

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Social Science Program



Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys (OMB # 1024-0224) FY 2002 Annual Report



Photograph courtesy of the National Park Service Historic Photograph Collection

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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 population being surveyed, the types of questions being asked, and research methodologies, the NPS proposed to OMB and received clearance for a pilot 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 fourth annual report, summarizing activities in FY 2002. 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, the Department of the Interior (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 5 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 2002 Activities

FY 2002 activities under the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys are summarized in Table 1. In FY 2002, 45 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 2002 was 8,076 hours. The average survey in FY 2002 placed a burden on the public of 179 hours. The mean burden on each individual respondent in FY 2002 was 18 minutes.

Table 1 – Fiscal Year 2002 Activities

NPS Survey #	P.I. Name	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	Expiration	Burden Hours	
02-001	Shettel	Remedial Evaluation/Rock Creek Park	10-Jan-02	10-Feb-02	31-Jul-02	44	
02-002	Wade	National Park Service Public Use Statistics Office Visitor Use Survey	01-Jan-02	31-Dec-02	31-Dec-04	235	
02-003	Ault	Bonefish and Fishery Resource Survey for the Florida Keys and Biscayne National Park			31-Aug-03	72	
02-004	Confer	Development And Application of a Recreational User Survey Instrument–Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve	01-Jan-02	30-Jun-03	31-Aug-03	537	
02-005	Smith	Amistad Reservoir Angler Survey: Amistad National Recreation Area	01-Apr-02	28-Feb-03	30-Sep-03	74	
02-006	Binder	Golden Gate National Recreation Area Survey for Public Input into an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking	rejected by OMB				
02-007	Zadorozny	Rock Creek Park Education Programs Study	withdrawn by principal investigator				
02-008	Johnson	Salcha River Landowners Mail Survey: Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve	15-Feb-02	30-Jun-02	31-Dec-02	48	
02-009	Johnson	Alaskan Military Operations Areas On-Site Visitor Surveys–Chena River & Harding Lake State Rec. Areas: Yukon-Charley Rivers National	01-Mar-02	30-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	540	
02-010	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Pinnacles National Monument Visitor Study	30-Mar-02	07-Apr-02	31-Oct-02	97	
02-011	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Everglades National Park Visitor Study	17-Mar-02	23-Mar-02	30-Sep-02	243	
02-012	Simmons	Visitor Services Project: Dry Tortugas National Park Visitor Study	20-Mar-02	26-Mar-02	30-Sep-02	121	
02-013	Banks	Glacier Bay National Park Backcountry Visitor Survey	01-May-02	30-Sep-04	31-Mar-05	200	
02-014	Foti	Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument Social Indicator Survey	17-Jul-02	30-Nov-02	06-Jun-03	111	
02-015	Kim	Regional Economic Impacts of Grand Canyon River Runners: Grand Canyon National Park	05-May-02	05-Aug-02	28-Feb-03	50	
02-016	Solop	Golden Gate National Recreation Area Public Interest Survey	22-Apr-02	30-May-02	30-Nov-02	270	
02-017	Swanson	Alaskan Military Operations Areas Big Game Hunters Mail Survey: Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve	15-Jun-02	30-Nov-02	31-May-03	608	
02-018	Hall	Human-Bear Interaction Assessment/Yosemite National Park	01-Jul-02	30-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	135	
02-019	Townsend	Glacier National Park 2002 Survey of Visitors	19-Jul-02	25-Jul-02	30-Sep-03	448	
02-020	Manning	Acadia National Park (Isle au Haut Section) Visitor Survey	01-Jul-02	28-Sep-02	28-Feb-03	171	
02-021	Marion	Acadia National Park Visitor Survey (Virginia Tech)	01-Jul-02	05-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	112	
02-022	Faris	Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park Recreational Study at Dams 4 & 5 on the Potomac River	01-Jun-02	15-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	19	
02-023	Schwenk	Fire Island Visitor Survey: Fire Island National Seashore	13-Jul-02	15-Jul-02	31-Dec-03	62	
02-024	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve Visitor Study	23-Jun-02	29-Jun-02	31-Dec-02	151	
02-025	Manning	Sagamore Hill National Historic Site Visitor Survey	01-Aug-02	02-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	92	
02-026	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Pipestone National Monument Visitor Study	07-Jul-02	13-Jul-02	31-Jan-03	121	
02-027	Fine	Marin Parklands Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan Resident Phone Survey: Golden Gate National Recreation Area	15-Jul-02	15-Oct-02	30-Jun-03	232	
02-028	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Outer Banks Group Visitor Study	12-Jul-02	18-Jul-02	31-Jan-03	271	
02-029	Manning	Visitor Research for the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area	01-Aug-02	30-Aug-02	28-Feb-03	57	

