



## 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:** 5.10.2018

**PROJECT TITLE:** National Capital Region (NCR) Visitor Use and Transportation Study at Six NCR Units

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

The results of this collection will be used to inform transportation planning and management efforts for units within the National Park Service National Capital Region (NCR). For the purposes of planning, it is necessary to understand visitor experience and perceived barriers related to transportation use and access in NCR park units. The NCR management team does not currently possess adequate information visitor demographics, use preferences, and expectations needed to inform the development of a Comprehensive Long-Range Transportation Plan. A visitor survey will be conducted in spring/summer 2018 to collect information about visitor use, visitor experience, expectations, and attitudes related to transportation services and facilities management.

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**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

**Where will the collection take place?** Six park units within the National Capital Region: 1) Prince William Memorial Forest Park, 2) Antietam National Battlefield, 3) Manassas National Battlefield Park, 4) George Washington Memorial Parkway, 5) Rock Creek Park, and 6) Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

**Sampling Period Start Date:** May 19, 2018 **Sampling Period End Date:** July 31, 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:**

**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.*

The National Park Service (NPS), National Capital Region (NCR) is undertaking the development of the initial version of a comprehensive Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to establish a tool for guiding transportation system investments in the region. The plan will be developed to bring NPS into compliance with federal legislation requiring that Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs) conduct long-range transportation planning in a manner generally consistent with the currently adopted US Department of Transportation planning practices, as applicable for States (DOTs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

One of the major planning factors considered in NPS LRTPs is the quality of the visitor experience as it relates to transportation systems and services related to NPS units. To ensure sustainable and sound financial decisions with regard to transportation systems, regions should consider visitor demographics, activities as it relates to transportation system usage to ensure traveler needs are met and experiences are maintained.

Currently there is not a comprehensive and reliable source from which to describe visitor activities, demographics, or preferences related to transportation systems for the National Capital Region. This type of information is typically gleaned from Visitor Surveys conducted at the unit level. However, only 5 units in the NCR have completed visitor surveys with this type of information since 2000, limiting the ability to reliably report current conditions and

preferences related to these critical factors. This data gap limits the regions ability to make holistic decisions about transportation system investments and reliable information about where visitors are coming from, what their transportation needs and preferences are, and what their current travel patterns are is unknown. Therefore, a region-wide transportation-focused visitor survey was identified as one of the highest data needs to inform the LRTP for the NCR.

NCR planners have requested this collection because they lack information needed to understand the following:

- what are the characteristics of the visitors in the park,
- what modes of transportations are used to travel throughout the NCR, and
- what are visitors expectations related to their transportation needs and experience.

A mail-back survey will be used to evaluate visitor preferences, expectations and uses of NCR transportation services. The data from this collection will serve as the foundation to inform the plan.

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## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY:**

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

The respondent universe for this collection will be all recreational visitors, age 18 or older, visiting one of the designated intercept locations within the six NCR park units during the sampling period. The study parks include:

1. Prince William Memorial Forest Park,
2. Antietam National Battlefield,
3. Manassas National Battlefield Park,
4. George Washington Memorial Parkway,
5. Rock Creek Park, and
6. Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

Visitors will be contacted during five non-consecutive sampling days at each study park during May, June and July of 2018.

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

During the sampling period, approximately 3,000 visitors will be randomly selected to participate in the survey during their visit to the unit. Sampling will occur for five non-consecutive days during the study period (see Table 1 below).

Sampling days will be stratified at each park to include 2 weekend days and 3 weekdays; and will run for approximately 8 hours each day. Only one site within each park will be sampled at any given time during each sampling day.

**Table 1. Example On-site Sampling Schedule**

Location	Sampling Days Per Site			
	May	June	July	TOTAL
Prince William Memorial Forest Park,	4	1	0	5
Antietam National Battlefield,	1	3	1	5
Manassas National Battlefield Park,	3	2	0	5
George Washington Memorial Parkway,	3	2	0	5
Rock Creek Park, and	1	1	3	5
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.	0	4	1	5
	12	13	5	30

**Location**

**Prince William Memorial Forest Park**

Vehicles will be intercepted as they enter the park at the entrance station and in the nearby RV campground on all five sampling days.

**Antietam National Battlefield**

Visitors will be intercepted at the park Visitor Center, Burnside Bridge, and Bloody Lane as they exit the parking lot. Sampling will occur for two hours in the morning at Burnside Bridge on three sampling days and at Bloody Lane on two sampling days. On each scheduled sampling day, after sampling concludes at the Burnside Bridge and Bloody Lane locations, the remaining time (6 hours) be spent at the Visitor Center.

