

Economic Valuation of the National Park Service – Phase 1B Report

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Michelle Haefele, Colorado State University

John Loomis, Colorado State University

Linda Bilmes, Harvard University

Brian Quay, Colorado State University

"He is a better citizen with a keener appreciation of the privilege of living here who has toured the national parks." Stephen Mather

Executive Summary

By measuring the net economic value of the National Park Service (NPS), this project will accomplish the first system-wide comprehensive assessment of the economic benefits the NPS provides the public.

This valuation will include an estimate of the public's (both visitors and non-visitors) willingness to pay for the units and programs of the National Park Service. In addition to the nationwide willingness to pay survey, detailed case studies are being developed for several specific areas which will show the intricate and often unseen role that the NPS plays in regional and local conservation and recreation endeavors.

After synthesizing and reviewing information on NPS units and programs, a choice experiment is being designed which will allow the research team to estimate economic values for various types of NPS units and for the several benefits derived from NPS programs and activities.

The study will use a nationwide sample of the general public consisting of several thousand households. Several survey methods (such as mail and internet) are being evaluated to determine the one best suited to achieving a high response rate and a valid, representative sample.

The survey under development is composed of several sections which will elicit the public's values as well as the underlying motivations for these values, including direct use values (such as recreation) and passive-use values (existence, bequest and option values). Six focus groups have been conducted to refine the survey.

A preliminary budget and schedule have been developed to implement the survey in 2013 and conduct analysis of the data in early 2014.

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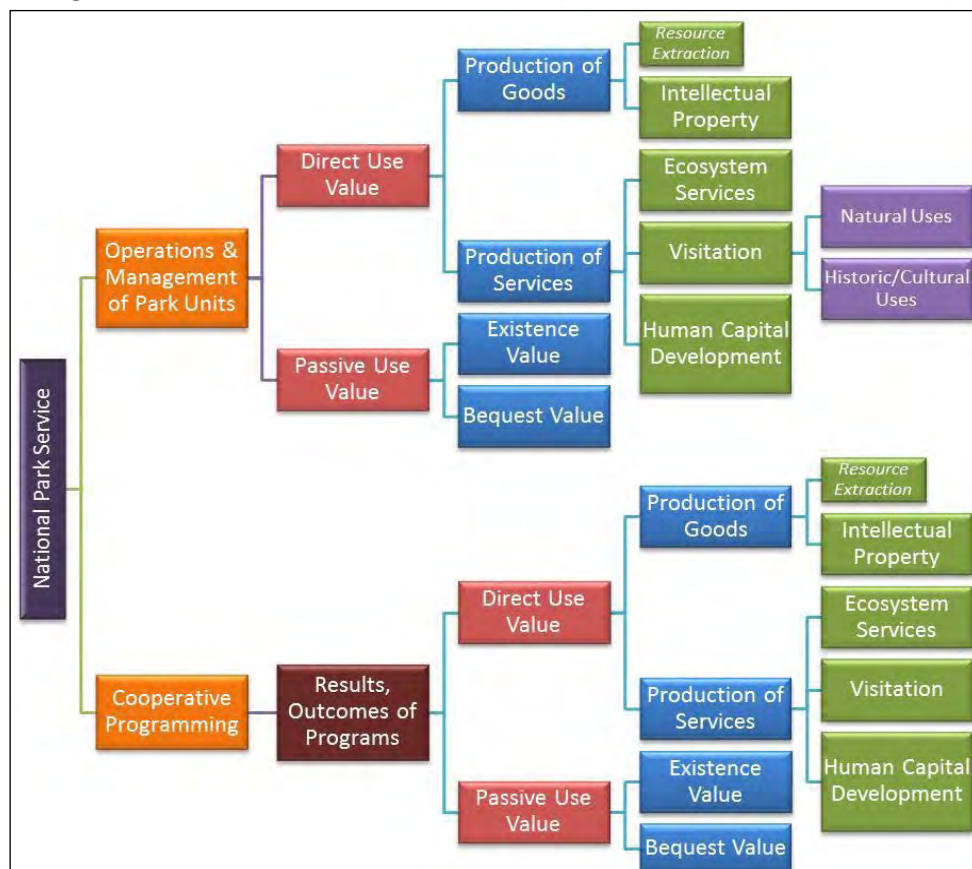
I. Introduction

This project will measure the total net economic value of the National Park Service (NPS), including national parks, national monuments, national recreation areas, and other units of the NPS system, plus the National Park Service programs both inside and outside National Park Service units. This project's valuation of the National Park Service's contributions to society, its programs as well as the NPS units, will provide the first system-wide comprehensive valuation.

The values measured will include those of the general public not just visitors to the National Park Service units. The economic values this project will estimate are called "net economic values," which are the values people hold for NPS units and programs that are over and above what they spend to enjoy those lands and programs. These monetized values include both direct use values (which derive from on-site use), passive use values (which are independent of on-site use) and the value of the National Park Service's role in cooperative conservation and management efforts, which fall into both categories. These net economic values reflect how much people are willing to pay in order to enjoy National Park Service units and programs.

Under the supervision of Harvard Kennedy School Professor Linda Bilmes, Harvard graduate students Francis Choi and Tim Marlowe devised a framework for estimating the total economic value of the National Park Service. The thesis was awarded the Harvard Environmental Economics Program's Christopher P. Kaneb Prize for the best paper in environmental, resource, or energy economics by a Harvard masters student. Choi and Marlowe (2012) include a very useful schematic depicting these values which we have adapted as Figure 1. The values to be measured flow from both the operations and management of NPS units and from NPS programs both inside and outside NPS system units. Both sources of value produce direct use values and passive use values.

Figure 1. Economic Valuation Framework (based on Choi & Marlowe 2012)



Direct use values include the production of goods and services. Goods produced by National Park Service programs and units can include resource extraction (although this activity is prohibited in most National Park Service units) and the production of intellectual property, such as books drawing on experiences in the National Park Service units or photographs of NPS landscapes or buildings. Services include recreation (described by Choi and Marlowe as visitation and divided into “natural use” and “historic/cultural use”), human capital development (e.g. knowledge gained from interpretive and educational programs, outdoor education programs for youth and adults, skills and confidence gained from active outdoor recreation) and ecosystem services (e.g. watershed protection, climate regulation, soil formation, air quality, erosion control, biological diversity, open space).

The concept of passive use value was first articulated by Krutilla in 1967, “...when the existence of a grand scenic wonder or a unique fragile ecosystem is involved, its preservation and continued availability are a significant part of the real income of many individuals.” (p. 779) Or put another way, passive use values are the values people have which are “... independent of any present or future use these people might make of those resources.” (Freeman 2003, p. 137)

Passive use values include existence value and bequest value. Existence value is the utility or benefit that accrues to an individual from simply knowing that a resource (such as a National Park) exists, even if they never expect to visit or see the or otherwise use the resource. Bequest value is similar, it is the benefit or utility an individual receives from know that a resource will be preserved for future generations to enjoy. These values are measured by what the visitor or household would pay or what is referred to as “willingness to pay.” This is the Federally approved measure of value used in benefit cost analyses (U.S. Water Resources Council 1983, U.S. Office of Management and Budget 1992, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2000).

National Park Service programs also provide what Choi and Marlowe (2012) refer to as “cooperative services.” These are services which are difficult to estimate a value for, but which are nevertheless an important aspect of the total value of the NPS. These include coordination and management of programs or projects which involve several jurisdictions (other federal agencies, state and local governments, non-profit organizations etc.), funding through grants and tax incentives, technical expertise and training and working with numerous other government agencies on a range of conservation, scientific and historical protection efforts. NPS programs also produce value for the American public through “organization leveraging” defined by Choi and Marlowe (2012) as the “... institutionalized opportunities for protection of natural resources and preservation of historical resources...” which are enabled by the existence of the NPS, noting that, “...The mere existence of the parks themselves make it possible for other conservation and preservation efforts to occur. Sometimes, the National Park Service provides programmatic services to extend their core mission beyond park unit boundaries. At other times, NPS uses the weight of its organizational reputation to accomplish goals with only indirect action.” (p. 29).

Some of these values are difficult to fully assess using standard economic methods, but we will endeavor to estimate the contribution of this work using case studies to supplement the survey (the case studies to be developed by the Harvard team led by Linda Bilmes in Phase II of the research project).

II. Update on Case Studies

The purpose of conducting case studies of park holdings is to better understand and to document some of the important functions of the NPS, where the public derives economic value. For example, many individuals place a high economic value on the ability to go walking on trails for several miles, while enjoying an environment of scenic vistas and protected conservation and wildlife. This ability is dependent on the invisible role of the NPS to coordinate among many jurisdictions and create a

seamless trail. Therefore the public may place a very high value on the function of the NPS as the “coordinator” of multiple stakeholders (such as local, regional, and state parks, federal lands, private in holdings, conservation lands and friends groups). The case studies can provide insight into how the NPS actually carries out this role, and document the benefits that the community experiences as a result of this coordination.

Harvard Professor Linda Bilmes supervised graduate students Tim Marlowe and Francis Choi in creating a template for such research, and applying it in Joshua Tree National Park to illustrate those values. She is currently supervising case studies in Saguaro National Park and in Santa Monica National Recreation Area. The Saguaro National Park study is focused on the value created by a holding that is located immediately adjacent to a major metropolitan area (Tucson, Arizona), and also the protection of the giant saguaro, the largest cacti found in North America. The saguaro cacti have both iconic value (as the symbol of the American west) and provide benefits to scientific, environmental and botanical research. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is one of the most complex units of the NPS, with more than 20 different land-owner types and more than 70 stakeholder groups. The case study being conducted there will examine the coordinating role of the NPS in detail, focusing on how NPS coordinates policies among the stakeholders to ensure the protection and survival of the area.

The valuation study project will also conduct case studies in NPS holdings that illustrate the historical, cultural, educational, and scientific activities of the NPS, as well as programs such as watershed protection and other areas where the survey shows that the public places an exceptionally high value. Discussions are currently underway to begin case studies in the Chesapeake Bay and several other locations.

III. Economic Valuation Methodology

Most of the economic value associated with the National Park Service is what economists call non-market value. There are no formal markets for such things as recreation opportunities, clean air and wildlife habitat so there are no market clearing “prices” for these goods as there are for market goods like clothing and cars.

Economists must measure the value of non-market goods using techniques which don’t rely on market prices. This can be done either indirectly or directly. Indirect measures of non-market values infer the value of the good in question by using other expenditures as an approximation. The travel cost method (TCM) is the indirect valuation technique most relevant for this study. The travel cost method uses the estimated cost of a visit (direct expenses plus the value of travel time) as a price along with the quantity of trips taken to trace out a demand curve, from which the value of the recreation experience can be calculated (Champ et al. 2003).

Direct methods to measure non-market values are also called stated preference because these techniques involve directly asking survey respondents their willingness to pay or their preferred alternative. Stated preference methods are the only methods which can derive passive use values. These methods can also be employed to estimate use values as is the case with three of the studies described in detail in the Phase 1A Report.

Contingent valuation (CVM) is a method whereby survey respondents are asked to indicate their willingness to pay for a non-market good like a recreation experience or passive use values such as existence value, option value or bequest value (Mitchell and Carson 1989).

The choice experiment (CE) method is a stated preference method wherein survey respondents are asked to choose from a set of alternative scenarios which vary in the level or several attributes, one of which is the price or cost associated with each (Louviere et al. 2000, Bennett and Blamey 2001).

