



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: 9-30-2020

PROJECT TITLE: National Capital Region (NCR) Visitor Use Management and Planning Survey

ABSTRACT: (not to exceed 150 words)

The National Capital Region (NCR) of the National Park Service (NPS) is seeking to better understand visitors at Monocacy National Battlefield (MONO) and Prince William Forest Park (PRWI). MONO and PRWI are scoping changes in visitor services and require focused research to help guide future visitation and identify appropriate activities, facilities and services at each site. The overall purpose of this project is to gather useful information that will help support visitor use management decisions for the NCR managed areas in this study.

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PROJECT INFORMATION:

Where will the collection take place? Monocacy National Battlefield (MONO) and Prince William Forest Park

Sampling Period Start Date: 10/1/2020

Sampling Period End Date: 9/30/2021

Type of Information Collection Instrument: (Check ALL that Apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Mail-Back Questionnaire | ☒ On-Site Questionnaire | ☐ Telephone Survey |
| ☐ Face-to-Face Interview | ☐ Focus Groups | ☐ Other (List) |

Will an electronic device be used to collect information? ☐ No ☐ Yes -

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 proposed research aligns with Secretary of the Interior priorities and strategic plan for 2018-2022. The outcomes of this project will provide information that will directly align with three key mission areas: (1) conserving land and water, (2) expanding outdoor recreation and access, and (3) modernizing organization and infrastructure for the next 100 years. These three mission areas will be fulfilled by a) informing land use planning processes for public use and access, b) fostering partnerships to achieve balanced stewardship and use of public lands, c) enhancing public satisfaction at MONO, and d) prioritizing infrastructure needs (Interior FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, 2018).

The research contributes to urban park initiatives by increasing access for urban and rural populations to nearby national park units. MONO and PRWI provide unique settings to connect Americans residing in urban areas. The research will seek visitor input and visitor characteristics that will inform strategies to manage access for rural and urban visitors. These strategies will additionally bolster the NPS in its efforts to stay relevant to a critical base of supporters by managing access and quality experiences to a diverse visitor population.

The proposed collection is designed to inform management decisions about potential changes in visitor services and visitor use at MONO and PRWI. Neither park currently has enough visitor information to make informed decisions about where their visitors go, what they do, and how to best allocate dwindling resources to meet desired conditions. Given that the parks have so little information about their visitors, a need was identified to first understand visitor motivations, desired activities and recreation preferences. This survey was designed to meet this need. Ultimately, outcomes of the proposed work can be used to inform potential management options, and engagement of current and future visitors.

This work is guided by the steps and principles of the Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework, which identifies the interdependent relationship between resource conditions, visitor experiences, and management actions as a strategic area of focus (VUM, 2016). The outcomes of this project will provide information that will assist MONO and PRWI managers to a) understand who is visiting the park units (e.g., demographics), including how and when they visit the units, b) identify visitors' recreational preferences, desires and motivations, c) understand visitors' needs and desires for activities, services, facilities and potential future opportunities, and d) forecast infrastructure, visitor services and facility improvements. The resulting work will have high capacity to be used in park strategic planning efforts to identify efficient paths towards infrastructure improvements, visitor services, amenities and appropriate staffing.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

(A) Respondent Universe:

The respondent universe for this collection will be a systematic sample of all adult recreation users (age 18 or older) at various sites across MONO and PRWI. According to NPS Visitor Use Statistics, approximately 144,969 people visited MONO and approximately 339,693 people visited PRWI in 2019.

(B) Sampling Plan / Procedures:

Because both sites provide exceptional opportunities for recreation and historical significance during three seasons, we will be sampling during fall, spring and summer, dates not yet known due to COVID-19 guidelines. The current yet flexible plan is to begin on-site sampling Spring and Summer of 2021. The sampling strategy is random, with every other visitor group being intercepted on-site. A strategy to randomly choose one person in the group who is over 18 to take the survey will be used. The random sampling strategy will be used to ensure that a representative sample of the visiting population is reached. Table 1 provides estimates for visitor contacts based on previous on-site survey efforts in other similar parks, areas of varying levels of use, and park manager input.

MONO

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- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| • Thomas Farm | • Worthington Farm |
| • Visitor Center | • River access point |
| • Best Farm | • Gambrill Mill House |

PRWI

-
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| • Turkey Run, | • Backcountry Area |
| • Lot D | • Visitor Center |
| • PRWI RV Campground | • Cabin Camps 1-5 |
| • Pine Grove Picnic Area | |

All sites were chosen based on conversations with park staff, planners and researchers, and are a representative sample of all locations within the park. These locations will be sampled during the proposed study period (Oct. 4-10, 2020 and May 30-June 5th, 2021).

The two sampling periods will occur for 14 total days (Table 1). Each period consists of 5-week days and 2-weekend days. Two researchers will intercept visitors at alternating sampling locations within MONO and PRWI during the sampling period. Sampling will be evenly split between the locations MONO (n=420) and PRWI (840), for a total of 1,260 visitor contacts.

In order to accurately gauge experiences, visitors will be approached at 6 points of interest in MONO, and 7 in PRWI. These locations are the primary points of use; thus most visitors will pass through at least one of these areas to access these sites. Sampling will occur at each of the locations on a rotating basis from 8-5pm during the sampling period.