**Manassas National Battlefield Park**

Two hour sampling sessions will occur at the following locations: Stone house, Stone Bridge and Brawner Farm (morning); park picnic area (lunchtime); Visitor Center (afternoon). Visitors will be intercepted as they exit the parking lot and upon entering the sampling area.

**George Washington Memorial Parkway**

Visitors will be intercepted as the exit parking lot at Gravelly Point, Jones Point Park, and Glen Echo Park. On Theodore Roosevelt Island, visitors will be intercepted for the survey on foot or on bicycle as they exit the bridge heading toward the parking lot, and as they exit the Mount Vernon bike path going toward the parking lot. At the Marine Corps War Memorial, visitors will be intercepted for the survey on foot as they return to their personal vehicle or tour bus.

**Rock Creek Park –**

Visitors will be intercepted for the survey on foot or on bicycle as they exit or (enter depending upon the location) the Grover Road Nature Center, Thompson Boat Center, Pierce Mill and adjacent Picnic Grove, Shorm Hill, and as Boundary Bridge toward the parking lot. Sampling will occur for one sampling day at each site.

**Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park**

Visitors will be intercepted on two sampling days at the Great Falls area (visitor center and Olmstead Island trailhead) as they return to the towpath. Visitors will also be intercepted as they exit the pedestrian bridge into Fish Market Square in Georgetown, on the towpath in Harper’s Ferry, and as they return to the parking lot at the Williamsport Visitor Center for one sampling day at each site.

**Table 2. Example of On-site Sampling at each location**

Location	Sampling Days/Sites				
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Prince William Memorial Forest Park,	Entrance Station and RV Campground				
Antietam National Battlefield,	Visitor Center and Burnside Bridge	Visitor Center and Bloody Lane	Visitor Center and Burnside Bridge	Visitor Center and Bloody Lane	Visitor Center and Burnside Bridge
Manassas National Battlefield Park,	Visitor Center and Stone Bridge	Visitor Center and Picnic Area	Visitor Center and Brawner Farm	Visitor Center and Stone House	Visitor Center and Stone Bridge
George Washington Memorial Parkway,	Gravelly Point	Jones Point Park	Glen Echo Park	Marine Corps War Memorial	Theodore Roosevelt Island
Rock Creek Park	Nature Center	Thompson Boat Center	Pierce Mill and Picnic Grove	Shorm Hill	Boundary Bridge
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.	Great Falls Area	Williamsport Visitor Center	Fish Market Square/ Georgetown	Harpers Ferry Towpath	Great Falls Area

A “timed-interval” approach will be used to randomly select one visitor group every N minutes of the day (where N~5 minute intervals each hour). This approach will allow for an even distribution of questionnaires throughout the sampling period (across days and hours). During the sampling period, we expect to contact 3,000 visitors. Based upon our sampling methods we anticipate that we will have to contact at least 1,200 visitors in May, 1,300 visitors in June, and 500 visitors in July. The number of participants will be evaluated at each park after each sampling day. If expected targets were not reached, the time interval between groups approached will be adjusted to meet overall target sample size. The following protocol will be used to implement the “timed-interval” approach to select participants:

1. At the designated start time, the survey administrator will contact the first visitor group to enter the survey area (as defined above) and ask them to participate in the survey. If the group agrees to participate, the survey

administrator will initiate collection process described in the *Instrument Administration* section below. At the end of each positive contact, the survey administrator will wait until the start of the next time interval before selecting the next visitor group.

2. When there is a negative contact (i.e., refusal) the survey administrator will conduct the non-response bias check. After that they will select the very next visitor group until a positive contact is made. Once a positive contact is made the survey administrator will not make another selection until the start of the next time interval. The survey administrator will repeat this sequence of steps throughout the sampling day. All visitors contacted will be asked to answer the non-response bias questions.

**Table 2. Estimated Number of Visitor Contacts during Sampling Period**

Location	On-site Sampling Schedule			
	May	June	July	Total
Prince William Memorial Forest Park,	400	100	0	500
Antietam National Battlefield,	100	300	100	500
Manassas National Battlefield Park,	300	200	0	500
George Washington Memorial Parkway,	300	200	0	500
Rock Creek Park, and	100	100	300	500
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.	0	400	100	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>3,000</b>

**(C) Instrument Administration:**

The survey design and sampling plan for the collections are based on Dillman's (2014) Tailored Design Method (TDM), with an emphasis on mixed modes of collection (onsite solicitation, mail-back survey and follow-up procedures). The TDM has been shown to increase response rates, improve accuracy, and reduce cost and respondent burden. This methodology is widely used in social science research, moreover, it has been used in more than 250 surveys conducted by the NPS Visitor Services Project (VSP). All of the questions appear in the current NPS Pool of Known Questions (OMB 1024-0224; Revised: October 2015)

A mail-back survey packet will be distributed on-site. The survey packet will include a booklet-sized questionnaire and a postage paid return envelope.

