

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Social Science Program

Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys (OMB # 1024-0224) Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report



Yosemite National Park (photo courtesy NPS Social Science Program)

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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, education, and inspiration. 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 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 in September 2001. Clearance of a second three-year extension was granted on 10 January 2005 (OMB# 1024-0224 exp. 1/31/08)

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) 2005. 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 provides guidance for submission and reviews all survey instruments for compliance with technical standards and program guidelines. In FY 2005 the staff responsibility for the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys was assigned to a Senior Research Associate.

For submissions that comply with program requirements, the Visiting Chief Social Scientist determines the appropriate number of burden hours, certifies that the survey instrument and research methodology are 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 ten working days.

The NPS Social Science Program developed guidelines describing the authorities, scope, and submission process for the program. The current document, *Guidelines and Approval Form for Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys, Focus Groups and Field Experiments*, was published and widely disseminated in January 2005. The guidelines and associated forms are available on the NPS Social Science Program website at

www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/survey.cfm.

Fiscal Year 2005 Activities

FY 2005 activities under the Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys are summarized in Table 1. In FY 2005, 82 surveys were received and 72 were approved. Approved surveys were conducted in or for 48 units of the National Park System. The total estimated burden on the public for all surveys approved in FY 2005 was 14,620 hours. The average survey in FY 2005 placed a burden on the public of 206 hours. The mean burden on each individual respondent in FY 2005 was 24 minutes.

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.

Table 1 – Fiscal Year 2005 Activities

NPS Survey #	Survey Title	Start Date	End Date	OMB Expiration Date	Burden Hours
05-001	Rocky Mountain National Park: Longs Peak Hiker/Climber Experience Survey	01-Feb-05	31-Jan-06	30-Jun-07	62
05-002	Curriculum, On-Site, and In-Class Evaluation: Central High School National Historic Site	15-Nov-04	14-Nov-07	31-May-08	48
05-003	Front-End Evaluation for Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site	15-Jan-05	15-Apr-05	31-Oct-05	48
05-004	NPS Visitor Services Project—Visitor Survey Card	01-Jan-05	31-Dec-07	30-Jun-08	3,520
05-005	Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site Management Issues Information Collection	WITHDRAWN BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
05-006	Backcountry Human-Bear Assessment: Yosemite National Park	01-Jun-05	15-Aug-05	30-Apr-06	186
05-007	How to Get Urban Children Active in their Natural Environment: Each One Teach to Make a Difference	WITHDRAWN BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
05-008	Hamilton-Grange National Memorial-Exhibits Study	01-Feb-05	28-Feb-05	31-Aug-05	60
05-009	Alaska Resident Outdoor Recreation and Travel Survey-Pilot Test	01-Feb-05	15-Mar-05	30-Sep-05	19
05-010	Teacher/Chaperone Survey of Education Programs- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore	18-Mar-05	31-Jan-08	31-Jan-08	43
05-011	Modeling Recreational Trip-Taking Behavior of Whitewater Boaters at the Obed Wild and Scenic River	WITHDRAWN BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
05-012	Presenting Race and Slavery at Historic Sites – Manassas National Battlefield Park	27-Mar-05	02-May-05	20-Nov-05	11
05-013	Important Places at Grand Canyon National Park	15-Mar-05	01-Mar-07	30-Sep-07	70
05-014	Homestead National Monument – Formative Evaluation – UN State Museum Section	28-Mar-05	30-Apr-05	30-Nov-05	43
05-015	Great Basin National Park Creel Survey	01-Jun-05	30-Oct-05	30-Apr-06	4
05-016	VSP – Congaree National Park Visitor Study	15-Apr-05	24-Apr-05	31-Oct-05	154
05-017	Evaluation of the Trails & Rails Partnership between the National Park Service and Amtrak: A Passenger Survey	28-May-05	05-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	73
05-018	Glen Canyon National Recreation Area Visitor Study	01-Apr-05	30-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	133
05-019	Experience Development Study for the White House Visitor Center	20-Apr-05	15-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	55