Stated preference methods are the only way to measure passive use values, and are flexible enough to measure direct use values as well. The two main types of stated preference methods are contingent valuation (CVM) and the choice experiments (CE, also sometimes called contingent choice, conjoint method, or stated choice), both briefly described above.

Of these two the choice experiment method is the most appropriate method to apply in this study for several reasons. This method is capable of gathering more information from survey respondents than a CVM study. In a choice experiment researchers can offer respondents more than the “take it or leave it” option of a CVM study, enabling respondents to choose their most preferred from a set of options or alternatives or to rank the options (Freeman 2003). The options contain differing levels of attributes, including a monetary attribute (the “price” of the option).

The exercise presented to survey respondents most closely mimics the act of purchasing a market good, where consumers choose from among several options of a good such as a car, weighing the various models’ attributes (one of which is the cost) in order to determine the most preferred (Louviere et al. 2000, Freeman 2003). In fact one of the earliest applications of the CE method pertained to cars (Freeman 2003). Under the right circumstances (few enough options and few enough attributes) it may be easier for respondents to choose a preferred option, or to rank the options than it is to directly determine a dollar value for a non-market good.

When analyzing the results of choice experiments, researchers are able to estimate the incremental willingness to pay (the economic value) for each of the non-monetary attributes of the preferred alternative (Freeman 2003). This will be beneficial in determining the overall value of National Park Service programs and units as well as determining what attributes of these programs and units are most valuable to the public.

Boyle and Markowski (2003) and Turner (2012) both recommend using choice experiments when estimating economic values for National Park Service resources. Both describe a comprehensive framework for developing estimates of value for system resources and programs. Boyle and Markowski note that the choice experiment format most closely mimics revealed preference (market) behavior.

These authors include a lengthy section on the issues associated with other stated preference methods.

The primary valuation method chosen for this project is the choice experiment format (CE), for the reasons discussed above. This methodology will influence the efficacy of the various survey mode options discussed in Section IV, below.

IV. Nationwide Sample Design

This section discusses the overall sample design, including potential sources of bias and ways of addressing these issues. The first decision point in determining the survey sample design is to identify the affected population. This is the group to whom the benefits and/or costs of the good being valued accrue. This is most straightforward when the population who will benefit is the same as the population who will pay for the good in question. In the case of the total economic value of the National Park Service this population is all U.S. households. The next step is to devise a sampling frame which ensures that the sample represents the affected population.

a. Sampling Frame

In order to for the results of the National Park economic valuation survey to be generalizable to the entire population the sample must be unbiased - that is every member of the affected population (in this case all U.S. households) must have an equal probability of being selected for the sample (Mitchell and Carson 1989). The extent to which the sample is unbiased will depend upon the method of generating the sample

(which to some extent will depend upon the survey mode, to be discussed below).

Using households listed in phone directories (for either phone or mail surveys) is a common method of generating a national household sample. However such a sample would be potentially biased for excluding households without telephones (an increasingly rare situation) and households with unlisted telephone numbers (which may be increasing). Another issue with telephone directories as a sample-generating technique is the increasing prevalence of cellular or mobile phones, most of which are not included in the usual name-address-telephone directories. However, random digit dialing (RDD) of area codes and both landline and cell phone prefixes does provide reasonably good coverage of the U.S. population. RDD has become common place among most university survey research centers and survey sampling companies (e.g., Survey Sampling Inc).

Internet panel surveys require access to the internet. Some internet firms overcome this problem by providing potential panel members with computers and internet connections. All such panels have the potential to result in self-selection bias (that is they will not include households whose members are unwilling to participate in internet surveys).

b. Sample Non-response and Sample Selection Bias

In some cases respondents will fail to answer some of the questions (the valuation question in particular). In other cases some respondents will fail to answer the survey at all. If the characteristics of the households that do not respond are different from those that do the results will be biased. Some groups may be underrepresented in the final sample. If these groups have different values for the National Park Service the results may be biased.

If the probability of obtaining a valid response is related to the respondent's value for the good the results may produce an estimate of economic value which is too high. If those respondents who place a higher value on the National Park Service are more likely to respond to the survey than those who place a lower value, the survey results will overstate the "true" value held by the American public.

V. Alternative Survey Modes

Survey mode refers to the means by which the survey questionnaire is delivered to potential respondents. Modes include mailed questionnaires, phone surveys, a combination of telephone and mail, and more recently the Internet can be used to deliver surveys. This section presents an evaluation of feasible alternative survey modes.

As noted above, an important consideration for survey research is the representativeness of the sample. The survey mode will influence sample bias in various ways. Modes which rely on technology, such as internet access, which is not universally used may result in a sample which is not representative.

Standing internet panels are often composed of potential respondents who have chosen to accept the invitation to participate by an internet survey firm (self-selected rather than random). All modes may be prone to some form of non-response bias (households with caller ID may refuse to answer a phone call from a survey research firm, mail surveys are often ignored by respondents, web-based surveys require respondents to opt-in. In person surveys may produce higher willingness to pay values due to respondents wishing to please the interviewer (Leggett et al. 2003).

a. Studies Comparing Survey Modes

Two papers (Grandjean et al. 2009 and Taylor et al. 2009) both report on a large study designed to assess the use of standing internet panels for use in non-market valuation research. The study reported in these two papers used the probability based standing panels recruited by Knowledge Networks (a leading survey research firm). These panels comprise households which have been recruited using

Random Digit Dialing which greatly increases the probability of any household being selected, thus reducing sample selection bias.

Noting that traditional (phone and mail) modes are becoming increasingly difficult to apply, Grandjean et al. (2009) and Taylor et al. (2009) compare several survey modes (mail, phone and internet with a standing panel) in a national willingness to pay study and find that phone surveys produce the highest willingness to pay, attributing this to potential “social desirability” effect often found in in-person surveys. They also found that the internet survey respondents who had been on the standing panel gave lower willingness to pay than other panel members, and that the variance of WTP responses was highest for the internet panel survey.

Poole and Loomis (2010) compare mail and internet surveys, focusing on two limitations of internet surveys – lower response rates and potential differences in results obtained via the internet versus mail. They found that while the mail survey had a higher response rate (50% compared to 44% for the internet survey), the difference was not statistically significant. Poole and Loomis found that the two groups of survey respondents did not differ in demographics, but did give differing responses to the survey questions, although the authors note that the response differences may be attributable to differing question formats.

Kaplowitz et al. (2004) study response rates for Internet surveys by testing several modes and including repeat contacts (as recommended by Dillman) for the Internet sample. They find that including a follow-up postcard for the Internet mode increased response rates.

Evans and Mathur (2005) note several advantages of internet surveys. One key advantage this mode has over mail surveys is the ability to control the order in which respondents answer the questions and view information presented which may be important for this study given the large amount of information and the two sequential choice questions. Evans and Mathur also note that online surveys are well suited to studies where large samples over wide geographic areas are desired.

Lindhjem and Navrud (2011) conclude that most stated preference studies using a web-based survey modes produce results that are comparable to other survey modes, but do note that self-selection bias may be difficult to overcome and reiterate the frequent finding of lower response rates.

One advantage of web-based surveys is the ability to measure how much time a respondent spends answering the questionnaire and whether the respondents uses information provided by the researcher. Berrens et al. (2004) investigate respondents’ use of information and the effort they apply to an internet contingent valuation survey and the effect of these variables on willingness to pay, finding that access to information does not influence WTP, but the use of information does (that is WTP varies according to respondents’ use of information).

b. Considerations Regarding Survey Mode Selection for NPS Economic Valuation

Several factors will determine the most appropriate mode for this study. The survey will be complex and will require the inclusion of some background information about both the National Park Service and the choice experiment. The web based format may allow us to include this information (such as a detailed color map of the NPS system) at a lower cost than would be the case with mail surveys. The use of a phone mode for this study would almost certainly require that a packet of information, and possibly the survey itself, be mailed to survey respondents.

Ultimately, our choice of which survey mode to use will be dependent on the layout and contents of the final survey, monetary costs of different survey modes and the time required to implement the survey mode as well as other considerations such as the ease with which various modes can be adapted during the survey process and the issues explored in the research noted above.

It should be noted that the choice experiment will require several variations of the survey (as many as 16 for the each version) in order to capture the full range of combinations of cost and program/unit changes.

We have contacted several organizations which specialize in conducting survey research. Each firm or university survey research center has strengths and weaknesses. Some specialize in only one mode of survey research. Table 1 compiles some of these various attributes in order to better evaluate the various options.

Table 1. Comparison of Survey Modes

	Internet	Mail only ^a	Mail – Internet
Sample coverage	Address based	Address based	Address based
Response rate (estimated)	5-10%	20-25%	25%
Sample validity	High	High	High
Approximate cost (n=5,000)	\$253,000-\$287,000 ^b	Unknown	\$160,000-251,000
Availability of firms with experience with NPS surveys	Yes	None known	Yes
Availability of firms with experience with non-market valuation	Yes	Yes	Yes

^a Few survey research firms are willing to undertake mail only surveys, we have been unable to find cost estimates.

^b The high end of the range reflects the cost to include a Spanish version. We will explore the cost of including Spanish versions for other modes. The higher cost of internet only reflects the need for a much larger initial sample due to lower response rates.

VI. Major Components of the Survey

The research team has conducted three focus groups to date and based on this input we have developed a draft survey which contains three main sections (a summary of the findings of these initial focus groups can be found in the Appendix). Due to the need to explain different types of Park units or NPS activities outside the Parks, we have decided that two separate surveys are needed—one for Park units and one for NPS activities outside the Parks. (The complete survey is included in the appendix to this report.)

a. Survey Section 1 – General Information and Introductory Questions

The first section of each survey presents respondents with general information about the National Park Service, with additional more specific information on either National Park Service units or programs (depending on the version). This section includes a set of questions asking the respondent about the reasons they may feel National Park Service programs or units might be important to them. The various reasons include protecting the environment, visitation and for future generations. The purpose of this question is to gain insight on the respondents' direct use versus passive use values for the National Park Service.

b. Survey Section 2 – Choice Experiment

This section is where the willingness to pay values are elicited and it has evolved considerably over the course of the focus group evaluations. The choice experiment begins with a discussion of the need to address NPS budget shortfalls in which the respondent is told that unless all American households pay into a hypothetical taxpayer funded trust fund that some NPS units will be sold or some NPS program outputs will be

eliminated. This leads into the valuation questions themselves wherein respondents are asked about their preference among several options. In the choice experiment format respondents are given a set of options or scenarios each of which contains one or more attributes, one of which is the cost to the respondent. These attributes are assigned a range of levels which are varied among the options (Figure 2 shows examples of the current program and park choice matrices).

While we initially cast our valuation approach as purchasing additional acreage of each park units, in the current federal government budget crises there was some appeal to value the willingness to pay to avoid reductions.

The choice experiment has been tested with two, three and four options. The current version includes four options. The no action option has the largest cuts to programs or parks and a cost of zero. The next option has smaller cuts, the third option has no cuts to programs or parks and the fourth option is an increase in some or all programs or parks. Options two through four have successively higher costs.