NPS Survey #	P.I. Name	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	Expiration	Burden Hours	
02-030	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Visitor Study	28-Jul-02	03-Aug-02	28-Feb-03	271	
02-031	Caneday	Washita Battlefield National Historic Site Visitor Study	26-May-02	30-Oct-02	30-Sep-03	100	
02-032	Lee	Colorado National Monument Visitor Survey	08-Jul-02	30-Jun-03	31-Dec-03	267	
02-033	Kulp	Experimental Brook Trout Angler Survey--Great Smoky Mountains National Park	01-Jul-02	30-Oct-04	30-Apr-05	18	
02-034	Wolch	Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Visitor Survey--Recreational Trail Use	12-Jul-02	21-Jul-02	31-Jan-03	173	
02-035	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site Visitor Study	03-Aug-02	11-Aug-02	28-Feb-03	121	
02-036	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Catoctin Mountain Park Visitor Study	03-Aug-02	11-Aug-02	28-Feb-03	181	
02-037	Taylor	Public Perceptions of Management Actions for the Wolves of the Southern Greater Yellowstone Area: Grant Teton National Park	12-Jul-02	08-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	361	
02-038	Cutts	Yavapai Observation-Geologic Exhibits: Grand Canyon National Park	30-Jul-02	31-Jul-02	31-Jan-03	45	
02-039	Manning	Isle Royale National Park Backcountry Visitor Survey	26-Jul-02	03-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	138	
02-040	Manning	Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Survey	30-Jul-02	02-Sep-02	31-Mar-03	195	
02-041	Hart	Blue Ridge Parkway Roadside Survey	02-Aug-02	28-Oct-02	30-Apr-03	225	
02-042	Davis	Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites: Economic Impact of Heritage Tourism in the Hudson River Valley	rejected by NPS Social Science Program				
02-043	Shiftan	Colonial National Historical Park Alternative Transportation System Phase II Study, Yorktown, VA	10-Sep-02	02-Oct-02	30-Apr-03	280	
02-044	Davis	Economic Impact of Heritage Tourism at Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area including the Roosevelt and Vanderbilt sites	15-Sep-02	30-Dec-03	30-Jun-04	32	
02-045	Hart	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park-Roadside Survey	01-Oct-02	15-Nov-02	31-May-03	54	
02-046	Hodges	Use, Demographics, and Economic Impact of Rock Climbing in the Obed Wild and Scenic River Area	15-Sep-02	31-Aug-03	28-Feb-04	293	
02-047	Littlejohn	Visitor Services Project: Stones River National Battlefield Visitor Study	05-Oct-02	13-Oct-02	30-Apr-03	121	
02-048	Manning	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park Visitor Survey	15-Oct-02	31-Oct-02	30-Apr-03	80	
Total FY02 Burden Hours						8,076	

Effects of the Expedited Approval Process

There are several immediate effects derived from this pilot 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 2002, 45 surveys were approved under the program with an estimated time savings of 203 months. On average, it took 54 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.

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 \$1,487 per study. This fourth year of the program yielded a direct cost savings to the federal government of approximately \$66,915 (45 studies X \$1,487 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 \$412 per study. The VSP conducted ten studies in FY 2002 for a total cost savings of approximately \$4,120. Estimating similar time savings to principal investigators for the 35 remaining studies conducted in FY 2002, an additional cost savings of approximately \$14,420 was incurred. The total cost savings to principal investigators is estimated to be \$18,540. Hence, the total amount of dollars saved by the federal government and principal investigators in FY 2002 is estimated to be at least \$85,455.

Table 2 – Summary of Time and Cost Savings

Activity	Approx. Salary	Standard Approval Process		Expedited Approval Process		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)	\$25.23/hr*	12.5 hours	\$315.38	3 hours	\$75.69	\$239.69
Review by Chief Social Scientist (GS-14 Step 6)	\$43.75/hr*	7.5 hours	\$328.13	3 hours	\$131.25	\$196.88
Review by NPS Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-13 Step 5)	\$35.96/hr*	3 hours	\$107.88	None	None	\$107.88
Review by DOI Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-15 Step 10)	\$57.35/hr*	2 hours	\$114.70	None	None	\$114.70
Review by OMB OIRA Desk Officer for DOI (GS-15 Step 5)	\$49.99/hr*	3 hours	\$149.97	1 hour	\$49.99	\$99.98
<i>Federal Register</i> Notice Publication	\$364.00 per notice	2 per study	\$728.00	None	None	\$728.00
Total Cost Savings Per Study						\$1,487.13

*Salaries are based on calendar year 2002 GS levels for the Washington, DC area.

In the four years the program of expedited approval has been in place, a total of 137 individual surveys have been approved, providing the federal government and principal investigators a time and cost saving estimated to be at least \$233,945.

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.

Progress on NPS Initiatives

In compliance with the pilot project approval, the NPS Social Science Program is undertaking several initiatives. These include:

- development of an archive of survey results.
- publication of a booklet orienting park managers and principal investigators to the various NPS and OMB approvals that apply to social science surveys and interviews.

The NPS Social Science Program is building a social science data and information archival system in consultation with scientists conducting NPS-sponsored visitors surveys. A written plan for archiving results has been prepared and materials are being archived in the NPS Social Science Program Office in Washington, DC. Strategies to archive research findings on the Social Science Program website and to link visitor survey data with other NPS scientific information are being explored.

The NPS Social Science Program has developed a booklet explaining the expedited and standard PRA approval processes for NPS-sponsored surveys, *Social Science Surveys and Interviews in*

the National Parks and for the National Park Service: A Guide to NPS and OMB Approvals. This booklet was reviewed by DOI and OMB prior to publication in July 2002. Broad dissemination to all park units, field offices of the NPS, and social scientists who conduct research in the National Park System followed publication. The booklet has helped clarify compliance with the PRA and allows NPS managers to better plan for social science research.

In its fourth 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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