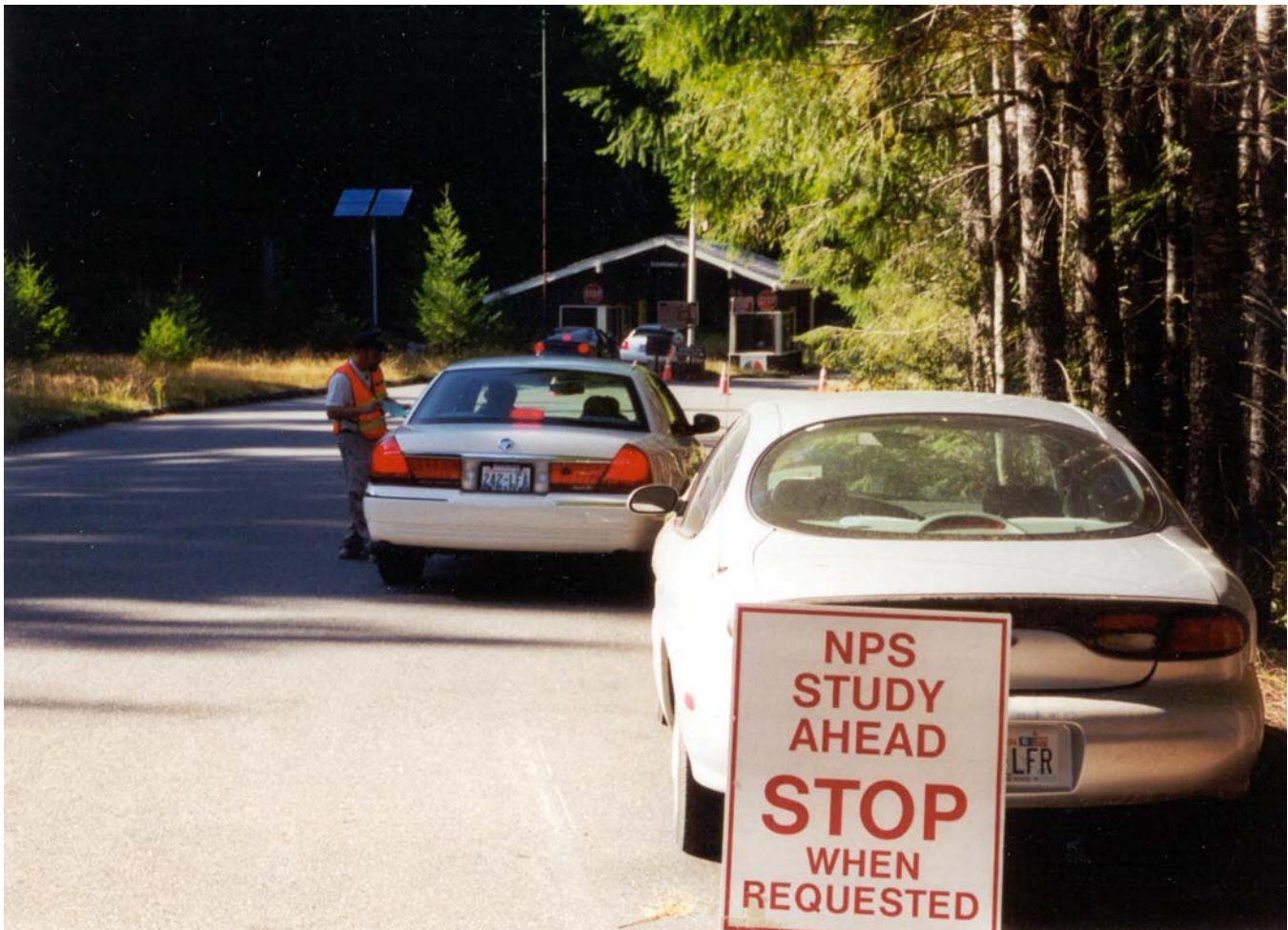




Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys (OMB # 1024-0224) Fiscal Year 2003 Annual Report



Mount Rainier National Park, Photo courtesy of the NPS Visitor Services Project

December 2003

Background on Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

The National Park Service (NPS) preserves the nation's natural and cultural heritage and provides for its enjoyment by citizens and visitors from throughout the world. An accurate understanding of the relationship between people and parks is critical to achieving the mission of the National Park System: protecting resources unimpaired and providing for public enjoyment. Such understanding requires a sound scientific basis. Hence, social science research is a necessary and important function of the National Park Service.