At the start of the sampling period, the first visitor group to enter the sampling area will be greeted and asked they would be willing to participate. Approximately one minute will be used during the initial contact to explain the purpose of the study and to select the adult member of the group (18 years or older) with the next birthday serve as the respondent for the survey. That individual will be: 1) asked to answer the non-response bias questions, 2) given a survey packet and 3) asked to fill out an address card that will include the following information: name, address and questionnaire code number located on their copy of the questionnaire. This information will only be used to follow-up

with all visitors accepting a survey packet but have not returned the completed questionnaire. Following Dillman's Tailored Design Method (TDM) within 10 working days of accepting a survey packet all visitors receive a thank you/reminder postcard. A second reminder letter, replacement questionnaire, and postage-paid return envelope will be sent to all non-respondents 20 working days after completion of on-site contacts. After the second reminder, all files containing the visitor's contact information collected on site will be destroyed.

All visitors refusing to participate in the survey, will be asked to respond the non-response bias questions (listed below, in item 9e). In addition to the non-response bias check, the interviewer will record observable information (i.e., current time, initial contact's gender) in a survey log. Observational data will be collected whether or not they agree to participate or answer the non-response bias questions. The number of refusals will be recorded and used to calculate the overall response rate at each park unit and for the study overall.

The following script will be used during the initial contact:

*"Hello, I am conducting a survey for (Park Name) to better understand your opinions about the transportation, programs and services here. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to complete this questionnaire (show packet) and mail it back?"*

→If **YES** – then ask, *"has any member of your group already participated in this survey?"*

- If **"YES"** (previously agreed to participate) then, *"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, we hope that you will return the questionnaire soon, if you have not already. Have a great day."*
- If **"NO"** (have not previously agreed to participate - only one adult in the group) then, *Thank you! [hand respondent packet; point to stamp]. Here's the questionnaire. You can mail it back in the same envelope. We need your name and address to send you a replacement if we don't hear from you in two weeks [hand address card], and I have a few quick questions.*

[The surveyor will ask them to start the process by answering the non-response bias questions (listed in item 9e).

- If **"NO"** (have not previously agreed to participate - more than one adult in the group) then, *Thank you! We can only have one adult respondent per group. Whose birthday is next? [wait for response]. You'll be our respondent [hand respondent packet; point to stamp]. Here's the questionnaire. You can mail it back in the same envelope. We need your name and address to send you a replacement if we don't hear from you in two weeks [hand address card], and I have a few quick questions.*

[The surveyor will ask them to start the process by answering the non-response bias

questions (listed in item 9e)

→If NO- (soft refusal) then, *“No problem. Instead, I have a few quick questions I’d like to ask you now that would really help the park.”* [The surveyor will record responses in spaces provided on the tracking sheet and then thank them for their time]

→If NO- (hard refusal) – *“No problem. Thank you for your time.”*

All survey administrators will be trained on every aspect of on-site surveying, including: survey administration, avoiding sampling bias, and handling all types of interview situations, especially safety of visitors and the administrator. Quality control will be ensured by monitoring interviewers in the field, and by checking their paperwork at the end of each survey day. In the event that on-site acceptance rates for participation in the visitor study are lower than the expected 80% acceptance rate during the sampling period, an experienced on-site field supervisor will provide additional training and support for the survey administration process, including:

- Working with survey administrators to ensure that survey administration protocols are being followed properly,
- Recommending the adjustment of the specific bounds of the survey administration area to better capture flows of visitors,
- Recommending the reduction of the time interval.

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

Approximately 3,000 visitors will be contacted for the study (500 contacts at each park unit). Based on similar studies conducted by the NPS VSP, it is expected that 400 (80%) visitors will agree to participate onsite. In 2016, Resource System Group, Inc. (RSG) conducted similar studies across 15 units of the National Park System, using similar prescribed sampling methods for on-site recruitment for mail-back surveys. These collections had an average onsite acceptance rate of 80% and average final response rate of 43%. Based on these past studies, we propose an acceptance rate of at least 80% and a final response rate of at least 50% for this collection.

The target number of 2,400 questionnaires (n= 400 per intercept location) will be distributed to ensure that an adequate sample will be generated so that there will be 95% confidence that the survey findings will be accurate to approximately 3 percentage points for the overall sample (based on the formula where confidence level =  $1 \div \sqrt{N}$ , where N = target number of surveys completed).



