Luskin Center reviewed the 2002 visitor-use survey as well as the known questions from the National Park Service. The team also performed a literature review of recreational use surveys and worked closely with NPS to understand their goals. The survey instrument was developed with the NPS team.

Seven people from the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs took the survey to pre-test the instrument. They each provided feedback to the Luskin Center regarding question clarity and time expected for taking the survey. The

average time for finishing the survey was 15 minutes. Editorial changes to the survey were made based on reviewer feedback.

**BURDEN ESTIMATES:**

Overall, we plan to approach 2,284 individuals across all sites during the sampling periods. We anticipate about 1,800 individuals will agree to participate and complete a survey while on site. It will take approximately 1 minute to complete on-site contact with visitors and to obtain agreement to complete the survey. We expect that about 463 (18%) visitors will refuse to participate and for those individuals, we will attempt to record their reason for refusal.

We are expecting that 463 (18%) of the visitors approached will refuse to complete the full version of the survey. For this group we will ask if they would be willing to answer the four questions (listed in section E) that will serve as the non-response bias check for this collection. We expect that 20% (n=93) of the on-site refusals will agree to answer the non-response bias questions. With that we anticipate that it will take an additional minute to complete the non-response survey, therefore (93 x 2 minute=186 minutes= about 3 hours).

The remaining 370 visitors completely refusing to accept any part of the invitation to participate will not incur a respondent burden and for those individuals, we will only record observational data.

We expect that an additional 15 minutes will be required to complete and return the on-site questionnaire (1,800 x 16 minutes = 480 hours). The burden for the on-site survey combines the initial contact plus the non-response survey with the time to complete surveys, the total of which is estimated to be 483 hours.

	Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Burden Hours
		<i>Initial contact added to completion time</i>	
Completed questionnaire	1,800	16	480
Non-response survey	93	3	3
<b>Total burden requested:</b>	<b>1,893</b>		<b>483</b>

**REPORTING PLAN:**

After survey implementation, the Luskin Center will organize and clean the collected data in advance of analysis. This may include transferring survey answers from paper to digital and/or organizing finished surveys into useable spreadsheets. The Luskin Center team will perform the following analysis:



- Cross tabulation of demographic information and activity and amenity use,
- Comparison of time trends in previous users with current users, and
- Calculation of frequency distributions of visitors and visitor activities.

As the data allows, we will also examine the variation in visitor characteristics and activities by trailhead type. After survey implementation and data analysis, the Luskin Center will draft a final report to present to NPS. The report will provide the survey findings, analysis, and recommendations for future on-site investments at trailheads. While the report will be meant for internal use, it will also be available to the public online

- Cross tabulations may include the following variables:
  - o Demographics
  - o Attitudes toward SAMO and conservation
  - o Recreational activities
  - o Visitation patterns
  - o Type of trailhead
  - o Access to SAMO

## 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.