05-020	Assessing the Amount, Type and Environmental Effects of Rock Climbing Use in Shenandoah National Park	14-May-05	31-Oct-05	30-Apr-07	68
05-021	Survey of Illness and Injury Among Backcountry Users in Yellowstone National Park	CLEARANCE DECLINED BY OMB			
05-022	VSP – Nicodemus National Historic Site Visitor Study	23-Jul-05	30-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	120
05-023	Evaluation of Gateway and Non-Gateway community Experiences and Concerns Regarding Wildfire and Wildfire Effects	WITHDRAWN BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
05-024	VSP – San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Visitor Study	24-May-05	30-May-05	30-Nov-05	256
05-025	Alternative Transportation Needs Survey Between Skagway and Dyea: Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park	15-Jun-05	30-Jun-05	31-Dec-06	29
05-026	Survey of Prince William Forest Park Neighborhood Residents, Visitors and the General Public	30-May-05	31-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	732
05-027	Social Research in Support of Impact Mitigation on Restoration of the Going to the Sun Road in Glacier National Park	26-Jun-05	30-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	93
05-028	Participant Survey of The American Revolution Educators Institute	09-Jul-05	15-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	121
05-029	VSP – Fort Sumter national Monument Visitor Study	17-Jul-05	23-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	211
05-030	VSP – Chickasaw National Recreation Area Visitor Study	01-Jul-05	10-Jul-05	28-Feb-06	405
05-031	A Waypoint Card Study of Visitor Itineraries at Tipsoo Lake and Summerland in Mount Rainier National Park	20-Jun-05	01-Oct-05	30-Apr-06	81
05-032	VSP – Lincoln Home National Historic Site Visitor Study	27-May-05	05-Jun-05	31-Jan-06	196
05-033	The Collection of Social Information about Visitors to Ross Lake National Recreation Area	03-Jun-05	30-Sep-05	30-Apr-06	473
05-034	The Effects of Crowding and Noise on Visitors' Interpretive Experiences at the Castillo de San Marcos National Monument	10-Aug-05	09-Aug-06	28-Feb-07	307
05-035	Visitor Voices: Testing Interpretive Theory, Assessing Interpretive Outcomes & Improving Int. Practices in IMR of the NPS	25-Jul-05	30-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	609
05-036	VSP – Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Visitor Study	22-Jul-05	31-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	190
05-037	VSP – Timpanogos Cave National Monument Visitor Study	08-Jul-05	16-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	139
05-038	Perceptions of Impact in the Subalpine Wilderness of Mount Rainier National Park	03-Jul-05	17-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	20

05-039	VSP – Johnstown Flood National Memorial Visitor Study	30-Jul-05	07-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	114
05-040	Alaska Resident Outdoor Recreation and Travel Survey; Pilot Test-II	25-May-05	25-Aug-05	31-May-06	13
05-041	Voyageurs National Park Junior Ranger Program Evaluation	01-Jul-05	30-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	63
05-042	NPS Interpretive Development Program Evaluation Study Pre-Test: Great Smoky Mountains National Park	11-Jul-05	31-Dec-05	31-Jan-06	6
05-043	Cape Cod National Seashore Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Visitor Use Survey	01-Jul-05	15-Nov-05	31-May-06	219
05-044	VSP – Cuyahoga Valley National Park Visitor Study	23-Jul-05	31-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	362
05-045	Evaluating the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor: A Process Approach	01-Jul-05	15-Sep-05	30-Sep-06	79
05-046	Semi-Structured Interviews of Acadia National Park (Mount Desert Section) Ocean Vehicle Users	05-Jul-05	15-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	31
05-047	Identifying Capacity for Local Community Participation in Wildlife Management Planning: White-tailed Deer Issues	15-Aug-05	31-Dec-05	30-Jun-06	26
05-048	Acadia National Park (Cadillac Mountain Summit) Management Efficacy Survey	15-Jul-05	25-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	89
05-049	Acadia National Park (Mount Desert Island Section) Low-Use, Area Use, and User Survey	06-Jul-05	22-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	117
05-050	Research to Support the Application of the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Framework at Acadia National Park	01-Aug-05	31-Aug-05	31-Mar-06	130
05-051	Acadia National Park (Mount Desert Island Section) Use and User Survey at Off-Peak Times of Day	06-Jul-05	22-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	78
05-052	Acadia National Park (Mount Desert Island Section) Visitor Survey	POSTPONED UNTIL 2006			
05-053	Acadia National Park (Mount Desert Island Section) Ocean Drive Survey	06-Jul-05	22-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	46
05-054	Old Faithful Visitor Education Center at Yellowstone National Park-Formative Evaluation	11-Jul-05	14-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	16
05-055	Study to Determine Desired Amenities in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways Campgrounds	18-Jul-05	30-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	50
05-056	Muir Woods National Monument Parking and Sound Survey	25-Jul-05	31-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	56
05-057	Great Smoky Mountains National Park Cades Cove Exit Survey	27-Jun-05	02-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	61
05-058	Visitor Preferences for Interpretation at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park	15-Jun-05	05-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	37
05-059	VSP – Yosemite National Park Visitor Study	08-Jul-05	17-Jul-05	31-Jan-06	422
05-060	Visitor Meanings at Theodore Roosevelt National Park	26-Jul-05	27-Aug-05	31-Mar-06	101