As part of its Social Science Program, the NPS sponsors surveys of the public to provide park managers with information for improving the quality and utility of NPS programs. All information collection activities funded or sponsored by the NPS must be done in compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-13) and implementing rules (5 CFR 1320) written by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Since many of the NPS surveys are similar in terms of the populations being surveyed, the types of questions being asked, and research methodologies, the NPS, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior (DOI), proposed to OMB and received clearance for a program of approval for NPS visitor surveys (OMB# 1024-0224 exp. 8/31/2001). The program presented an alternative approach to complying with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). The program was designed to provide several specific benefits.

First, it would improve the opportunity for meaningful public comment by offering one public review period for the entire program of similar surveys. Second, it would increase federal government efficiency by reducing the personnel time and funding necessary to prepare and review the proposed collections of information. Third, it would assist researchers by simplifying the approval process for social science research. Fourth, it would improve the timely delivery of usable knowledge to NPS managers.

In the first three years of the program, 92 individual surveys were conducted.

In 2001, the NPS Social Science Program submitted an extension request for the program of expedited approval. That extension request expanded the program to include surveys of park visitors, potential park visitors, and residents of communities near parks. OMB clearance was granted on 19 September 2001 (OMB# 1024-0224 exp. 9/30/04).

The positive result is more savings in time and cost to the federal government (NPS, DOI, and OMB) and principal investigators, and a further reduction in burden on the public.

Annual reports are required as a component of the approval. This is the fifth annual report, summarizing activities in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003. In this report, the program is referred to as the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys.

Management and Oversight

Separate management, oversight, and approval responsibilities are held by the NPS Social Science Program, DOI, and OMB.

The NPS Visiting Chief Social Scientist, with the assistance of Social Science Program staff, provides guidance for submission and reviews all survey instruments for compliance with technical standards and program guidelines. The staff responsibility for the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys has been assigned to Brian Forist, Research Associate.

For submissions that comply with program requirements, the Visiting Chief Social Scientist determines the appropriate number of burden hours for the information collection, certifies that the survey instrument and research methodology is technically acceptable and in compliance with the PRA, and transmits the individual survey package to OMB for final approval. If the NPS receives approval from OMB, the NPS allocates the OMB control number (and an NPS tracking number), survey expiration date, and designated burden hours, and authorizes the principal investigator to use the approved instrument.

The DOI office responsible for oversight of information collection activities (the Office of Policy Analysis) monitors NPS activities within the program, provides policy guidance, and reviews annual reports.

The OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) provides expedited review of NPS submissions under the program and notifies the Visiting Chief Social Scientist of approval (or the need

for revision) within five working days.

The NPS Social Science Program developed guidelines which describe the authorities, scope, and the submission process for the program. The guidelines under the initial approval, dated October 1, 1999, were broadly disseminated to park managers and the social science community. A revised document reflecting program changes, *Guidelines and Approval Form for Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys*, was published and widely disseminated in December 2001. The revised guidelines and associated forms are available as downloadable files on the NPS Social Science Program website at <http://www.nps.gov/tech/survey.htm>.

Fiscal Year 2003 Activities

FY 2003 activities under the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys are summarized in Table 1. In FY 2003, 56 surveys were approved. Approved surveys were conducted in, or for 44 units of the National Park System. The total estimated burden on the public for all surveys approved in FY 2003 was 11,976 hours. The average survey in FY 2003 placed a burden on the public of 214 hours. The mean burden on each individual respondent in FY 2003 was 21 minutes.