Figure 2. Choice Matrices








<u>Program Version</u>	Option 1 Cuts to all programs	Option 2 Smaller cuts to all or some programs	Option 3 No cuts to programs	Option 4 Increase some programs
 Local historic sites that the National Park Service helps protect each year:	40% decrease 1,200 sites	5% decrease 1,900 sites	No cuts 2,000 sites	5% increase 2,100 sites
 Acre s transferred to local communities recreation:	30% decrease 1,890 acres	No cuts 2,700 acres	No cuts 2,700 acres	5% increase 2,835 acres
 Area s established for the protection of natural environments which are significant or important to local communities:	30% decrease 80 areas	10% decrease 103 areas	No cuts 114 areas	No increase 114 areas
 Sets of educational resources and materials produced by the National Park Service each year:	20% decrease 19 sets	No cuts 24 sets	No cuts 24 sets	20% increase 29 sets
Your household's annual cost for each of the next 10 years:	\$0	\$50	\$100	\$115
I would choose:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 2. Choice Matrices (continued)

<i>Parks Version</i>	Option 1 Cuts to all parks	Option 2 Smaller cuts to all or some parks	Option 3 No sale of parks	Option 4 Purchase some new park areas
 National Park areas which focus on the preservation of nature and nature-based recreation.	30% decrease sell 58,055,200 acres	10% decrease sell 74,642,400 acres	Keep all 82,936,000 acres	No increase, but keep all 82,936,000 acres
 National Park areas which focus on the preservation of American history and culture.	40% decrease sell 110 sites	5% decrease sell 175 sites	Keep all 184 sites	5% increase 193 sites
 National Park areas which focus on protecting bodies of water.	20% decrease sell 1,262,400 acres	Keep all 1,578,000 acres	Keep all 1,578,000 acres	20% increase 1,893,600 acres
Your household's annual cost for each of the next 10 years:	\$0	\$50	\$100	\$115
I would choose:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We are continuing to consult with statisticians and experts in designing these choice sets to determine the optimal combinations to include in the survey. There may be as many as 32 different combinations of alternatives. Since each respondent will probably see only one of the 32 (to keep the burden minimized for survey versions involving the trading taxes option, discussed below) or two of the 32 in survey versions not involving the trading taxes, this will require between 16 and 32 unique versions of the survey be administered. This is part of what adds to the cost of performing these surveys.

The values for the level of attributes (prices and programs cut/acres sold) for the four options, including the maximum reduction and maximum price for no reduction, have been tested in focus groups in Colorado (Denver and Fort Collins) and San Francisco and will be further tested in additional focus groups in March (in Boston). These attribute levels will be finalized after pre-testing the survey questionnaire in early- to mid-2013.

The choice experiment section of the survey also includes a second version of the choice experiment where the options are the same as the first, however rather than a tax payment from respondents, the cost of each option is paid for with a cut in funding for Interstate and U.S. highways. This approach is sometimes called a tax reallocation payment vehicle (Bergstrom et al. 2004) and is included in order to capture an alternative to the standard willingness to pay.

The last part of this section includes a “yes-or-no” contingent valuation willingness to pay question where the respondent is asked to whether they would vote for the option to save all NPS program outputs (units/acres) if the choice were only between that or the option with the largest reductions (but zero cost to the respondent). This is a dichotomous choice CVM question, which will allow us to do an internal validity check against the choice experiment values.

c. Survey Section 3 – NPS Visitation, Use of NPS Programs and Demographics

The third (final) section of the survey includes questions about respondents’ outdoor activities, use of NPS programs (visits to NPS units) and standard demographic questions. The current working drafts of both versions of the questionnaire are included in the appendix.

We have submitted the draft survey for peer review. Reviewer suggestions were tested

in the two February focus groups and will also be tested in the March focus groups and finalized based on these results as well as the results of pre-testing.

d. Summary of initial focus group results

Two focus groups were held in Colorado in November 2012 (one in Denver, the other in Fort Collins). These focus groups were held early in the process in order to identify as early as possible any issues with proposed questions and/or question wording. In order to further refine the questionnaire two additional Colorado focus groups were held in January 2013 (one in Denver, one in Fort Collins), and two focus groups were held in February 2013 in San Francisco, CA. Additional focus groups in the Boston MA area in March 2013.

This summary will discuss the results of Focus Groups 1-6 (as of this writing Focus Groups 7 and 8 have not been conducted). The survey has been revised substantially between the first four Focus Groups and Focus Groups 5 and 6. Table 2 shows a brief description of Focus Groups 1-6. A detailed summary of these focus groups can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2. Description of Focus Groups to Date

Focus Group	Location	Date	Participants	Survey
FG 1	Denver, CO <i>CSU Continuing Education Learning Center</i>	November 13, 2012	11	Parks
FG 2	Fort Collins, CO <i>CSU Main Campus, Lory Student Center</i>	November 15, 2012	12	Programs
FG 3	Fort Collins, CO <i>CSU Main Campus, Lory Student Center</i>	January 10, 2013	14	Parks
FG 4	Denver, CO <i>CSU Continuing Education Learning Center</i>	January 29, 2013	11	Programs
FG 5	San Francisco, CA <i>Ecker & Associates</i>	February 11, 2013	11	Programs
FG 6	San Francisco, CA <i>Ecker & Associates</i>	February 11, 2013	13	Parks
FG 7, 8	Woburn, MA <i>Answer Quest</i>	March 14 (scheduled)	12-14	Parks, Programs

Description of the National Park Service This section is informational only. It includes a general description of the Park Service and a more detailed description of either the programs our NPS units (depending on the version). The six Focus Groups thus far have given useful input on the wording, complexity and content of the this section which has been shortened and simplified for both versions.

Importance of NPS Units/Programs The first two focus groups included a set of questions asking about the importance of various attributes or characteristics of NPS programs and units. The initial versions of these questions were deemed too complicated and repetitive (they included a similar series of scales for each type of NPS unit or NPS program). We have revised this question series to be much less complex. The purpose is to derive the extent to which respondents' values reflect use or passive use.

The version of this question which was tested in Focus Groups 3 and 4 was much revised, several respondents still found the questions confusing. A few suggested some additional reasons to value parks. The version used in Focus Groups 5 and 6 included some "negative" statements which were included to address a noted lack of balance in the earlier versions. These question will need further revision in order to be useful. Many respondents felt that several of the statements were vague and many misconstrued the intended meaning.

Choice Experiment-Willingness to Pay The most difficult questions are those for the choice experiment which are where the economic valuation will be derived. These questions require that the good be carefully described, that the mechanism by which respondents pay for the good (called the payment vehicle) is realistic and does not create incentives for strategic answers. This set of questions is preceded by a page describing the good to be valued.

This section includes language which encourages respondents to answer honestly, to give a response that reflects their true value for the National Park Service. Several participants felt that this language was too strong, that it made them apprehensive about the magnitude of the tax they were going to be asked about. We revised the language to reflect these comments (including a range within which the tax would fall) after Focus Groups 1 and 2 and the section did not spur any discussion or issues in Focus Groups 3. For Focus Groups 4, 5 and 6 we used several versions of the choice questions (with varying prices and levels of reduction) and participants in this group noted that the range did not match the choice question they had been given. This issue will require some revision of the final survey.

We should note that the members of Focus Group 3 and 4 seemed to be reacting to the proposal rather than the value of the parks. Many mentioned that there must be some other way for NPS to “cut costs.” We have added language stressing that we are seeking a value for NPS programs and units for upcoming focus groups.

Initially (for Focus Groups 1 and 2) this question was posed as a potential increase in the number of acres of park units (for the parks version) or an increase in park programs (for the program version). The payment vehicle was a tax paid by all households annually for the next five years. The increase would be voted on and the option chosen would be implemented with all households paying.

The overall response to this question as worded/formatted in the first two focus groups was a very strong rejection of the payment vehicle as unrealistic (a few pointed out that the only national referendum in the U.S. is the vote for president). Furthermore, several participants also noted that there were other more pressing priorities for the government, that the parks had enough land already, that the current parks were not being adequately maintained. Several suggested that park entrance fees should be raised, a few suggested voluntary donations (like a check-off on the income tax form). We have begun testing a question where the good is avoidance of a reduction in park units/programs, but are retaining the tax payment vehicle since it is recommended in the literature as the least likely to result in strategic responses (Carson and Groves 2007).

For Focus Group 2 we tried an additional choice question without the cost variable, asking only for a preference between expansion and no expansion. This question preceded the two with the cost included. Several participants noted that this was meaningless without the cost variable (this idea was dropped from further consideration).

Focus Group 3 reacted somewhat negatively to the choice question where they were asked to choose between various options which included reductions in some or all types of NPS units. Most wanted to choose a la carte from among the 4 options, selecting larger or smaller reductions depending on their preferred park type. Many were appalled that this proposal might be decided by a small sample of U.S. residents. This concern, however suggests that respondents take the survey seriously and that they believe their answers have real consequences. This is a desirable effect for valid estimates of willingness to pay (Carson and Groves 2007). As in the first two focus groups people wanted the tax to be based on household income or to be replaced by a voluntary contribution of some sort. Focus Groups 5 and 6 seemed to react less vehemently against a tax, some even indicating a preference for the option which retains all NPS units (in Focus Group 6) at the highest cost. Most in these groups still expressed displeasure at the tax payment vehicle and suggested voluntary donations and entrance fees as

preferable payment vehicles.

Following the more traditional choice question (where a respondent's choice would incur a direct cost to his/her household in the form of a tax) we are including the same set of choices, but with a tax reallocation payment vehicle. To our knowledge this type of payment vehicle has only been used in one non-market valuation study. Bergstrom et al. (2004) found that when respondents were given a payment vehicle which was a reallocation from all other public good their willingness to pay was higher than if it were coming from their own pocket. For the NPS choice experiment respondents are asked to choose the option they most prefer, but the "cost" is a reallocation of money (per household) from U.S. and Interstate Highway funding to NPS. We chose to use highways based on a suggestion from Boyle (2012) who noted that making the trade-off more specific and using a good which is widely consumed would make this choice more consequential for the respondent and eliminate the problem for researchers not really knowing what goods respondents were assuming were being traded.

This question has been surprisingly disliked by most participants in all focus groups. Many wanted to choose the program from which to reallocate funds, several felt that they needed more information about how much funding the highway program already had and the potential negative impact that reallocation would have on highways. Several respondents were quite adamant that NPS was lower priority than highways. Some asked, "why highways?" In response we tested language noting that we chose highways since nearly every U.S. resident has some occasion to use them. This created an approximate economic payment mechanism since it required the respondent to give up a program they value in exchange for NPS programs/units.

When faced with this tax trade-off question, Focus Groups 3 and 4 almost universally rejected the choice. Many changed their responses from a choice with no reduction in park programs or acres to the option which included the largest reduction in NPS programs/units rather than transfer any money from highways (which would have the effect of a lower valuation for NPS). Some cited safety concerns or noted that highways are a necessity where parks are a luxury. This also occurred in Focus Groups 5 and 6 but to a lesser extent. Only one participant actually changed to a higher cost option (willing to reallocate funds rather than pay out of pocket). Based on the input from the six focus groups conducted thus far this question has been eliminated from the survey.

Use of NPS units/programs and Demographics The final section includes questions about outdoor recreation in general and specific use of NPS areas or programs along with standard demographic questions which mirror the U.S. Census categories. We tested the recreation and NPS use questions in Focus Group 3-6, most found the question clear and easily understandable. It is interesting to note that every member of the panel in Focus Group 3 had visited one or more NPS unit and most several times a year. One person did indicate that they were not sure if the place they visited was NPS or not. This is a pretty common issue that has been noted in past surveys of NPS visitation.

All members of Focus Group 3 indicated that they had used local trails and/or visited local historic sites and also did so very frequently. None indicated that they had used any NPS educational resources, however. We will test this question in the upcoming focus groups to see if there are regional differences.