05-061	Economic Impacts of National Heritage Area Visitor Spending	25-Jul-05	01-Nov-05	31-May-06	136
05-062	Visitor Experience and Transportation Systems in Yosemite National Park	15-Aug-05	31-Oct-05	30-Apr-06	15
05-063	NPS Interpretive Development Program Evaluation Study	10-Jul-05	15-Feb-06	30-Sep-06	57
05-064	Cultivating connection: Incorporating Meaningful Citizen Science into Cape Cod National Seashore's Research & Monitoring Program	WITHDRAWN BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
05-065	Muir Woods Shuttle Passenger Survey	03-Sep-05	04-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	70
05-066	Bandelier National Monument Visitor Center Formative Evaluation	07-Aug-05	08-Aug-05	28-Feb-06	28
05-067	Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites Visitor Study	10-Aug-05	30-Sep-06	30-Sep-07	2,550
05-068	Survey for Effective Information Presentation for Cape Cod National Seashore Visitors	WITHDRAWN BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
05-069	Death Valley National Park—Scotty's Castle Visitor Study	01-Sep-05	31-Aug-06	28-Feb-07	63
05-070	Alcatraz Island Monitoring Survey	01-Aug-05	31-Aug-05	31-May-06	21
05-071	Great Smoky Mountains National Park – Not in Cades Cove Survey	01-Sep-05	27-Jul-05	28-Feb-06	47
05-072	Great Smoky Mountains National Park – Visitor Diary	01-Sep-05	27-Jul-05	28-Feb-06	138
05-073	Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area Wild Hog Hunting Permit and Telephone Questionnaire	WITHDRAWN BY PARK			
05-074	Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island Teacher Survey	15-Sep-05	31-Dec-05	30-Jun-06	32
05-075	Effects and Expectations on Grand Canyon National Park Backcountry Hiker Satisfaction	01-Sep-05	31-Jan-06	30-Jun-06	136
05-076	Acadia National Park: Semi-Structured Interviews of Cadillac Mountain Visitors	05-Aug-05	31-Aug-05	31-Mar-06	11
05-077	Beyond Park Boundaries: The Significance and Meanings of Eugene O'Neill NHS Among the Danville Community	01-Oct-05	01-Dec-05	30-Jun-06	110
05-078	Analysis to Assist with Pricing the America the Beautiful Pass – Preliminary Focus Groups	20-Aug-05	05-Oct-05	30-Apr-06	158
05-079	Visitor Survey at Cape Lookout National Seashore	POSTPONED UNTIL 2006			
05-080	Voyageurs National Park 2005 Community Study	30-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	30-Sep-06	267
05-081	Golden Gate National Recreation Area Portable Changeable Message Sign Visitor Survey	15-Sep-05	18-Sep-05	31-Mar-06	125
05-082	Onsite and Internet Survey of Prince William Forest Park Visitors	14-Oct-05	09-Dec-05	31-Mar-06	125
TOTAL BURDEN HOURS					14,620

A conservative estimate nets a time savings of approximately four and one-half months per survey. In FY 2005, 72 surveys were approved under the program with an estimated time savings of 324 months. On average, it took 43 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 was 14 days longer than the previous year. The increase was caused by a growth in submissions of 39%, from 59 in FY 2004 to 82 in FY 2005.

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 \$1,702 per study.

This seventh year of the program yielded a direct cost savings to the federal government of approximately \$122,544 (72 studies X \$1,702 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 \$446 per study. The VSP conducted 11 studies in FY 2005 for a total cost savings of approximately \$4,906. Estimating similar time savings to principal investigators for the 61 remaining studies conducted in FY 2005, an additional cost savings of approximately \$27,206 was

incurred. The total cost savings to principal investigators is estimated to be \$32,112. Hence, the total amount of dollars saved by the federal government and principal investigators in FY 2005 is estimated to be at least \$154,656.

In five years, a total of 316 individual surveys have been approved, providing the federal government and principal investigators a time and cost saving estimated to be at least \$613,582.

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.



Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site
Photo courtesy of the NPS Visitor Services Project

Table 2 – Fiscal Year 2005 Costs and Savings

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)	\$28.49/hr*	12.5 hours	\$356.13	6 hours	\$170.94	\$185.19
Review by Chief Social Scientist (GS-14 Step 6)	\$49.40/hr*	7.5 hours	\$370.50	3 hours	\$148.20	\$222.30
Review by NPS Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-13 Step 5)	\$40.61/hr*	3 hours	\$121.83	None	None	\$121.83
Review by DOI Information Collection Clearance Officer (GS-15 Step 10)	\$64.75/hr*	2 hours	\$129.50	None	None	\$129.50
Review by OMB OIRA Desk Officer for DOI (GS-15 Step 5)	\$56.45/hr*	3 hours	\$169.35	1 hour	\$56.45	\$112.90
<i>Federal Register</i> Notice Publication	\$465 per notice	2 per study	\$930.00	None	None	\$930.00
Total Cost Savings Per Study						\$1,701.72

* Salary estimates based on 2005 OPM Salary Tables for Washington DC Area

Progress on NPS Initiatives

The NPS Social Science Program has undertaken several initiatives as part of this approval program. The major initiative undertaken in FY 2005 included continued 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 250 reports have been

digitized and made available on the NPS Focus Digital Library and Research Station. NPS Focus is currently on the NPS Intranet at <http://focus.inside.nps.gov>. Public access to the Social Science Studies Collection and NPS Focus is being planned.

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 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 continued success of this valuable program.

For Additional Information

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Keweenaw National Historical Park
Photo courtesy of the NPS Visitor Services Project