Table 1 – Fiscal Year 2003 Activities

NPS Survey #	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	Expiration	Burden Hours
03-001	Big South Fork National River and Recr. Area Wild Hog Permit and Telephone Questionnaire	09-Jan-03	31-Jul-04	31-Mar-06	6
03-002	Great Smoky Mountains National Park-Mt. Leconte Visitors Use Study	20-Oct-02	31-Dec-03	13-Jun-04	122
03-003	Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail: Tent City Visitor Center and Waysides	28-Jan-03	04-Mar-03	30-Sep-03	21
03-004	Yellowstone and Grand Teton 2002-2003 Winter Use Survey	18-Dec-02	15-Mar-02	30-Sep-03	799
03-005	Minority Visitor Use Patterns at Rocky Mountain National Park	30-Jan-03	30-Apr-03	31-Oct-03	750
03-006	Visitor Use Survey, Padre Island National Seashore	01-Jan-03	31-Dec-03	30-Jun-04	413
03-007	Front-end Evaluation Research for Exhibit Development Project: Badlands National Park	21-Jan-03	22-Jan-03	31-Jul-03	80
03-008	Regional Perspectives and Opportunities for Feral Hog Management in the Greater Big Bend Region, Texas	01-Jan-03	31-Mar-03	31-Dec-03	192
03-009	Aztec Ruins National Monument Visitor Survey	01-Feb-03	31-Jan-04	31-Jul-04	267
03-010	Grand Canyon National Park: Yavapai Observation Station-Geologic Exhibits Formative Evaluation & Exhibit Prototyping	04-Mar-03	05-Mar-03	30-Sep-03	32
03-011	Monitoring Visitor Behaviors on Acadia National Park Carriage Roads	01-Jul-03	31-Aug-03	28-Feb-04	34
03-012	Survey of Grand Canyon National Park Visitors Regarding the Interpretive Services Provided by Grand Canyon River Outfitters	30-May-03	15-Dec-03	30-Jun-04	413
03-013	Colorado National Monument Visitor and Vehicular Data Collection Survey	01-Apr-03	15-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	54
03-014	Charleston Harbor Water Taxi Resident & Non-Resident Survey, Fort Sumter Group Parks	22-Mar-03	01-Jun-03	31-Dec-03	188
03-015	National Capital Parks Central Visitor Transportation Study	24-Mar-03	11-Jul-03	30-Jan-04	498
03-016	Arches National Park Visitor Transportation Surveys	07-Apr-03	09-Aug-03	28-Feb-04	47
03-017	Public Preferences for Elk and Vegetation Management in Rocky Mountain National Park	01-May-03	01-Aug-03	28-Feb-04	1,048
03-018	Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail: Tent City Visitor Center and Waysides Formative Evaluation	21-Apr-03	15-Jun-03	31-Dec-03	27
03-019	Evaluating the influence of interpretive messages in changing adult attitudes toward, & knowledge about wildland fire at Mesa Verde National Park	01-Jun-03	15-Aug-03	28-Feb-04	84
03-020	Acadia National Park (Isle au Haut Section) Community Survey	02-May-03	02-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	104
	National Park Service Potential Visiting Scholar Information Collection	recommendation for submission under standard ICR procedure			