Focus Groups 5 and 6 were recruited by a professional marketing research firm and were screened to attempt to assemble a panel with at least half non-visitors. Initially with a 5 year window the firm was unable to find more than one or two non-visitors so the window was shortened to 2 years and the panels seated had half who reported no visits within two year. However most answered that they had visited (again possibly indicating that most people are not familiar enough with National Parks to differentiate from other recreation areas).

Importance of Federal Programs The initial versions of the survey (reviewed by Focus Groups 1 and 2) included a question on the importance of various federal government programs (national defense, U.S. highways and Interstate highways, national parks, the space program, threatened and endangered species protection, air and water quality, and health care). This question appeared following the introduction in the version for Focus Group 1. Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of these programs are on a scale ranging from “not at all important” to “extremely” important. There was little variability among the importance assigned to the programs and all were rated fairly high (at least “very important” with the exception of the space program which was rated as “moderately important”)

Several participants in Focus Group 1 questioned the placement of the question, suggesting that it would make more sense appearing later in the survey (prior to the second choice question where park/program expansions were to be paid for through reallocation of taxes). We tested this revised question order in Focus Group 2. The participants did feel the order made more sense, but the results were similar (little variability in the importance ratings). This question has been dropped from consideration due to focus group comments which indicated that respondents thought it broke up the survey and just made it longer.

VII. Preliminary Budget

As there are still two more focus groups to be conducted (scheduled for mid-March in Boston) we are still refining the survey and the design of alternatives. Therefore the estimates for implementing the survey by different modes are very rough approximations from survey research centers or firms, based on our current design. The final costs may change slightly as the survey is finalized and we are able to confirm final bids from these survey research firms. At this time our initial bids indicate about \$60 per sampled household for internet panel or RDD phone-mail-phone interviews. Since we are aiming for a sample of 2,500 households for each version (NPS units and NPS programs) we expect the cost to be up to \$150,000 for each survey version (a total of \$300,000). Depending on timing and availability of funding we may do the NPS units survey first and then follow up with the NPS program survey once additional funding becomes available. Table 3 shows the detailed estimated budget.

Table 3. Loomis & Bilmes NPS Economic Study Phase II Budget, January 11th 2013

	Bechtel Grant Year		Total
	1st half April 2013 - Sept 2013	2nd half Oct 2013 – March 2014	Grant Year April 2013 - March 2014
Work Task:			
Final Survey Pretesting in three Cities	\$30,000		\$30,000
Survey Data Collection: target n= 5000 (split sample 2,500 each NP Units & NP Programs)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$300,000
Data Consistency checks, Outliers	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Statistical Data Analysis & Modeling	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$30,000
Writing (Summary, Full Report, Journal articles, book)	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$20,000
Project Manager (aid in Modeling, Writing-Articles, book)	\$52,500	\$52,500	\$105,000
Travel (Coordination Trips-CSU & Harvard; presentations)	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Peer Review @ 5 steps by Expert Panel	\$10,000	\$4,000	\$14,000
Case Studies Data (CA & other States: Units & Programs)	\$37,500	\$37,500	\$75,000
Case Studies Project Manager (case analysis & writing)			\$25,000
Total Direct Cost	\$315,000	\$279,000	\$619,000
Indirect Cost @Bechtel Rate = 20%	\$63,000	\$55,800	\$123,800
TOTAL PHASE II PROJECT COST	\$378,000	\$334,800	\$742,800
Bechtel Request (based on April to March Grant Year)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$100,000
Other Funding Needed (requested from other foundations)	\$328,000	\$284,800	\$612,800

Months 2 and 3: Step 2 – Survey Implementation: Depending on the mode chosen, data collection would like last two months. In part, it would take this long if we wish to have a mid-course check on the design of the levels of the dollar amount of the tax increase. Based on the responses to the first half of the 2,500 responses, we would refine the dollar costs to make sure the range of dollar values covers the respondents full range of values for National Park units. If full funding is received we would do both NP units and NPS activities. If funding is only provided for one of the two surveys, we would begin with NP units.

Month 4: Step 3 – Screening the data: We will screen the data for any coding errors, outliers, or inconsistent responses. Once we are satisfied with the accuracy of the data, initial statistical analysis would begin.

Month 5: Step 4 – Formal statistical modeling: Data will be analyzed using multinomial logistic regression models (sometimes called conditional logit models). Various specification searches looking at alternative explanatory variables, geographic partitions of the data, etc. would occur during August to September.

Month 6: Step 5 – Drafting of the results for peer review: We anticipate peer reviewers may suggest additional or alternative variables, or alternative specifications of the conditional logit models. We may work with other statisticians to refine the analysis.

Month 7: Step 6 – Incorporating peer reviewer comments: We will incorporate any comments from reviews and do necessary reanalysis and revisions of the draft report.

Month 8: Step 7 – Circulate draft report: The draft report will be reviewed by the full Harvard-CSU team and outside economists. Based on this review we will make appropriate revisions in response to comments. This may involve additional statistical analysis.

Month 9: Step 10 – Finalize draft report and submit abstracts to meetings of environmental economists.

Months 10-11: Step 11 – Develop presentations, present results, and begin revision of draft report into final report with additional statistical analysis if needed.

Month 12: Step 12 – Journal Manuscripts: We will begin drafting journal manuscripts (one on NPS units, and if funding was received for NPS Programs, one on Programs)

Month 13: Step 13 – Refine and format manuscripts for submission to journals.

Months 14-16: Step 14 – Respond to Journal Reviewers: In response to journal reviews, complete any requested statistical analysis and rewriting.

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Appendix A – Summary of all Focus Groups to Date

Focus Group 1-November 13, 2012, Denver CO, 11 participants – Parks Version

FG1-Page 1 - Importance of Public Programs

Wording: Colorado State University is conducting a survey of opinions on the National Park Service, an agency of the federal government. The federal government spends tax money on many programs for many purposes. Some of these may or may not be of value to you.

Before we talk about the National Park Service in more detail, we would like to know whether these public programs, including the National Park Service, are important to you or not.

Please circle the number which best describes how you feel about each of these public programs: (1=not at all important, 2=slightly important, 3=moderately important, 4=very important, 5=extremely important)

Response summary:

Program:	Average
National defense	4.45
U.S. Highways and Interstate Highways	4.55
National Parks	4.36
Space program	3.64
Threatened & endangered species protection	3.73
Air and water quality	4.73
Health care	4.73

Comment summary: Respondents questioned the need for this set of questions in a survey about National Parks. Some noted that the programs were so broad that information obtained would be of little value. No way to know whether a respondent is basing their rating on use of the program, concern about the program's funding (too little, too much), whether the program meets its goals, or whether a specific aspect of a program is important versus the entire program. Some noted that the question should appear at the end of the survey.

FG1-Page 2 – Description of National Park Service

Wording: This survey will focus on the National Park Service. Even if you have not visited any type of National Park Service area or participated in any type of National Park Service program, it is important that we hear from you so the sample represents the opinions of all Americans such as yourself.

The National Park Service manages the areas of the National Park Service system and oversees several programs.

National Park Service Areas:

- Nearly every state has one or more National Park Service areas.
- There are several types of areas which the National Park Service manages:
 - The National Parks are usually large areas which often have very well-known features, like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, or the Great Smoky Mountains.
 - Other types of National Park Service areas like National Historic Sites or National Memorials focus on the preservation of historical or cultural sites, or certain natural features like rivers, lakes and seashores.
 - Other types of National Park Service areas like National Recreation Areas focus on recreation.

National Park Service Programs:

- The National Park Service administers several cooperative programs which operate in local communities in every state in the U.S.
- These programs strive to protect environmental, cultural, historical or recreational resources through activities which are conducted outside of the national parks, within communities (both local and distant), and frequently in cooperation with state and local governments, other federal agencies, non-profit organizations and citizen groups.

These programs support community efforts to preserve locally significant historic sites and open spaces and help build community parks, greenways and trails.

Comment summary: Most respondents wanted more examples of programs, and some also wanted more examples of national parks. Many also suggested local or regional examples.

FG1-Page 3 – Park Types with Color and Icons, Map (at this stage we were using a generic NPS map)

Wording: This survey will focus on National Park Service areas, the table below shows examples of some of these types of areas:

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture and the commemoration of significant events and people

Types of areas:

National Battlefields

National Military Parks

National Historical Parks, National Historic Sites

National Memorials

Examples:

Antietam (MD) and Manassas (VA)

Gettysburg (PA) and Vicksburg (MS)

Appomattox Courthouse (VA), Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace (NY), Tuskegee Airmen (AL)

Flight 93 National Memorial (PA), Lincoln Memorial (DC), Jefferson Memorial (DC)

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on water recreation and protection:

Types of areas:

National Lakeshores

National Seashore

National Rivers, National Wild & Scenic Rivers, Riverways

Examples:

Apostle Islands (WI), Sleeping Bear Dunes (MI)

Padre Island (TX), Cape Hatteras (NC), Point Reyes (CA)

Rio Grande River (TX), Missouri River (SD), Mississippi River (MN)

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on land recreation and protection:

Types of areas:

National Parkways

National Recreation Areas

National Scenic Trails

Examples:

The Blue Ridge Parkway (NC, VA)

Boston Harbor Islands (MA), Golden Gate (CA), Lake Mead (AZ,NV)

The Appalachian Trail (CT, GA, MA, MD, ME, NC, NH, NJ, NY, PA, TN, VA, VT, WV)

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on natural and cultural resource preservation and nature-based recreation:

Types of areas:

National Parks

National Monuments

National Preserves, National Reserves

Examples:

Yellowstone (WY, MT, ID), Great Smoky Mountains (TN, NC), Isle Royale (MI)

African Burial Grounds (NY), Cedar Breaks (UT), Statue Of Liberty (NY)

Big Cypress (FL), Tallgrass Prairie (KS)

Other types of National Park Service areas: The White House, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C. city parks, etc.

Comment summary: Eliminate the word “areas” (just say National Parks). Map is too busy, difficult to read, print too small. Suggest color-coding map to match park types. Some suggested adding information to the map such as “family areas,” scenic areas, any restricted areas, fee versus no fee, sub-categories of historical sites (such as Civil War battlefields, other historical eras). Some suggested a regional map rather than national. Some suggested combining the map with the descriptive page(s). One suggestion to consolidated the description of the NPS.

FG1-Page 4 – Importance of National Parks - We used two formats for this set of questions which were initially very detailed, with Likert scale questions for each type of park. One version was a single table with various reasons NPS areas might be important as column headings, and the park types as row headings. Respondents were instructed to use a Likert scale (from not at all important to extremely important) and insert the appropriate number into the table cells. The second version had separate tables for each park type with “fill in the dot” responses. Respondents were asked which format they preferred, and most respondents chose the “dot” version.

Response summary: (averages are for the “dot” responses)

This type of park is important to me...	History	Water	Recreation	Nature	Other
because I enjoy visiting them.	4.55	4.50	4.50	4.44	4.33
because I enjoy knowing that they are preserved	4.55	4.80	4.60	4.60	4.70
because I enjoy knowing that future generations can visit and enjoy them.	4.91	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.50
because I expect to visit them someday	4.00	3.60	3.50	3.78	4.00
for protecting natural resources and wildlife habitat.	4.64	4.70	4.70	4.67	4.30

Comment summary: Many found both formats confusing. Several questioned the need for redundant questions/statements for each type of park.

FG1-Page 5 – Description of Payment Vehicle

Wording: New National Park Service areas could be created from lands purchased from private landowners who are willing to sell.

If new National Park Service areas are created, visitors to these new areas would pay entrance fees to visit these areas, but these fees would not generate enough funds to buy the new lands, to maintain facilities, and to protect natural, historic and cultural resources. The expansion of National Park Service areas would not be possible unless all Americans pay for them.

