

## **Bureau of Land Management Visitor Survey – Instructions for On-Site Visitor Survey Administration**

### **Getting Started**

- Since every BLM site is unique, these procedures were developed by Washington State University (WSU) as a general set of guidelines. To ensure aggregation of surveys across all BLM-managed lands, it's important to follow the guidelines at all sites. However, if you experience problems or have any questions regarding your site, please contact Nathan Palmer at Washington State University (509-335-1736 and email: [nathan.palmer@wsu.edu](mailto:nathan.palmer@wsu.edu)) **for suggestions and directions on how to adapt the methods for your site.**
- Approximately two weeks prior to the survey start date, Washington State University will ship each site contact person a package containing: survey manual, surveys, postcards, locked drop boxes, script, return FedEx label (paid), and surveyor and site-coordinator report forms. A checklist of materials will be included to ensure each site has the full complement of materials. Please check all materials before beginning survey distribution.
- It is critical that these surveys represent a cross-section of all visitors to your BLM area, i.e., age, race, sex, activity. To reach this cross-section of visitors, select a sampling period (with the guidance of the WSU) between 30-60 days. If visitation to your site(s) is low, you can contact WSU for an extension of up to 30 days. Survey distribution must be completed within the current fiscal year.
- Offices should plan on administering all of their surveys within the specified survey period. A surveying plan should be created for each site long before the first sampling day and should consider all of the items listed in the Survey Administration section below, including the need to account for visitors refusing to take the survey. To ensure a representative sampling of visitors at your survey site, up to 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the total number of surveys may be administered during any given day; however, our experience indicates it is a rare instance when you will be able to collect this daily maximum number of surveys.

### **Survey Administration**

- During the Survey Period, a maximum of 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the total number of surveys provided by WSU may be completed during a sampling day. A sampling day **should** consist of at least a four-hour period of time and may occur in the morning, afternoon, or evening, depending on visitation to that site. The sampling day may be extended for areas that have sporadic visitation throughout the day. Select sampling days that represent a mix of weekend days and weekdays spread out across the sampling period. The goal here is to get the broadest mix of visitors possible to reduce the sampling bias.
- **Keep Accurate Records.** This is extremely important. Record your progress daily by completing the “Daily Surveyor Report.” At the completion of the survey period, the site coordinator will complete the “Coordinator Report” which will summarize the daily reports. All reports will need to be sent back in the enclosed envelope to WSU.
- Use an objective method of selecting visitors to survey. Instead of just surveying those who appear friendly or approachable or who have extra time to complete a survey, employ one of the following approaches:

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- Every *n*th visitor to exit a specific area
- A visitor at every *n*th campsite
- Every *n*th visitor past an imaginary line across a trail

*\*n*th equals a predetermined number, for example- every 4<sup>th</sup> person, to ensure a randomized sample.

- Give the survey to only **one person**, 18 years or older, in each group. Do not give the survey to more than one person in each group. Groups should **NOT** collaborate on responses to survey questions.
- Visitors who wish to **volunteer** to fill out the survey are **NOT allowed** in order to maintain a scientific sample. Explain to the visitor that this is a scientific sample that does not allow for volunteers however, their opinions are very important to the BLM and they should be directed to whom they can address their concerns and suggestions. Visitors should be selected to complete the survey **after** they have spent some time in the area. Visitors will not be able to accurately comment on the area if they have not yet experienced it.
- To ensure confidentiality and security, locked drop boxes will be provided. All completed surveys are to be deposited in the locked drop box by the respondent. Surveys will arrive at the sites folded in half to fit easily into the boxes. **Please encourage respondents to not add additional folds in order to maximize drop box space.** Do not leave the locked drop boxes unattended at any time.
- **Make it easy** for visitors to complete the survey. There are three ways to complete the survey:
  1. Paper at time of visit; 2. Tablet provided by field worker at time of visit; 3. Online after the visitor has left the survey field worker location. WSU has a limited number of tablets to send to sites. Not all sites will get a tablet. For those that select paper, provide clipboards and pencils. Provide respondents with sufficient time and privacy to fill out the survey. In areas that are hot or have limited shade, set up a hospitality station with water or shade. Have the respondents deposit surveys directly into the locked drop box. To complete the survey at a later time online (typically in situations where paper-pencil method may be difficult such as concern about COVID-contact), postcards with QR codes for respondents to complete the survey online can be offered as an alternative. Please note that respondents might not complete the online survey after leaving the site thus the number of postcards distributed is not equivalent to the number of completed surveys.
- WSU will provide the locked drop boxes to the BLM. Two will arrive at the beginning of the survey with all other survey materials. As a box becomes too full, contact Nathan Palmer for a replacement (509-335-1736). These boxes will be exchanged via FedEx to maintain efficiency.

**To contact Nathan Palmer** at WSU, call: 509-335-1736, email: [nathan.palmer@wsu.edu](mailto:nathan.palmer@wsu.edu)

**To contact Michelle Puckett**, BLM Visitor Survey Coordinator, call: (928) 247-7718, email: [mpuckett@blm.gov](mailto:mpuckett@blm.gov)