NPS Survey #	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	Expiration	Burden Hours
03-022	Glacier Bay National Park-Gustavus AK Charter Guide and Client Survey	15-Jun-03	15-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	56
03-023	Glacier Bay National Park Creel Survey	01-Jun-03	30-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	166
03-024	Glacier Bay National Park Boaters Survey	01-Jun-03	15-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	80
03-025	Gateway National Recreation Area-Floyd Bennett Field Visitor Study (VSP)	24-May-03	01-Jun-03	31-Dec-03	287
03-026	Cowpens National Battlefield Visitor Study (VSP)	28-May-03	03-Jun-03	31-Dec-03	121
03-027	Cuyahoga Valley National Park Underground Railroad Hike Interpretive Evaluation	28-Jun-03	28-Jun-03	31-Dec-03	49
03-028	The Alagnak River Recreational Visitor Survey	10-Jun-03	01-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	151
03-029	Backpackers' food storage habits and attitudes at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks	20-Jun-03	15-Sep-04	31-Mar-05	6
03-030	Grand Canyon National Park--South Rim Visitor Study (VSP)	22-Jun-03	28-Jun-03	31-Jan-04	301
03-031	Grand Canyon National Park--North Rim Visitor Study (VSP)	22-Jun-03	28-Jun-03	31-Jan-04	181
03-032	Visitor Environmental Survey at Acadia National Park/Air Quality and Health in Acadia National Park	01-Jul-03	08-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	152
03-033	Capulin Volcano National Monument Visitor Study (VSP)	10-Jul-03	16-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	121
03-034	Grand Canyon National Park Visitor Survey	01-Sep-03	30-Aug-04	28-Feb-05	1,745
03-035	Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park Visitor Study (VSP)	06-Jul-03	12-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	331
03-036	Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Visitor Study (VSP)	18-Jul-03	24-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	121
03-037	Chena River State Recreation Area Phone Survey	01-Jul-03	30-Oct-03	30-Apr-04	86
03-038	Public Perceptions of Management Actions for the Wolves of the Southern Greater Yellowstone Area	15-Jun-03	01-Sep-03	31-Mar-04	325
03-039	Oregon Caves National Monument Visitor Study (VSP)	16-Jul-03	22-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	135
03-040	Fort Stanwix National Monument Visitor Study (VSP)	24-Jul-03	30-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	121
03-041	Lassen Volcanic National Park Visitor Center Formative Evaluation	25-Jul-03	25-Jul-03	31-Jan-04	49
03-042	Haleakala National Park Summit Visitor Survey	14-Aug-03	23-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	63
03-043	Haleakala National Park Exit Visitor Survey	14-Aug-03	23-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	63

NPS Survey #	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	Expiration	Burden Hours
03-044	Haleakala National Park Bicycle Tour Visitor Survey	14-Aug-03	23-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	42
03-045	Arches National Park Visitor Study	10-Aug-03	16-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	184
03-046	Muir Woods National Monument Visitor Survey	01-Aug-03	24-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	142
03-047	Golden Gate National Recreation Area-Muir Beach Visitor Survey	01-Aug-03	24-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	75
03-048	Visitor Experiences with Interpretive Displays in the Wupatki National Monument Visitor Center	01-Sep-03	30-Nov-03	31-Mar-04	17
03-049	North Cascades Mountain Lakes Visitor Survey	01-Aug-03	10-Sep-03	31-May-04	17
03-050	Salem Maritime National Historic Site Visitor Survey	15-Aug-03	31-Oct-03	30-Apr-04	52
03-051	Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park Transportation Study	16-Aug-03	24-Aug-03	29-Feb-04	16
03-052	Cane River Creole National Historical Park Visitor Survey	15-Aug-03	31-Oct-03	30-Apr-04	52
	Yellowstone National Park - Wolf Economic Study	recommendation for submission under standard ICR procedure			
03-054	Lake Meredith National Recreation Area and Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument Visitor Study 2003-2004	15-Oct-03	30-May-04	30-Nov-04	236
03-055	Saguaro National Park Visitor Use Simulation Modeling	01-Sep-03	30-May-04	30-Nov-04	521
03-056	Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness Rock Climbing Study	01-Oct-03	01-May-04	31-Dec-04	113
03-057	Montezuma Castle National Monument and Tuzigoot National Monument Visitor Study 2003-2004	01-Oct-03	31-May-04	30-Nov-04	409
03-058	Mojave National Preserve Visitor Study	10-Oct-03	18-Oct-03	30-Apr-04	211
					11,976

Effects of the Expedited Approval Process

There are several immediate effects derived from this program. These include time savings, cost savings, reduction in burden on the public, and increased peer review. The standard PRA survey approval process takes approximately six months once the first *Federal Register* notice is published. Under the expedited program, the approval time has been reduced to

45 days or less once a survey has been submitted to the NPS for review.

A conservative estimate nets a time savings of approximately four and one half months per survey. In FY 2003, 56 surveys were approved under the program with an estimated time savings of 252 months. On average, it took 38 calendar days from initial submission for a survey to be

reviewed by the NPS Social Science Program staff, revised by the Principal Investigator as needed, certified by the NPS Visiting Chief Social Scientist, and approved by OMB. This reflects a reduction from FY02 during which it took, on average, 54 days from initial submission to final OMB approval.