The cost of potentially expanding National Park Service areas would be spread across all U.S. households. The expansion would be funded by a special federal tax which would be voted on by all citizens. Paying for the expansion would reduce the amount of money that your household would have to buy other goods and services. This special federal tax would be in effect only for the next 5 years.

The money from this special federal tax would go into a special fund which by law would only be used for National Park Service areas. A new citizen advisory board would be created which would review the expenditures from the fund annually.

The amount of the special federal tax would depend on how much land is purchased.

If a majority of people vote in favor of increasing National Park Service areas it will be implemented and there will be a cost to all U.S. households.

Comment summary: Many suggested that other issues were of higher priority. At least one person noted that current National Parks lack adequate funds for maintenance. Most noted displeasure at new taxes, disbelief that funds would not be used for

other purposes and disbelief that the tax would expire. Several also noted entrance fees and costs for camping, both as reasons for rejecting additional taxes and as alternative sources for NPS funding. Several said they would prefer a voluntary payment/donation. Most also wanted more information about specific expansions and plans to manage funds. Many cited the weak economy and either personal or overall inability to pay new taxes. Many also questioned the implied national referendum.

FG1-Page 6 – Cheap Talk [Note – due to time constraints page 6 was not tested by this focus group – it seems like we ought to put back some of this language]:

Wording: Before we ask you for your choices, we would like to note that studies show that people tend to act differently when they face hypothetical decisions such as this one. For example, some people may say that they would pay a certain dollar amount to create new National Park Service areas, but if they were *really required to do so they would not*.

There may be several reasons for this. We realize that it is difficult to imagine that the choice is real, or it may be too difficult to evaluate the impact on your own household budget.

We want you to answer the same way that you would if you really had to pay the amount shown on the next page for additional National Park Service areas. Please take into account your household income (will your budget allow you to actually spend the dollars indicated), and whether you value new National Park Service areas that much. Consider everything else you would buy with the money spent on National Park Service areas. Also consider that there are many other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.

Your answers will be used to help government officials decide whether to purchase additional lands to create new National Park Service areas from taxpayer funds. Your decision will likely affect the amount of taxes you may pay in the future. Thus we want you to give serious thought to the following questions.

FG1-Page 7 – Willingness to Pay

Wording: We will be asking you several questions about expanding National Park Service areas because there are different amounts of lands and different types of National Park Service areas that could be purchased. [Note: this wording was intended to set up multiple choice questions and has since been dropped. We will not likely do multiple choice questions.]

Please treat each one as a stand-alone question, as if it were the only choice you are making (in other words don't add up the totals). For each question think about the amount of land that would be added, the type of National Park Service area and how much it would cost by itself.

The first option (Option 1) is **no change** in the acres of any National Park Service areas (the current number of acres), so there would be no cost. The cost of Option 2 would be spread across all U.S. households for the next 5 years.

Whichever option that a majority of households choose will be the option that is carried out and all households will pay the amount specified.

Please indicate which option you would vote for:

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture and the commemoration of significant events and people (with icons)

Option 1 Current acres

303,000

Option 2 Adding new acres

50% increase, adding 151,500 acres

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on water recreation and protection

1,578,000

No change

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on land recreation and protection

4,128,000

20% increase, adding 825,600 acres

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on natural and cultural resource preservation and nature-based recreation

78,377,000

No change

Other types of National Park Service areas

37,000

No change

Your household's annual share of the cost per year for the next 5 years

\$0

\$35

I would vote for:

Option 1

Option 2

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "very uncertain" and 10 is "very certain," please indicate how certain you are of that you would actually vote for the option you indicated above.

Circle the number which best describes how certain you are.

Response summary:

Number selecting Option 1 (current acres, \$0) 7

Number selecting Option 2 (add acres, \$35) 4

Average certainty 8.80

Comment summary: Most reiterated the comments about other priorities, skepticism about the funding mechanism and objection to taxes. Several asked how the amounts were determined (the amount of added acres and the dollar amount of the cost). Many also wanted more specific descriptions of exactly how the money would be spent. Many were either confused by the matrix (not understanding that the options were "bundles") or wanted to be able to select specific park types (rather than take the bundle as given).

FG1-Page 8 – Tax Reallocation

Wording: Another way to pay for expansion of National Park Service areas is to reduce the budget for the funding of other federal programs. For this survey

we will assume that funding for Interstate and U.S. highways would be reduced each year for the next 5 years.

This method would not increase your taxes, but would transfer tax dollars to new National Park Service areas. If the voters approve the expansion of National Parks areas it would reduce the amount of money that the federal government would have to spend on Interstate and U.S. Highways for the next 5 years.

Dollar amount transferred from Interstate and U.S. Highways to National Parks per household, per year for the next 5 years (Option 1-\$0, Option 2-\$35)

Please indicate which option you would vote for: (with the same choice matrix as page 7)

Only 3 respondents answered this question, all selecting option 1 (no increase in acres, and no transfer of funds from highways) – the average certainty was 9.67

Comment summary: Most were vehemently opposed to taking money from highways to fund expansion of NPS (most objected so much to this question that they refused to answer it).

Focus Group 2-November 15, 2012, Fort Collins CO, 12 participants – Programs Version

FG2-Page 1-Description of NPS

Wording: This survey will focus on the National Park Service. Even if you have not visited any type of National Park Service area or participated in any type of National Park Service program, it is important that we hear from you so the sample represents the opinions of all Americans such as yourself. The National Park Service manages the areas of the National Park Service system and oversees several programs.

National Park Service Areas:

- Nearly every state has one or more of the 397 National Park Service areas.
- There are several types of areas which the National Park Service manages:
 - The National Parks are usually large areas which often have very well-known features, like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, or the Great Smoky Mountains.
 - Other types of National Park Service areas like National Historic Sites or National Memorials focus on the preservation of historical or cultural sites, or certain natural features like rivers, lakes and seashores.
 - Other types of National Park Service areas like National Recreation Areas focus on recreation.

National Park Service Programs:

- The National Park Service also administers several cooperative programs which operate in local communities in every state in the U.S.
- These programs strive to protect environmental, cultural, historical or recreational resources through activities which are conducted outside of the national parks, within communities (both local and distant), and frequently in cooperation with state and local governments, other federal agencies, non-profit organizations and citizen groups.
- These programs support community efforts to preserve locally significant historic sites and open spaces and help build community parks, greenways and trails.

Comment summary: Several people offered general comments on wording, mostly seeking to clarify the descriptions.

FG2-Pages 2, 3 and 4 – Detailed description of NPS programs/Importance of NPS programs – this set of pages combined the descriptions with the Likert scale questions on the importance of NPS programs for various reasons. This section used the same 5-point scale (1=not at all important to 5=very important)

Wording: **National Park Service Programs which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture and the commemoration of significant events and people** (with icons)

These programs provide assistance in the form of grants, tax credits and expertise to private property owners who wish to preserve historic buildings and sites, including programs which target specific cultural or historical subjects like the Underground Railroad, lighthouses and important battlefields. Many of these programs are “cost sharing” – that is they require matching funding from local governments, non-profit organizations or private property owners to be added to the National Park Service funding.

Examples include the National Heritage Areas Program, the National Historic Landmarks Program, the National Register of Historic Places, the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, the American Battlefield Protection Program, the Maritime Heritage Initiative, the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, the National Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Program and Several programs which train preservation specialists.

National Park Service Programs which focus mainly on water recreation and protection

For example, through the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Program, the National Park Service works with state and local governments and other federal agencies to coordinate management of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers and provides education to NPS staff, stakeholders and the public about the importance of Wild and Scenic Rivers, and protects river resources.

National Park Service Programs which focus mainly on land recreation and protection

One of the main purposes of these programs is to help local communities provide recreation facilities such as trails and open space through cost sharing grants and transfers of federal lands to local communities.

Examples include the Federal Lands to Parks Program, the National Trails System Program, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the Hydropower Recreation Assistance Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program.

National Park Service Programs which focus mainly on natural resource preservation and nature-based recreation

For example, the International Affairs Program works with other parks in countries throughout the world to recognize the links that exist between natural and cultural resources which often transcend international boundaries. This program also hosts volunteers from other countries who come to the U.S. to learn about park management.

Through the National Natural Landmarks Program, highly significant private lands can be designated – with landowner permission and participation – as Landmarks. These are lands deemed significant because they represent outstanding examples of natural or geologic features.

Recent designations of Landmarks include: Lake Shasta Caverns in California, Ice Mountain in West Virginia and Big Spring Creek in Colorado.

Response summary:

NPS programs which focus mainly on ... are important to me because...	History	Water	Recreation	Nature
because I enjoy using trails and parks and other sites enabled by these programs.	4.27	4.60	4.70	4.80
because I enjoy knowing that programs are in place which preserve natural resources near my community.	4.73	4.60	4.80	4.80
because I enjoy knowing that future generations will be able enjoy these natural resources.	4.64	4.60	4.90	4.90
because I expect to use parks and trails or other sites someday.	4.55	4.40	4.40	4.60
for ensuring the protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat.	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.55

Comment summary: Several suggestions to simplify and clarify the wording. Most felt this section was too long.

FG2-Page 5 – Choice Experiment with no payment

Wording: We will be asking you several questions about expanding National Park Service programs because there are different types of programs which could be expanded and differing levels of improvements which could be made.

Please treat each one as a stand-alone question, as if it were the only choice you are making (in other words don't add up the totals). For each question think about the specific programs to be expanded and the level of enhancements by themselves. **[Note: this wording was intended to set up multiple choice questions and has since been dropped. We will not likely do multiple choice questions.]**

The first option (Option 1) is **no change** in any National Park Service programs (the current situation).

The cost of Option 2 is an increase in one or more of the outputs or benefits from National Park Service Programs.

Please indicate which option you would choose or would be most in favor of:

National Park Service programs which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture and the commemoration of significant events and people (with icons)

National Park Service programs which focus mainly on water recreation and protection

National Park Service programs which focus mainly on land recreation and protection

National Park Service programs which focus mainly on natural resource preservation and nature-based recreation

Option 1 Current

Number of historic sites the National Park Service has helped protect: **89,000**

Number of Wild and Scenic Rivers, outside of NPS areas, which the National Park Service helps manage: **29**

Acres of federal lands the National Park Service has helped to transfer to local communities: **173,000**

Number of National Natural Landmarks the National Park Service has helped to protect: **569**

Option 2

20% change, protecting 18,000 more historic sites

50% increase, adding 14 Wild and Scenic Rivers

10% increase, transferring 17,000 more acres to local communities

No change

I would choose:

Option 1

Option 2

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “very uncertain” and 10 is “very certain,” please indicate how certain you are of the preference you indicated above.

Circle the number which best describes how certain you are.

Response summary:

Number selecting option 1	2
Number selecting option 2	5
Average certainty (n= 5)	6.6

Comment summary: Many questioned the need for this question, most felt that it was meaningless without a dollar amount (referred to the real choice question with dollar amounts which appears later, suggested that was all that was needed). Many also wanted to choose “a la carte” from among the attributes.

FG2-Pages 6 and 7 – Payment Vehicle – this page described the good to be valued (increases in program outputs), the mechanism for payment (a tax) and included language encouraging respondents to offer accurate honest answers which are based on their realistic situation.

Wording: P.6 Potentially expanding National Park Service programs would require additional funding.

