



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: 9/24/2021

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

ABSTRACT: (not to exceed 150 words)

The National Capital Area (NCA) Region 1 of the National Park Service (NPS) is seeking to better understand visitors' preferences for public education resources and amenities, facilities, and infrastructure at Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Historic Park (CHOH) and Rock Creek Park (ROCR). Both units 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 NCA managed areas in this study. The purpose of this Importance Performance survey is to understanding visitors' preferences about park attributes and their quality. This request is to replicate portions of surveys for MONO and PRWI approved by OMB on 12/1/2020 (1024-0224 National Capital Region Visitor Use Management and Planning) and extend on-site data collection to CHOH and ROCR.

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PROJECT INFORMATION:

Where will the collection take place? Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park and Rock Creek Park)

Sampling Period Start Date: 10/31/2021

Sampling Period End Date: May/31/2022

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) - online survey |

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) and enhancing public satisfaction at CHOH and ROCR. (Interior FY 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, 2018).

The research contributes to current park initiatives designed to increase access for urban and rural populations to nearby national park units. CHOH and ROCR provide unique settings to connect Americans residing in urban and rural 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.

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 CHOH and ROCR managers to a) understand who is visiting the units (e.g., demographics), including how and when they visit the segments/units, b) identify visitors' recreational preferences, desires and motivations, c) understand visitors' needs and desires for activities, services, facilities and public education 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:

On-Site Survey - The respondent universe for this collection will be a systematic sample of all adult recreation users (age 18 or older) at various sites along CHOH and within ROCR. 800 surveys total, 400 at each unit, will be collected. The survey participants will be intercepted at a specified sampling location, as they are leaving the site (exit survey).

(B) Sampling Plan / Procedures:

To accurately gauge experiences, visitors will be approached at pre-determined points of interest in CHOH and ROCR (Table 1). These locations are the primary points of use within both units; thus most visitors will pass through at least one of these areas to park resources. Because CHOH and ROCR provide exceptional opportunities for recreation and historical significance fall and spring seasons. We will conduct on-site sampling for 24 days in the fall of 2021 and 24 day in the Spring of 2022. We will randomly be sampling every other visitor group (18 years or older) on-site from 8 am – 12 pm or 1 pm – 5 pm daily. The random sampling strategy will be used to ensure that a representative sample of the visiting population is reached.

The sampling locations within the park were chosen based on conversations with park staff, planners, and researchers, and are representative of all locations along the trail. These locations will be sampled for a total of 24 days split between the fall and spring sampling periods. The both sampling periods will consist of 4-week days and 4-weekend days. Researchers will intercept visitors at alternating sampling locations in ROCR and CHOH the sampling period with an anticipation of 800 visitor contacts during each season for a total of 1,600 visitor contacts.

To accurately gauge visitor preferences', visitors will be approached at determined points of interest along the CHOH and within ROCR. These locations are the primary points of use within or in proximity to the units; thus most visitors will pass through at least one of these areas to access the parks. Sampling will occur at each of the locations on a rotating basis from 8am-5pm during the sampling period.

Table 1. Estimated Number of Visitor Contacts

Location	Fall 2021		Spring 2022		Total
	Weekday	Weekend	Weekday	Weekend	
CHOH	150	200	175	225	800
ROCR	200	250	175	225	800
TOTAL	350	450	350	450	1,600

(C) Instrument Administration:

Every other on-site visitor group seen will be contacted, and 1 adult from each group will be asked to participate. Interviewers will use tablet computers (e.g., i-Pads) to administer the surveys utilizing an online survey platform developed specific to the survey method. 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. 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).

An alternate approach using business cards may be used to reduce person-to-person contact. The research team will distribute business cards explaining the survey and the request to participate. Business cards would be kept on a table, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be available at all sampling locations. Research staff will be masked and gloved during any person-to-person contact during the administration of the survey.

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 CHOH/ROCR. Your participation is voluntary, and all responses will be kept anonymous. Would you be willing to take a 10-minute survey?"

- 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 that is at least 18 years old has the next birthday?" Ask them to start by answering the non-response bias questions (listed below). Record response in spaces provided on the tracking sheet. Tablets will be then administered to participants to complete 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.

For the online stakeholder survey, similar methods will be utilized: An introduction email will be sent to possible participants, if they agree to participate, they will complete the survey, if they do not agree, follow up emails with the same non-response questions will be sent. 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.

(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. Although we aim to achieve this level of confidence, the lack of precise visitor numbers along the trail and within the park may make this difficult to know. The email distribution list for the online survey, provided by the park will be approximately 800. Assuming a 50% response rate, we will need to contact approximately 800 visitors on-site, 400 at CHOH and 400 at ROCR.

Table 2. Anticipated Response Rates

Location	Initial Contacts	Acceptance 50%	Non-respondents (Soft refusals) 50%	Non-response survey 20%	Hard Refusals 80%
CHOH	800	400	400	80	320
ROCR	800	400	400	80	320
Est TOTAL	1,600	800	800	160	640

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

During the initial contact, the interviewer will ask each visitor three questions taken 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 CHOH/ROCR?
2. Prior to your visit, were you aware that CHOH/ROCR 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. These same three questions will be used to follow up with online refusals as well.

(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 instruments previously approved by OMB (e.g., Monocacy National Battlefield). 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 CHOH and ROCR 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:

The overall respondent burden at CHOH and ROCR is 180 hours. This includes the initial contact, instructions, and the time it takes to complete the questionnaire and non-response survey.

CHOH

At CHOH, we plan to approach 800 individuals across all sites within CHOH during the sampling period. We anticipate that 50% (n=400) of those contacted will agree to participate and complete the on-site survey. The initial contact time (1 minute) will be used to explain the purpose of the survey and provide instruction and answer question about the survey. Based upon the pretest we estimate that an average of 12 additional minutes will be required to complete and return the survey (400 respondents x 13 minutes = 87 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 require an additional minute, including the

initial contact, the burden for the non-response check is estimated to be 3 hours (80 respondents x 2 minutes = 3 hours).

The respondent burden at CHOH (on-site) is 90 hours. This includes the initial contact, instructions, and the time it takes to complete the online questionnaire and non-response survey.

ROCR

At ROCR, we plan to approach 800 individuals across all sites within ROCR during the sampling period. We anticipate that 50% (n=400) of those contacted will agree to participate and complete the on-site survey. The initial contact time (1 minute) will be used to explain the purpose of the survey and provide instruction and answer question about the survey. Based upon the pretest we estimate that an average of average of 12 additional minutes will be required to complete and return the survey (400 respondents x 13 minutes = 87 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 require an additional minute, including the initial contact, the burden for the non-response check is estimated to be 3 hours (80 respondents x 2 minutes = 3 hours).

Total Refusals

The remaining 640 visitors (*CHOH on-site n=320 and ROCR on-site n=320*) refusing to accept any part of the invitation to participate will not incur a respondent burden.

Table 4. Burden Estimates

	Completed Responses	Completion Time * (minutes)	Burden Hours (rounded up)
On-site survey			
<u>CHOH</u>	400	13	87 hours
<u>ROCR</u>	400	13	87 hours
Subtotal	800		174 hours
Non-response survey			
<u>CHOH</u>	80	2	3 hours
<u>ROCR</u>	80	2	3 hours
Subtotal	160		6 hours
Total burden requested under this ICR:	960		180 hours

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

REPORTING PLAN:

The study results for CHOH and ROCR will be presented in internal agency reports for NPS managers within the network. 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.