The expedited approval process provides substantial cost savings for the federal government by reducing staff time required to review submissions. Table 2 shows that the approval process saves approximately \$1,572 per study.

This fifth year of the program yielded a direct cost savings to the federal government of approximately \$88,032 (56 studies X \$1,572 per study). In addition to these direct cost savings, principal investigators also benefit by a significant reduction in labor required to prepare approval packages.

The project manager for the NPS-sponsored Visitor Services Project (VSP) estimates a savings of 15 hours at an estimated cost of \$429 per study. The VSP conducted ten studies in FY 2003 for a total cost savings of approximately \$4,290. Estimating similar time savings to principal investigators for the 46

remaining studies conducted in FY 2003, an additional cost savings of approximately \$19,734 was incurred. The total cost savings to principal investigators is estimated to be \$24,024. Hence, the total amount of dollars saved by the federal government and principal investigators in FY 2003 is estimated to be at least \$112,056.

In five years, a total of 193 individual surveys have been approved, providing the federal government and principal investigators a time and cost saving estimated to be at least \$348,001.

Burden on the public has been reduced by eliminating the repetitive *Federal Register* publications for substantially similar survey research. Extensive public review of the program as a whole resulted in effective and efficient public comment. Those comments were incorporated into the final submission to OMB.

Finally, the expedited approval process encourages principal investigators to have their survey instruments peer-reviewed prior to submission. This has resulted in higher quality studies that reduce burden on the public and ensure more accurate data.

Activity	Approx. Salary	Standard Approval		Expedited Approval		Cost Savings
		Average Review Time Per Study	Cost Per Study	Average Review Time Per Study	Cost Per Study	
Review and handling by Social Science Program staff (GS-11 Step 5)	\$26.31/hr*	12.5 hours	\$328.88	3 hours	\$78.93	\$249.95
Review by Chief Social Scientist (GS-14 Step 6)	\$45.62/hr*	7.5 hours	\$342.15	3 hours	\$136.86	\$205.29
Review by NPS Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-13 Step 5)	\$37.50/hr*	3 hours	\$112.50	None	None	\$112.50
Review by DOI Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-15 Step 10)	\$59.79/hr*	2 hours	\$119.58	None	None	\$119.58
Review by OMB OIRA Desk Officer for DOI (GS-15 Step 5)	\$52.13/hr*	3 hours	\$156.39	1 hour	\$52.13	\$104.26
<i>Federal Register</i> Notice Publication	\$390 per notice	2 per study	\$780	None	None	\$780.00
Total Cost Savings Per Study						\$1,571.58

Progress on NPS Initiatives

The NPS Social Science Program has undertaken several initiatives as part of this approval program. The major initiative undertaken in FY03 included development of an archive of survey results.

The NPS Social Science Program has established a social science data and information archival system in consultation with scientists conducting NPS-sponsored public surveys and NPS library programs. The Social Science Studies Collection has been established with hard copies of reports housed in libraries in the NPS Social Science Program Washington, DC office and the Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) in Harpers Ferry West Virginia. To date, more than 120 reports have been digitized and made available on the NPS Focus Digital Library and Research Station. NPS Focus is currently on the NPS Intranet only at <http://focus.inside.nps.gov>. It is expected that public access to the Social Science Studies Collection and NPS Focus will be available in 2004.

The NPS Visitor Services Project (VSP) based at the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit has developed an archival portion of their Web site, providing access to survey instruments, executive summaries, and full reports. The VSP Web site is located at <http://www.psu.uidaho.edu>.

The NPS Social Science Program Web site has recently been redesigned. The new Social Science Program Web site at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience> includes links to the Social Science Studies Collection on NPS Focus and the VSP website.

In its fifth year, the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys has proven to be useful, effective, and efficient. The NPS Social Science Program looks forward to continuing to work with NPS managers, social scientists, DOI, OMB and the public to ensure the success of this valuable program.

For Additional Information

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Grand Canyon National Park
Photo courtesy of the NPS Visitor Services Project