In some cases, users of areas established by expanded National Park Service programs may pay some fees to use them, but these fees would not generate enough funds to cover the cost of expanding National Park Service Programs. The expansion of National Park Service programs would not be possible unless all Americans pay for them.

The cost of potentially expanding National Park Service programs would be spread across all U.S. households. The expansion would be funded by a special federal tax. Paying for the expansion would reduce the amount of money that your household would have to buy other goods and services. This special federal tax would be in effect only for the next 5 years.

The money from this special federal tax would go into a special fund which by law would only be used for expanding National Park Service programs. A new citizen advisory board would be created which would review the expenditures from the fund annually.

The amount of the special federal tax would depend on the extent of the expanded National Park Service Programs.

If a majority of people are in favor of increasing National Park Service programs it will be implemented and there will be a cost to all U.S. households.

P.7 Before we ask you for your choices, we would like to note that studies show that people tend to act differently when they face hypothetical decisions such

as this one. For example, some people may say that they would pay a certain dollar amount to expand National Park Service programs, but if they were really required to do so they would not.

There may be several reasons for this. We realize that it is difficult to imagine that the choice is real, or it may be too difficult to evaluate the impact on your own household budget.

We want you to answer the same way that you would if you really had to pay the amount shown on the next page for expanding National Park Service programs. Please take into account your household income (will your budget allow you to actually spend the dollars indicated), and whether you value National Park Service programs that much. Consider everything else you would buy with the money spent on National Park Service programs. Also consider that there are many other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.

Your answers will be used to help government officials decide whether to expand National Park Service programs using taxpayer funds. Your decision will likely affect the amount of taxes you may pay in the future. Thus we want you to give serious thought to the following questions.

Comment summary: Several expressed objection to a new tax either on principle or because of the economy. Many questioned the cost of programs, and the proposition that the tax would expire (after 5 years). Several people wanted to know how the tax was determined, who would pay, how the tax would be collected. Several suggested voluntary contributions and/or increased entrance fees. Some felt the wording about considering personal budget constraints was biased against the NPS. This focus group also wanted to see a range of costs in this initial explanation of the payment vehicle.

FG2-Page 8-Willingness to Pay – the table for this question is the same as page 5 but with an additional row:

Your household's annual share of the cost per year for the next 5 years:

Response summary:

Number selecting option 1 (\$0)	1
Number selecting option 2 (\$5)	8
Average certainty (n=5)	7.8

Comment summary: Several people expressed a preference for this page over the choice with no cost. One person wondered if the cost of implementing the survey was more than \$5 per household. Some suggested that the payment should be based on income (often hear the term "sliding scale") or voluntary. One marked the individual increases – for and against (as before, apparently not want to choose a bundle but rather looking for an a la carte selection).

FG2-Page 9 - Importance of Public Programs

Wording: The federal government spends tax money on many programs for many purposes. Some of these may or may not be of value to you. We would like to know whether these public programs, including the National Park Service, are important to you or not. (5 point Likert scale – not at all important to extremely important)

Response summary:

Program:	Average
National defense	4.00
U.S. Highways and Interstate Highways	3.92
National Parks	3.67
Space program	2.50
Threatened & endangered species protection	3.33
Air and water quality	4.00
Health care	4.08

Comment summary: Some expressed their personal opinions about the importance of these programs (including some who suggest the only programs of importance are defense, security). Some suggested another response category – "important." Some needed clarification, noting that some programs may be important, but are funded at levels that are too high, no way to indicated that the way the questions are worded.

FG2-Page 10 – Tax Reallocation – repeats the choice question with a transfer of funds rather than a tax payment by respondents.

Wording: Another way to pay for expansion of National Park Service programs is to reduce the budget for federal funding for Interstate and U.S. highways each year for 5 years. This method would not increase your taxes, but would transfer tax dollars to National Park Service Programs. If the voters approve the expansion of National Parks programs it would reduce the amount of money that the federal government would have to spend on Interstate and U.S. Highways for 5 years.

Response summary:

Number selecting option 1	4
Number selecting option 2	4
Average certainty (n=5)	7

Comment summary: Several expressed concern about the impact on roads and highways. Many wanted to know what the current highway budget is. Some wanted to choose the program from which to transfer funding for park programs. One suggested combining with willingness to pay questions (apparently want to have the option of either paying a tax or reallocating).

Focus Group 3-January 10 2013, Fort Collins CO, 14 participants – Parks Version

FG3-Page 1 – Written description of NPS – includes brief description of both parks and programs

Wording: Colorado State University is conducting a survey on the National Park Service, which is an agency of the federal government.

The National Park Service manages the areas of the National Park Service system and oversees several external outreach programs which are briefly described below.

Even if you have not visited any type of National Park Service area or participated in any type of National Park Service program, it is important that we hear from you so the sample represents all Americans.

National Park Service Areas:

- Nearly every state contains one or more of the 397 National Park Service areas.
- There are several types of areas which the National Park Service manages:
 - The National Parks are usually large areas which often have very well-known features, like the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, or the Great Smoky Mountains.
 - Other types of National Park Service areas, like National Historic Sites or National Memorials, focus on the preservation of historical or cultural sites, or certain natural features like rivers, lakes and seashores.
 - Other types of National Park Service areas, like National Recreation Areas, focus on recreation.

External Activities of the National Park Service:

- The National Park Service operates several cooperative programs with local communities in every state in the U.S.
- These external programs support community efforts to preserve locally significant historic sites and open spaces, and help build community parks, greenways and trails.

These particular National Park Service programs operate outside of the National Parks, in cooperation with state and local governments, other federal agencies, non-profit organizations and citizen groups.

Comment summary: lots of wording suggestions, mostly for clarity.

FG3-Page 2 – Table with examples, also first use of custom map with color coding (done by NPS GIS people). Eliminated “other” category, now only four park types.

Comment summary: Most people liked the color coding, comment that the red and brown are not easily distinguished from each other. Some pointed out that some National Monuments are not really appropriately categorized as nature-based.

Comments on the map – the font is too small, change “symbolology” to legend.

FG3-Page 3 – Importance of NPS – the Likert scale questions have been simplified to just one set covering all National Park Service areas.

Wording: National Park Service areas can mean different things for different people. Please mark the box which best describes how you feel about these National Park Service areas for each of these various reasons below. **National Park Service areas are important to me...** (scale is now strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) with check boxes)

Response summary:

because I currently enjoy visiting them	4.69
because I enjoy knowing that they are preserved.	4.69
because I enjoy knowing that future generations can visit and enjoy them.	4.83
because I expect to visit them someday.	4.25
for protecting natural resources and wildlife habitat.	4.77
because they provide educational opportunities	4.31
because they protect the environment	4.23

Comment summary: Notes on wording. Several noted that the statements are all positive, making it seem biased.

FG3-Page 4 – Payment Vehicle – scenario is now a reduction (selling) of park acres (sites for historic) with a one-time tax.

Wording: Even with their current budget the National Park Service has had inadequate funding to maintain all the National Park Service areas and preserve their natural resources. With potential significant reductions in the National Park Service’s budget, the agency may have to sell some of these lands and then concentrate their limited funding on the remaining lands. **The National Park Service areas sold to private developers would likely be used for other purposes, possibly including second home developments, resorts, houses, office complexes or retail malls.**

Retaining all of the current acreage and types of National Park areas, as well as effectively managing their natural resources, would not be possible unless all Americans, visitors and households, pay the costs of retaining these areas and preserving their natural resources. Thus, the cost of keeping the existing National Park Service areas would be spread across all U.S. households as well as visitors to these areas.

In order to keep the current areas, a special dedicated National Parks Fund would be established and would be funded by a special federal tax. This special

federal tax would be a one time payment by all households.

The amount of the special federal tax would range from \$10 - \$150 per household. The specific amount would depend on the type of National Park Service areas retained and how many acres are retained.

By law, the money going into the National Parks Fund would only be used for protecting and managing the National Park Service areas that would otherwise be sold. A new volunteer citizen advisory board would be created which would review the expenditures from the fund annually.

We want you to answer the questions that follow the same way that you would if you really had to pay the amount shown on the next page to avoid sales of selected National Park Service areas. Please take into account your household income (whether your budget would allow you to actually spend the dollars indicated), and whether you value National Park Service areas that much. Consider everything else you would buy with the money spent on National Park Service areas. Also consider that there are many other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.

Your answers will be used to help the National Park Service decide what types of National Park areas, and how many acres of each, to keep and which to sell. Thus, we want you to give serious thought to the following questions as this could affect the amount of National Park areas this country has for decades to come.

Comment summary: Several note that it is unfair to tax everyone (suggest “pro-park” people should fund) or suggest that tax should be income based, voluntary donations (income tax form check-off is often suggested). Many express opposition to taxes in general or due to personal budget. Also noted that we already pay for parks. One person expressed concern that a dedicated fund would just mean that current general funding for parks would go away. Some question how a one-time (changed for this version) would fund the parks in perpetuity. One suggested that the map would cause people in states with fewer parks to feel the tax was unfair to them or their state. Several suggest that parks could be maintained by volunteers or members of “friends” groups. Also suggest job programs for teens. Some were concerned that the proposal was already a done deal – suggest more equivocal language (might instead of will). Suggestion to state the purpose of the survey (which the respondent interpreted as better managing federal money). Uses of lands sold – one suggest this was a good emotional pull. Many note government mismanagement, suggest audits for efficiency, cost cutting instead of this proposal.

FG3-Page 5 – Willingness to Pay

Wording: Options 2, 3 and 4 are different **proposals to sell** some acres of some or all types of National Park Service areas. Option 1 reduces the acreage of all types of parks and the cost is zero. Options 2 and 3 propose selling fewer acres in some types of parks, and none in others.

Option 4 would retain all current National Park Service acres as well as fund the proper management of the current acres.

Whichever option that a majority of households choose will be the option that is carried out and all households will pay the amount specified. There is no right or wrong answer, so be honest with yourself.

At the bottom of this table, please indicate which option you would choose:	Option #1	Option #2	Option #3	Option #4 Keep all current acres No Sale of lands
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on natural resource preservation and nature-based recreation (with icons)	<u>40% decrease</u> Sell 31,350,000 acres	<u>5% decrease</u> Sell 3,919,000 acres	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 78,777,000 acres	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 78,777,000 acres
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture or the commemoration and remembrance of significant events and people	<u>40% decrease</u> Sell 74 sites	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 184 sites	<u>15% decrease</u> Sell 28 sites	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 184 sites
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on water recreation and protection	<u>40% decrease</u> Sell 631,000 acres	<u>20% decrease</u> Sell 316,000 acres	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 1,578,000 acres	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 1,578,000 acres
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on land recreation and protection	<u>40% decrease</u> Sell 1,660,000 acres	<u>10% decrease</u> Sell 415,900 acres	<u>20% decrease</u> Sell 832,000 acres	<u>No sale</u> Keep all 4,159,000 acres
Your household's one-time cost	\$0	\$50	\$85	\$125
I would choose:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “very uncertain” and 10 is “very certain,” please circle the number that best describe how certain you are that you would actually choose the option you indicated if you actually had to pay.

