



Social Science Program – Expedited Review Update

This notification outlines the current status of the NPS Social Science Program's (SSP) expedited review process. Although the expedited review process was renewed in June 2008, the pace of individual submission reviews by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has slowed dramatically. Part of this is due to understaffing at OMB, part to administration priorities directing OMB to focus on rulemaking, and part to a new electronic submission process known as ROCIS that limits the number of surveys that can be submitted at one time. As a result, 19 NPS surveys scheduled by parks for 2008 were either canceled or delayed until 2009 because they could not be approved in time.

The results of this slowdown during the summer of 2008 forced the SSP to take the unprecedented step of suspending the acceptance of expedited submissions. Unfortunately, due to the reasons outlined above, the slowdown has continued and we currently find ourselves in the position of having a backlog of submissions at what is normally a slower time of year. In light of this and information we've received from the Department of the Interior, indicating that the OMB review slowdown will continue through the end of the current administration, **we are forced to suspend the acceptance of new submissions under the expedited review program.**

Currently, we have 16 submissions that are awaiting OMB review and approval. Five of these are studies that were submitted last spring and scheduled to begin during the summer of 2008 but were unable to be reviewed in time, and thus, have been delayed until next summer. Eleven of these are submissions we received since September 1, 2008. These studies have start dates ranging from this fall through next summer. Our priority is to get these 16 submissions moving through the expedited process prior to accepting any new submissions.

Continue to check the SSP's web site for updates regarding the status of the expedited review process.