

SUPPORTING STATEMENT – PART B

Recreation Area and Visitor Center Comment Cards – 0710-0019

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

I. Description of the Activity

The target audience are individuals representing a group or party visiting USACE recreation areas/parks or visitor centers. Results of the comment card instruments are collected in a central database for institutional use in constructing visitor satisfaction with facilities and USACE customer service performance results. The data provides recreation project managers with comparative results to identify opportunities for improvements in recreation facilities and management services on their projects.

The proposed survey design and level of sampling effort at each surveyed recreation area is consistent with the methodology implemented since previously approved in 2013. The comment card program utilizes a three year cycle, where one year is mandatory collection to balance agency needs with burden reduction. This is reflected as a “scheduled” protocol. The card may also be administered based on a self-serve basis or used as needed for management information in a “solicited” protocol. The description in this document reflects the process used in a mandatory year, however data entry would apply to any protocol used to administer the comment cards.

The total number of CE managed recreation areas at 402 projects/lakes is the universe. Surveys are not to be conducted at projects or areas with extremely low-use (less than 50,000 annual visits). Visitation level is annually updated in the generation tool to eliminate selection of projects or recreation areas that fall outside of the sampling frame criteria. Historically, less than 250 projects/lakes and fewer than 1,600 recreation areas at those projects/lakes have participated in this program.

For recreation areas (day use and campgrounds) in a mandatory year or year in which is information collection is planned, sampling would occur during a 3-month sampling window. At the 200 USACE projects/lakes with the lowest visitation will complete a comment card survey for their project with a planned sample size of 160 completed comment cards. The remaining projects will conduct separate satisfaction surveys of campers and day-users, each with a planned sample size of 320 completed comment cards.

For visitor centers, a total of 20 completed comment cards should be obtained from visitors each week during an 8-week sampling season.

USACE Recreation Customer Comment Cards for Recreation Areas and Visitor Centers	Number of Potential Survey Sites	Length of Sampling Season	Instrument Distribution for Low Visitation Parks	Instrument Distribution for High Visitation Parks	Instrument Distribution for Visitor Centers
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Recreation Areas, Day Use/Campgrounds	1,600	3-month	160	320	--
Visitor Centers	60	8-week	--	--	160

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

Describe any of the following if they are used in the collection of information:

- a. Statistical methodologies for stratification and sample selection

The online Survey Schedule Generators (Generator) produce systematic schedules for utilization by project/lake staff to direct when instruments should be distributed. Staff can select areas/parks/visitor centers to be included or omitted based on level of anticipated visitation. Only frequencies and summaries are produced for analysis.

- b. Estimation procedures;

Field staff input instrument results through an online data entry system. The only analysis of the data are frequencies and summaries tables rolled up by recreation area and visitor center for each project/lake.

- c. Degree of accuracy needed for the Purpose discussed in the justification;

This collection does not propose nor require a precision instrument. The results gathered by the methodology of this systematic sample (gathered on a schedule generated by the online tool), and the visitor perceptions of recreation facilities and USACE customer service recorded by the comment cards, are considered adequate to monitor trends in visitor satisfaction, and to alert management to customer concerns.

- d. Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures

Comment cards are given to selected visitors at the end of their visit, as they are preparing to leave the park or visitor center. The survey calendar shows the times of day at which to administer a comment card to a visitor. At each reference time listed in the survey schedule, a comment card should be offered to a member of the next visitor party preparing to leave the park or visitor center. To handle non-responses and refusals, the comment card should be offered to a member of each subsequent party, until the card is accepted.

- e. Use of periodic or cyclical data collections to reduce respondent burden.

Use of comment cards is planned with a mandatory year once every three years to support recreation performance measurement and benchmarking goals. Review of past collection data has already resulted in reduced comment card contacts scheduled through the Generator. The 3-year mandatory cycle (year 1 mandatory, years 2-3 optional) was implemented to balance agency goals with burden reduction. During the optional years, Projects/Lakes use the comment card at their discretion to provide desired voluntary feedback from recreation users. This decreases the overall annual sampling effort while continuing to separately report customer satisfaction results for visitors to Corps parks and visitor centers.

3. Maximization of Response Rates, Non-response, and Reliability

Personally handing the visitor the instrument and waiting for the response to be completed maximizes the response rates. Corps staff are instructed not to leave the comment card with the visitor with instructions to drop it off later at a designated location. To handle non-responses and refusals, the comment card should be offered to a member of each subsequent party, until the card is accepted and the quota is met. The response is considered representative of the party not the individual.

4. Tests of Procedures

It is periodically reviewed by the USACE Recreation Leadership Advisory Team, Engineer Research Development Center, and Institute for Water Resources to ensure it is still meeting management needs.

5. Statistical Consultation and Information Analysis

a. This instrument does not employ statistical analysis. As part of the data entry tool, simple frequency is provided to summarize the data for a particular project/lake.

b. USACE staff or other authorized individuals (i.e. volunteer, intern, etc) collect the data at any of the 402 USACE Water Resource Projects participating in a given year. The instrument, schedule generator, and data entry tool is maintained by USACE Engineer Research Development Center by Ginny Dickerson and Dena Williams.