Response summary:

Number selecting option 1 (\$0)	0
Number selecting option 2	2
Number selecting option 3	1
Number selecting option 4	8
Average certainty (n= 5)	7.86

Comment summary: Many doubted that a tax would be one-time. Many reject the tax, want the payment to be voluntary. Many suggest the tax should be based on income. Several still want to choose a la carte, rather than select a bundled option (want to choose programs, or areas they prefer). One wanted to rank the parks, select which parks to sell. Some asked about restrictions

on what the buyers of NPS lands could do with them. Many wanted more information about what would happen to lands, what current budget is, how NPS is managing its money, whether other options have been or are being considered, etc. Some concern about the fairness of a tax on all households, suggest making it a voluntary donation or increasing entrance/user fees. Others would want access to be free if this tax is collected. One person questions whether the NPS has the legal right to sell any land based on a survey, one questioned whether such a small sample could be used to determine policy. (These concerns indicate that the respondents are taking the survey seriously.) Suggest returning some historic sites to the states (specifically the Jimmy Carter site should go back to GA). Some note that the page is too long, with too much information. Many express concern about the prospect of selling any lands. One suggests that private industry would do a better job of administering recreation sites, shouldn't be the role of the federal government (modified the table to sell 100% of this type).

FG3-Page 6 – Tax Reallocation (same matrix as above)

Response summary:

Number selecting option 1	1
Number selecting option 2	3
Number selecting option 3	2
Number selecting option 4	3
Average certainty (n=5)	8

Comment summary: Some still want to choose “cafeteria style” rather than select an option. Most do not like this question, change option to the one which has \$0 transfer (except for one who preferred this to paying out of their own pocket). Some said that their answer would be different if transfer were coming from a different agency. Often cite safety concerns. One suggested that once gas becomes more expensive the roads won't be used as much so loss of funding won't have as much of an impact.

Several want more information, including the potential impact of funding loss for highways.

FG3-Page 7 – CVM question – *did not test CVM on this group due to time constraints*

Wording: If there were only two choices: **Option #1** – the sale of National Park areas as described above or **Option #4** retain all current National Park areas as described above where you would have to pay a one-time tax cost to your household of \$125, would you vote for Option #4?

FG3-Page 8 – Recreation / visitation question

Response summary:

In the last 5 years have you	Percentage yes:
Gone to a beach, reservoir or lakeshore	100%
Gone hiking	100%
Gone camping	64%
Visited any NPS area	100%
Nature	100%
History	71%
Water	79%
Recreation	79%

Number of times – average = 6 to 9 times

Comment summary: Most felt the visitation questions were clear. One person suggested asking how far people travel to visit National Parks. One person said they were not sure if they were in a National Park. One suggested using the maps for fundraising, having contests to see how many parks people can visit.

Focus Group 4-January 29 2013, Denver CO, 11 participants – Programs Version

FG4-Page 1 – Description of NPS, this section included the narrative below and a simplified table with four types of program outcomes

Wording: Colorado State University is conducting a survey on the public's values for the National Park Service (NPS), which is an agency of the U.S. government. Even if you have not visited any type of National Park Service area or participated in any type of National Park Service program, it is important that we hear from you so the sample represents all Americans.

The mission of the National Park Service is to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.”

In order to achieve this mission, the National Park Service manages the areas of the National Park system and carries out several external programs. This survey will focus on **external programs of the National Park Service (NPS)** which are described below.

- The National Park Service operates these programs in local communities in every state in the U.S.
- These external programs support community efforts to preserve locally significant historic sites and open spaces, and help build community parks and trails.
- These National Park Service programs operate outside of the National Parks, in cooperation with state and local governments, other federal agencies, non-profit organizations and citizen groups.

The external programs of the National Park Service have several purposes which are listed below.

Preservation of local historic buildings and sites which commemorate American history and culture or significant events and people. (with icons)

The National Park Service provides grants for historic preservation, advice to private property owners who wish to preserve historic buildings and sites and administers tax credits for renovation and preservation of historic buildings and sites. The National Park Service also maintains the National Register of Historic Places and runs programs which target specific cultural or historical subjects such as the Underground Railroad, lighthouses and important battlefields.

Creation and improvement of recreation opportunities for local communities.

The National Park Service distributes cost sharing grants to help local communities provide recreation facilities such as trails and open space and carries out other programs which increase recreation opportunities and facilities for local communities and which transfer federal lands to local communities for parks and other recreation areas.

Protection of natural environments which are significant or important to local communities.

The National Park Service works with local communities and landowners to protect remarkable local ecological, biological or geological features.

Educational resources for teachers, students and families. (new icon for education, dropped water)

The National Park Service produces lesson plans for “Teaching with Historic Places” and “Discover our Shared Heritage” travel itineraries which incorporate local historic sites into school courses. The National Park Service also provides training for state and local professionals who do historic restoration, preservation and renovation.

Comment summary: People were confused by the “Travel Itineraries” and “Teaching with Historic Places” in the education section. Several commented that the red (for history) was hard to read. Some questioned what is meant by “public’s values.” Lots of edits to the NPS mission, one person took particular offense to “preserve unimpaired” (also later noting that preserve, protect usually mean restrict). A few questioned how the programs were implemented (e.g. “who decides what’s historic or not?”). Many noted that they were not aware of these NPS programs.

FG4-Page 2 – Likert scale questions

Wording: National Park Service (NPS) activities in local communities can mean different things for different people. Please check the box which best describes how you feel about the statements below. (Scale 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree)

Response summary:

I enjoy knowing that trails, parks, open space and historic sites and buildings are being protected in communities throughout the U.S. by NPS programs even if I don’t ever visit or use them.

NPS programs are important to me because I currently enjoy using local trails, parks and open space where I live.

NPS programs are **not** necessary because local governments do not need any help from the U.S. government to provide trails, parks and open space or to protect local historic sites and buildings.

NPS programs are important to me because I currently enjoy visiting local historic sites and buildings.

I enjoy knowing that future generations can visit and enjoy local trails, parks, open space and historic sites and buildings that are protected by NPS programs.

The private sector can do a better job of protecting local historic sites and buildings.

NPS programs are important to me because I expect to visit local trails, parks, open space, or historic sites and buildings someday.

There are too many external National Park Service programs.

NPS programs are important to me because they help protect the environment and wildlife habitat.

NPS programs are important to me because they provide opportunities to learn about history or nature.

Ave	Max	Min
4.50	5	3
3.90	5	3
1.70	3	1
4.20	5	3
4.50	5	4
2.90	4	1
4.56	5	4
2.80	5	1
4.20	5	2
4.11	5	3

Comment summary: Several commented that many of the statements were too vague or could be interpreted several ways. Some stated that people may be unaware that local trails or historic sites were facilitated by NPS, and that the questions assume respondent has greater knowledge of NPS programs. Several people pointed out that “private sector” needs to be defined.

FG4-Page 3 – Payment Vehicle

Wording: Even with the current budget, the National Park Service does not have sufficient funding to maintain the current level of the programs it provides. Maintaining the current level of programs which provide support to local communities for the preservation of historic sites and buildings, recreation lands for local communities, protection of natural, ecological or geological features and educational programs, would not be possible unless all Americans help pay the costs. Thus the cost of keeping all the existing National Park Service programs and activities would be spread across all U.S. households.

In order to maintain all the current programs, a special dedicated National Park Service Program Fund would be established and would be funded by a special federal tax. This special federal tax would be a one-time payment by all households.

The amount of the special federal tax would range from \$15 - \$350 per household. The specific amount would depend on the type of program and what level of program activities are provided.

By law, the money going into the National Park Service Program Fund would only be used for maintaining the current level of programs that would otherwise be cut. A new volunteer citizen advisory board would be created which would review the expenditures from the fund annually.

We want you to answer the questions that follow the same way that you would if you really had to pay the amount shown on the next page to avoid reductions in National Park Service programs. Please take into account your household income (whether your budget would allow you to actually spend the dollars indicated), and whether you value amenities from the National Park Service programs that much. Consider everything else you would buy with the money you would pay for National Park Service programs. Also consider that there are many other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.

Your answers will be used to help the National Park Service determine how many *fewer* historic sites to preserve, how many *fewer* acres of recreation land to provide to local communities, how many *fewer* natural, ecological or geological features to protect, and how many *fewer* educational programs it will help to provide. Thus, we want you to give serious thought to the following questions as this could affect the amount of these National Park Service programs to be offered.

Comment summary: Several edits to the wording (one person urged us to hire a professional editor or proofreader). Many (as happens every time) reacted strongly to the idea of a tax (one person noted that “my blood pressure went up”). Some thought it was politically motivated. Many wanted itemized budgets, more information about how money would be spent. Some wanted more information on the mechanics – when, how would tax be collected. One noted that the range would be a lot of money (suggesting that \$15-30 per household would be plenty). Several said that users should pay. Some asked who currently pays for NPS programs. Suggested wording: “By this survey, the NPS is seeking to balance the cost of its various programs with the value placed on these programs by the public.”

FG4-Page 4 – Willingness to Pay

Wording: [Note: values below are from one scenario, for this group we used all but the highest dollar-value scenarios]

Options 1, 2, and 3 are different **proposals to cut** some or all types of National Park Service programs. Option 1 reduces of all types of programs and the cost to you is zero. Options 2 and 3 propose smaller cuts in some types of programs, and none in others.

Option 4 would retain all current National Park Service programs.

Whichever option that a majority of households choose will be the option that is carried out and all households will pay the amount specified. There is no right or wrong answer, so be honest with yourself.

At the bottom of this table, please indicate which option you would choose:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Preservation of local historic buildings and sites which commemorate American history and culture or significant events and people	<u>40% decrease</u> 787 <i>fewer</i> historic sites NPS helps protects each year	<u>5% decrease</u> 98 <i>fewer</i> historic sites NPS helps protects each year	<u>20% decrease</u> 394 <i>fewer</i> historic sites NPS helps protects each year	<u>No change</u> 2,000 historic sites protected each year
Creation and improvement of recreation opportunities for local communities	<u>25% decrease</u> 676 <i>fewer</i> acres transferred to local communities each year	<u>20% decrease</u> 541 <i>fewer</i> acres transferred to local communities each year	<u>20% decrease</u> 541 <i>fewer</i> acres transferred to local communities each year	<u>No change</u> 2,700 acres transferred to local communities each year
Protection of natural environments which are significant or important to local communities	<u>20% decrease</u> 23 <i>fewer</i> areas protected each year	<u>10% decrease</u> 11 <i>fewer</i> areas protected each year	<u>No Change</u> 114 areas protected each year	<u>No change</u> 114 areas protected each year
Educational resources for teachers and students	<u>40% decrease</u> 4 <i>fewer</i> lesson plans & travel itineraries produced per year	<u>5% decrease</u> Less than 1 <i>fewer</i> lesson plans & travel itineraries produced per year	<u>5% decrease</u> Less than 1 <i>fewer</i> lesson plans & travel itineraries produced per year	<u>No change</u> 10 lesson plans & travel itineraries produced per year
Your household's one-time cost	\$0	\$60	\$35	\$500
I would choose:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “very uncertain” and 10 is “very certain,” please circle the number that best describes how certain you are that you would actually choose the option you indicated if you actually had to pay.

Circle the number which best describes how certain you are.

Response summary:

Number choosing option 1	2
Number choosing option 2	3
Number choosing option 3	4
Number choosing option 4	1
Average certainty	6.10

Comment summary: The range noted on the previous page doesn’t match the specific range that respondents saw. Others noted that in some cases the dollar amounts of the options did not increase in order (2 and 3 were not always sequential). The usual objections to the tax, other priorities, would rather see “entitlements” cut than have this fee imposed. Some note that this fee on top of entrance fees is too much. Others expressed concern about what would happen to Social Security and Medicaid. Many said not fair, realistic to impose tax on all households. Suggestion of private grants to fund. Emphatic insistence on more information (itemized budgets, etc.). Some noted that four options was too many, the matrix is too complicated. Some

expressed support for national parks (indicating that most don't separate programs from parks, although one respondents specifically noted that he had to keep reminding himself of the distinction).