**Table 1. Expected Acceptance Rate**

Intercept Location	Initial Contacts	Acceptance 80%	Non-respondents 20%	Non-respondents	
				Non-response survey (80%)	Hard Refusals (20%)
Prince William Memorial Forest Park	500	400	100	80	20
Antietam National Battlefield	500	400	100	80	20
Manassas National Battlefield Park	500	400	100	80	20
George Washington Memorial Parkway	500	400	100	80	20
Rock Creek Park	500	400	100	80	20
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park	500	400	100	80	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>120</b>

Given an assumed onsite acceptance rate of 80% (yielding a target number of 2,400 distributed questionnaires) and an assumed response rate of 50% for returned, completed questionnaires, the total number of visitor contacts will be 3,000 visitors to yield at least 1,200 completed, returned questionnaires for analysis.

**Table 2. Expected Response Rate from Visitors Who Accept a Questionnaire**

	Initial On-site Contacts	Initial On-site Acceptance	Returned Questionnaires 50%	Non-respondents 50%
Visitors at all sites	3,000	2,400	1,200	1,200

**(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. *How many adults, 18 and older, and children are in your personal group?*
2. *What is your state of residence (if you live in the US) or country of residence (if you do not live in the US)?*
3. *Did you experience any traffic or transportation difficulties getting to the park today?*
4. *Did you (or anyone in your group) encounter barriers or challenges with park activities due to any physical conditions you may have?*

*Or if the group has just entered the park:*

*Do you anticipate that you (or anyone in your group) will encounter barriers or challenges with park activities due to any physical conditions you may have?*

- a. *If YES, is the barrier related to mobility, communication, or something else?*

All Responses will be recorded for every contact, except “hard refusals” (those who completely refuse to participate in the study or to answer the non-response bias questions). This method will also serve as the non-response bias check for visitors accepting a survey packet, but not returning the completed questionnaire. Those who do not respond will be

tracked via their Survey Code and identified as non-respondents. The responses to the on-site non-respondent questions for this group will be compared with responses of visitors who return the questionnaire. Results of the non-response bias check will be reported and any implications for applicability of survey results to generalizations about the study population will be discussed.

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

All of the questions in this survey were taken from the currently approved NPS Pool of Known Questions (1024-0224). These questions have been used in other studies completed by RSG, where the clarity of survey questions and understanding from respondents has been demonstrated. Variations of these questions have been reviewed by NPS managers, and PhD-level and MS-level NPS survey research consultants at RSG. Pre-testing was conducted with RSG administrative staff (e.g., H.R. representatives, accountants), who do not possess experience with or knowledge of survey research or park management. The respondents commented that overall, the wording of the questions was clear, and review of their responses on their questionnaires reflected their understanding. Questionnaire completion times were observed and are incorporated into the burden estimate below.

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**BURDEN ESTIMATES:**

The combined total burden for this collection is estimated to be 536 hours. We have estimated respondent burden as follows:

- ❖ On-site contact – (Initial Contact and Non-Response Bias Check) : 120 hours  
Two minute will be used to explain the study and to complete the address cards with all visitors that agree to participate and an additional minute will used to conduct the non-response bias check (3 minutes x 2,400 respondents = 120 hours).
- ❖ On-site Non-response bias check (non-respondents): 16 hours  
One minute will be used to for the initial contact and an additional minute will used to conduct the non-response bias check with all non-respondents that agree to answer the four non-response bias question (2 minutes x 480 respondents = 16 hours). We will not calculate the burden for the remaining 4% (n=120) of the on-site visitors contacted that completely refuse to participate in the study; however, the surveyor will attempt to record any reason for refusal and record observational data.
- ❖ Visitor mail-back survey: 400 hours  
It will 50% (n=1,200) of all of the on-site visitor that took a survey packet, will take an average of 20 minutes to complete and return the mail-back questionnaire (20 minutes x 1,200 = 400 hours)

**Table 1. Annual Respondent Burden Estimates**

Respondents	Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Annual Burden Hours
On-site Contacts Instructions/Address Card/Non-Response Check (Respondents)	2,400	3	120
Non-respondents Non-response check	480	1	16
Returned/Completed Surveys	1,200	20	400
Total burden requested under this ICR:		Contact time added to completion time	<b>536</b>

**REPORTING PLAN:**

The study results will be presented in an internal report for park managers. Results of statistical analyses and summary statistics will be compiled (e.g. response frequencies, measures of central tendency, correlations, Chi-square, analysis of variance, factor analysis, and scale reliability analysis, as appropriate). Final reporting will be delivered to park managers in hard copy and electronic formats, and posted as a Natural Resource Data Series in the NPS Data Store (<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/>) as required by the NPS Programmatic Review Process.

Reference:

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L.M. (2014). *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Hoboken NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

## 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.