

# Kodiak Refuge Visitor Survey Onsite Instructions for Operators, Guides, and Refuge Staff

*The following instructions should be reviewed by anyone who will be contacting visitors for the Kodiak Refuge bear viewing survey effort. The vast majority of contacts will be made by commercial air taxi operators as their clients return to their offices after flying out to the refuge to view bears. Permitted guides and lodge owners on the refuge will also have cards available, as will refuge staff who may encounter independent bear viewers on the refuge who travel with their own plane. All operators, guides, lodge owners, and relevant refuge staff will be at a mandatory meeting to review the following instructions:*

## **Contacting Visitors: Who to Contact**

As clients return to air taxi offices after a trip to the refuge, all individuals who are (1) above the age of 18, and (2) traveled to the refuge to view bears will be invited to fill out a survey card. Operators will be responsible for:

- 1) Asking individuals to participate in the survey effort,
- 2) Collecting cards in a private box where individuals' responses cannot be seen, and
- 3) Recording the number of bear viewing participants returning on each flight, as well as the number that chose to participate in the survey by returning a card

\*There will be a small number of bear viewers who travel to the refuge independently, or use their own plane to travel to private lodges where bear viewing is facilitated by permitted guides. In these cases, guides and refuge staff that interact with these individuals will follow the same protocol for interacting with visitors.

**Visitors will NOT be completing the full survey onsite.** In an effort to reduce public burden hours onsite, especially for individuals who may be on viewing trips of very short duration, initial survey cards are used to collect contact information for accessing the longer survey at a time more convenient for visitors. This also allows the opportunity for visitors to process their trip before answering questions about the experience.

## **How to identify a bear viewer**

For the sake of this survey, a bear viewer is defined as any individual who traveled onto the Kodiak Refuge for the purpose of viewing bears. Individuals who travel to the refuge for the primary purpose of hunting should **not** be considered bear viewers. While some bear viewers

will be easily identified based on their destination with the air taxi, others will need some clarification. Bear viewers include people who:

- Specifically signed up for a bear viewing trip **\*on the refuge** with an air taxi operator
- Traveled to the Frazer Fish Pass
- Traveled to Koniag's Brown Bear Center on Karluk Lake
- Traveled to a private lodge on or boarding the refuge where travel onto the refuge was part of their trip (*please ask if their trip was motivated by viewing bears on the refuge*)
- Stayed at a public use cabin or camped on the refuge (*please ask if their trip was motivated by viewing bears on the refuge*)
- Hired an air taxi operator to be dropped off on the refuge (*please ask if their trip was motivated by viewing bears on the refuge*)

\*Visitors who flew with an air taxi operator to view bears at Katmai national park **cannot be included** in the survey sampling population. Our approved survey is for visitors to the Kodiak Refuge, and this does not give us jurisdiction to survey visitors to Katmai.

### **Contacting Visitors: How to Contact**

Participation is voluntary, yet we hope each bear viewer you contact will choose to fill out a survey card. We suggest you begin by asking clients how their trip went, followed by an emphasis on the importance of their participation in this effort. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) list provided at the end of this document will help answer questions visitors may have as well as inform you about this effort. Please be sure to read this document prior to contacting bear viewers.

### **When a visitor agrees to participate...**

Thank them for their time, and provide them with a pen and survey card. Inform them that their information will remain private, and point them to the location of the designated drop box where they will insert their card through the slot on top.

### **If a visitor does not want to participate...**

Thank them for their time, and note the number of non-participants on the survey tracking spreadsheet.

A staff member of the Kodiak Refuge will collect survey cards and tracking spreadsheets at least every two weeks. If you are in need of more cards or spreadsheets at any point, please call the Refuge at 907-487-2600 and a resupply will be delivered to you.

**THANK YOU! We could not conduct this survey without your help!**

## Frequently Asked Questions

*We do not expect you to have all of the following questions and answers memorized. However, they will give you some background knowledge about the survey effort and will help you answer questions that visitors may ask when you contact them.*

**1. How long will the survey take?**

The postcard survey should only take 1-2 minutes to fill out. For individuals who choose to participate in the online survey, it should take about 10-15 minutes.

**2. Can I just take the longer survey now?**

No, visitors in past wildlife refuge surveys have indicated they would rather fill out the survey in the convenience of their own home. You can expect to receive the link to the online survey in 2-3 weeks.

**3. Is there an option to take the longer survey without taking it online?**

Unfortunately, no. Due to time constraints the Refuge was only able to make the longer survey available online. If you do not have online access, please indicate this on your survey card.

**4. I would like a survey, but I am not 18 yet. Can I still participate?**

Unfortunately, no. Due to legal obligations, we are only allowed to distribute the survey to people age 18 and above.

**5. I would like a survey, but English is not my first language. Is there another option?**

Unfortunately, no. We were not able to provide the survey in additional languages, but we appreciate you wanting to be involved.

**6. Can I get results of the survey?**

Yes! All respondents who fill out and submit a survey will receive an email with instructions for accessing the results online after the collection effort is complete.

**7. Who is being asked to participate?**

A total population sample of refuge visitors who come to view bears is being asked to participate. We are inviting all bear viewers to ensure a large enough sample size to be confident in survey results.

**8. Why is this survey being conducted?**

The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge is required to provide wildlife viewing opportunities under the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. In order to effectively plan for ongoing sustainable wildlife viewing, the Refuge is sponsoring this survey to collect information on how current bear viewing experiences meet visitor expectations, and how these experiences can be improved.

**9. Who is conducting this survey?**

The US Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting this survey in partnership with the Utah State University Department of Sociology.

**10. What kinds of questions are on the survey?**

Questions on this survey will allow managers a better understanding of visitors' recreational, educational and informational experiences, and will measure satisfaction with bear viewing opportunities.

**For questions regarding this study, please contact the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge at:**

[Hansel.Klausner@fws.gov](mailto:Hansel.Klausner@fws.gov)

907-487-2600