Table 1. Estimated number of contacts during sampling period

Location	Oct 4-10	May 30-June 5	Total
MONO	210	210	420
PRWI	420	420	840
Total	630	630	0

(C) Instrument Administration:

Every visitor group seen will be contacted, and 1 adult from each group will be asked to participate. Interviewers will use a business card with a link to an online questionnaire. The selected respondent will be asked to use the link to complete the questionnaire after their visit. 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. Business cards will be administered to guests and they will be asked to complete the questionnaire online after their visit utilizing Qualtrics survey software. The research team will distribute business cards to the researchers at the sampling locations. *note: the business card approach is being used in lieu of an on-site survey utilizing a tablet to minimize contact and proximity with visitors during the COVID-19 outbreak. Researchers will stay 6 feet apart from all visitors. Business cards will be kept on a table for visitors to take in a contactless way. Hand sanitizer and

sanitizing wipes will be in abundance at all sampling locations. If masks are mandated and/or appropriate, research staff will be masked and gloved.

Visitors selected for participation will be read the following script:

"Hello, my name _____. I am conducting a survey for the NPS to better understand your opinions related to your overall experience and preferences at MONO/PRWI. Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to take a 10-minute survey online when you return home after your visit?"

- If yes – the interviewer will make sure no one in the group has already been asked to take the survey - then say, "Thank you for agreeing to participate. Who in your group is at least 18 years old has the next birthday?" Ask them to start by answering the non-response bias questions (listed below) and sharing their e-mails for follow up reminders. Record response in spaces provided on the tracking sheet. Direct them to take a business card. Participants will be debriefed on how to access the Qualtrics link to answer the survey.
- If no (soft refusal) - ask them if they would be willing to answer the non-response bias questions and then thank them for their time.

Record responses on 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 a 95% confidence that the survey findings will be accurate within 3-5 percentage points. Assuming a 50% response rate, we will need to contact approximately 800 visitors at MONO, and 1,600 visitors at PRWI.

Table 3. Anticipated Response Rates

Location	Initial Contacts	Acceptance 50%	Non-respondents (Soft refusals) 50%	Non-response survey 20%	Hard Refusals 80%
MONO	800	400	400	80	320
PRWI	1,600	800	800	160	640
Est TOTAL	2, 400	1,200	1,200	240	960

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

During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each visitor three questions take from the survey. The following questions will serve as the non-response bias check for this collection:

1. how many days in the last month (30 days) have you visited MONO/PRWI?
2. prior to your visit, were you aware that MONO/PRWI is managed by the National Park Service (NPS)? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure
3. What is your gender? (select one) ☐ male ☐ female

All responses will be recorded on a log for every survey contacted. 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 variations of many of the questions have been used in NPS two survey instruments previously approved by OMB (e.g., Buffalo National River and Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area). The questions are from the currently approved NPS Pool of Known Questions (1024-0221 exp. 5/31/2023). Any variations of the questions have been reviewed by PRWI managers and faculty at Old Dominion University and Kansas State University and approved by the NPS Information Collections Clearance Officer. The questionnaire was tested on six members of the general public for to estimate respondent burden and clarity of questions.

BURDEN ESTIMATES:

MONO

Overall, we plan to approach 800 individuals at all sites within MONO during the sampling period. We anticipate that 50% (n=400) of those contacted will agree to participate and complete the online survey after their visit. The initial contact time (2 minutes) will be used to explain the purpose of the survey and provide instruction and answer question about the on-line survey. Based upon the pretest we estimate that an average of 15 additional minutes will be required to complete and return the on-line survey (400 respondents x 17 minutes = 113 hours).

Of all the visitors refusing to accept the invitation (n=400) we will ask if they would be willing to answer the 3 questions that will serve as the non-response bias check for this collection. We expect that 20% (n=80) of the on-site refusals will agree to answer the non-response bias questions which will an additional minute, including the initial contact the burden for the non-response check is estimated to be 3 hours (80 respondents x 2 minute = 3 hours).

The respondent burden at MONO is 116 hours. This includes the initial contact, instructions, and the time it takes to complete the online questionnaire and non-response survey.

PRWI

For this segment of the study, we plan to approach 1,600 individuals at all sites within PRWI during the sampling period. We anticipate that 50% (n=800) of those contacted will agree to participate and complete the online survey after their visit. The initial contact time (2 minutes) will be used to explain the purpose of the survey and provide instruction and answer question about the on-line survey. Based upon the pretest, we estimate that an average of

15 additional minutes will be required to complete and return the on-line survey (800 respondents x 17 minutes = 227 hours).

Of all the visitors refusing to accept the invitation (n=800) we will ask if they would be willing to answer the 3 questions that will serve as the non-response bias check for this collection. We expect that 20% (n=160) of the on-site refusals will agree to answer the non-response bias questions which will an additional minute, including the initial contact the burden for the non-response check is estimated to be 5 hours (160 respondents x 2 minute = 5 hours).

Total Refusals

The remaining 960 visitors (MONO n=320 and PRWI n=640) refusing to accept any part of the invitation to participate will not incur a respondent burden. We will attempt to record their reason for refusing to accept a card to complete the on-line survey.

The overall respondent burden at PRWI is 348 hours. This includes the initial contact, instructions, and the time it takes to complete the online questionnaire and non-response survey.

Table 4. Burden Estimates

	Completed Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Burden Hours (rounded up)
Questionnaire			
MONO	400	17	113 hours
PRWI	800	17	227 hours
Subtotal	1,200		340 hours
Non-response survey			
MONO	80	2	3 hours
PRWI	160	2	5 hours
Subtotal	240		8 hours
Total burden requested under this ICR:			348 hours

* Initial contact time of two minute is added to the time to complete the surveys.

REPORTING PLAN:

The study results for both MONO and PRWI will be presented in internal agency reports for NPS managers at the parks. 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 NPS Social Science Studies Collection as required by the NPS Programmatic Approval process. Hard copies will be available upon request.

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 12 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.