FG4-Page 5 – Tax Reallocation – same matrix as above

Wording: Another way to pay for to avoid reductions in National Park Service programs in local communities is to reduce the budget for the funding of other federal programs. For the purpose of this survey the funding for Interstates and U.S. highways would be reduced. We have chosen highways since nearly everyone uses them.

This method would not increase your taxes, but would transfer tax dollars to National Park Service programs. Every dollar transferred to the National Park Service fund their programs would reduce the amount of money that the federal government would have to spend on Interstate and U.S. Highways.

At the bottom of this table, please indicate which option you would choose:

Response summary:

Number choosing option 1	7
Number choosing option 2	2
Number choosing option 3	0
Number choosing option 4	0
Average certainty	5.60

Comment summary: Relevant comments: Some had trouble understanding that the money would be transferred from highways to parks (rather than from their own pocket). Wanted more information. Some suggested money should be transferred from other programs (not highways). Less vehement objection to this than in other focus groups. One person noted that they would not answer such a survey.

FG4-Page 6-CVM

Wording: If there were only two choices: **Option #1** – the reduction of all National Park Service programs as described above or **Option #4** retain all current National Park Service programs as described above where you would have to pay a one-time tax cost to your household of \$500, would you vote for Option #4?

Summary of Responses: only 4 said yes, they would choose Option 4 if it was all or nothing.

Comment summary: One person felt that underling the word tax was “inflammatory.” Reiteration of need for more information. One said they wouldn't vote for any of the options. One suggested that the public isn't knowledgeable enough to give useful answers.

FG4-Page 6 – Recreation / visitation

Wording: Lastly, we would like to know about you and your recreational activities. Your answers to these questions will only be used to see how well our survey sample represents the American public as a whole. Your answers are confidential. You will not be identified in any way.

In the last 5 years have you (check all that apply):

Response summary:

Gone to the beach, a lake or a reservoir?	91%
Gone hiking	82%
Gone camping	73%
Have you visited any local historic or recreational site in the last 5 years?	82%
Visiting local historic sites or areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and commemoration of significant events and people.	91%
Visiting local open space, trails, “Rails-to-Trails” sites, parks or other areas which focus mainly on recreation.	100%
Visiting local natural areas where ecological or geological amenities are featured.	91%
Participating in local natural or historical education programs	18%
Average frequency	6 to 9 times

Comment summary: One person noted that they did not know whether their visits were to NPS sites.

Note: The day following this group, one of the members called to try to clarify his overall impression of the survey. He felt that the whole thing was being designed (by the NPS) to get the answer that NPS wanted which was support for a budget increase for the agency. He spoke at length about his negative impression of all government programs, waste, “budget maximizing” behavior, etc. This may have been an isolated reaction, but some of the other comments also imply that people are reacting to the government aspect rather than their personal value for the public good.

Focus Group 5-February 2013, San Francisco, 11 participants – Programs Version

FG5-Page 1 – Description of NPS

Wording: Colorado State University is conducting a survey on whether the public values the National Park Service, which is an agency of the U.S. government.

Even if you have not visited any type of National Park Service area or participated in any type of National Park Service program, it is important that we hear from you so the sample represents all Americans.

The National Park Service's role is to manage and preserve the natural, historic and cultural resources of the National Park system. The National Park Service also works with partners to extend the benefits of natural, historic and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation to local communities through the agency's external programs.

This survey will focus on **external programs of the National Park Service** which are described below.

- The National Park Service operates these programs in local communities in every state in the U.S.
- These external programs support community efforts to preserve locally significant historic sites and open spaces, and help build community parks and trails.
- These National Park Service programs operate outside of the National Parks, in cooperation with state and local governments, other federal agencies, non-profit organizations and citizen groups.
- The external programs of the National Park Service have several purposes which are listed below.

Preservation of local historic buildings and sites which commemorate American history and culture or significant events and people.

The National Park Service provides grants for historic preservation, advice to private property owners who wish to preserve historic buildings and sites and administers tax credits for renovation and preservation of historic buildings and sites. The National Park Service also maintains the National Register of Historic Places and runs programs which target specific cultural or historical subjects such as the Underground Railroad, lighthouses and important battlefields.

Creation and improvement of recreation opportunities for local communities.

The National Park Service distributes cost sharing grants to help local communities provide recreation facilities such as trails and open space and carries out other programs which increase recreation opportunities and facilities for local communities. The National Park Service also helps to transfer federal lands to local communities for parks and other recreation areas.

Protection of natural environments which are significant or important to local communities.

The National Park Service works with local communities and landowners to protect remarkable local ecological, biological or geological features.

Educational resources for teachers, students and families.

The National Park Service produces lesson plans and other educational materials which incorporate local historic sites into school courses. The National Park Service also provides training for state and local professionals who do historic restoration, preservation and renovation.

Comment summary: Some edits, questions about wording. "Cost sharing grants" was not well understood, some wondered where the money was coming from (where it was being taking out of). Regarding transfer of lands to local communities – some were concerned that this places a maintenance burden on local governments. Some felt the discussion was too long. Comments that the red was alarming.

FG5-Page 2 – Likert scale questions

Wording: National Park Service (NPS) activities in local communities can mean different things for different people. Please check the box which best describes how you feel about the statements below. (1-5, strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Response summary:

I appreciate that knowing that trails, parks, open space and historic sites and buildings are being protected in communities throughout the U.S. by NPS programs even if I don't ever visit or use them.	4.1
I currently enjoy using local trails, parks and open spaces in my community.	3.9
Local governments do not need any help from the U.S. government to provide trails, parks and open space or to protect local historic sites and buildings.	2
NPS programs are important to me because I currently enjoy visiting local historic sites and buildings.	3.4
I enjoy knowing that future generations can visit and enjoy local trails, parks, open space and historic sites and buildings that are protected by NPS programs.	3.9
Private businesses can do a better job of protecting local historic sites and buildings.	2.6
NPS programs are important to me because I expect to visit local trails, parks, open space, or historic sites and buildings someday.	3.6
There are too many National Park Service programs.	2.3
NPS programs are important to me because they help protect the environment and wildlife habitat.	4.2
NPS programs are important to me because they provide opportunities to learn about history or nature.	4.1

Comment summary: Many felt that this set of questions was confusing, didn't see the point. The question about private businesses caused a lot of confusion – many interpreted it to mean that we were asking about current job performance of private businesses running park programs. Others saw it as foisting a burden or added responsibility onto already strapped businesses. Someone mentioned volunteer programs.

FG5-Page 3 – Payment vehicle

Wording:

- The federal government does not have sufficient funding to maintain the current level of the government programs it provides and is considering cutting National Park Service programs for local communities.
- Maintaining the current level of National Park Service programs will not be possible unless all American households help pay the costs.

Were you previously aware of these budget issues? (4 – yes, 7 – no)

- A special dedicated fund would be established and would be funded by a special federal tax. This special federal tax would be paid by all households annually for 10 years.
By law, the money going into the fund would only be used for maintaining National Park Service programs that would otherwise be cut and would be managed by a volunteer citizen advisory board.
- The amount of the special federal tax would not exceed \$500 per household and would depend on the types of programs and what level of program activities are provided.

Have you previously heard of this proposed program? (0 – yes, 11 – no)

- We want to know how much National Park Service programs and activities are worth to you, so please answer the following questions the same way that you would if you really had to pay the amount shown (on the next page) to avoid reductions in National Park Service programs.
- Please take into account your household income (whether your budget would allow you to actually spend the dollars indicated), and whether you value the National Park Service programs that much.
- Consider everything else you would buy with the money you would pay for National Park Service programs. Also consider that there are many other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.

Your answers will be used to help the federal government balance the cost of National Park Service programs with the benefits of these programs to American households. Thus, we want you to give serious thought to the following questions as this could affect the amount of these National Park Service programs to be offered.

Comment summary: Some were unclear about whether tax was a total of \$500 or \$500 per year. Many expressed objection to taxes, to paying for something they don't use. Many felt the tax should be based on income, unfair for all households to pay. One person assumed it was a property tax (asked how it would be collected from renters). One person reacted to the "cheap talk" almost the opposite way intended (felt it was trying to persuade her to pay). Skepticism about the funds actually being used for dedicated purpose. Someone noted Social Security fraud – suggested that as a source of funds. Some said they would rather spend on schools, homeless, elderly, etc.

FG5-Page 4 – Willingness to pay

Wording: Options 1 and 2 are two different proposals to cut some or all types of National Park Service programs.

Option 3 would retain all current National Park Service programs.

Whichever option that a majority of households choose will be carried out and all households will pay the amount specified. There is no right or wrong answer, please choose the option that you would most support.

At the bottom of this table, please check the box to indicate which option you would choose:[Note: used Options 1, 2 and 4 of the 4-option design]

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Local historic sites that the National Park Service helps protect each year: (with icons)	1,200 sites	1,900 sites	2,000 sites
	40% decrease	5% decrease	No change
Acres transferred with the help of the National Park Service to local communities for the creation and improvement of recreation opportunities:	2,025 acres	2,160 acres	2,700 acres
	25% decrease	20% decrease	No change
Areas established with the help of the National Park Service for the protection of natural environments which are significant or important to local communities:	91 areas	103 areas	114 areas
	20% decrease	10% decrease	No change
Sets of educational resources and materials produced by the National Park Service each year:	14 sets	23 sets	24 sets
	40% decrease	5% decrease	No change
Your household's annual cost for each of the next 10 years:	\$0	\$60	\$500
I would choose:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "very uncertain" and 10 is "very certain," please circle the number that best describes how certain you are that you would actually choose the option you checked if you actually had to pay.

Circle the number which best describes how certain you are:

Response summary:

Number choosing Option 1	4
Number choosing Option 2	7
Number choosing Option 3	
Average certainty	7.82

Comment summary: Many commented that their choice was based on what they could afford. Most chose option 2 (the middle) noting that it was a compromise, although at least some also noted that they did so reluctantly. As with every focus group, several protested the tax altogether, noting they would be in favor of a donation or tax-deductible contribution.

FG5-Page 5 – Tax Reallocation – same matrix as above

Wording: Another way to pay to avoid reductions in National Park Service programs in local communities is to reduce the budget for the funding of other federal programs. For the purpose of this survey the funding for Interstates and U.S. highways would be reduced. We have chosen highways since nearly everyone uses them.

This method would not increase your taxes, but would transfer existing tax dollars to National Park Service programs. Every dollar transferred to the National Park Service fund their programs would reduce the amount of money that the federal government would have to spend on Interstate and U.S. Highways.

At the bottom of this table, please check the box to indicate which option you would choose:

Response summary:

Number choosing Option 1	8
Number choosing Option 2	2
Number choosing Option 3	1
Average certainty	7.45

Comment summary: Several noted the need for improvement (cited bad highways in the local area). Some wanted to know what impact the transfer would have on highways. Several cite safety issues, importance to the economy, prefer money to go to education, use highways more than parks, would rather raid other programs. One person chose this option, noting that the government would be able to get the money for highways from some other source.

FG5-Page 6 – CVM

Wording: If there were only two choices: **Option #1** – the reduction of all National Park Service programs as described above or **Option #3** retain all current National Park Service programs as described above where your household would have to pay an annual tax of \$500 for ten years, would you choose Option #3?

Response summary: only one of 11 said yes

Comment summary: The one “yes” response said he was “over a barrel” and “you win, I lose.” A few mentioned that they don’t use parks that much. One noted that they need more choices, some cannot afford the high amount.

FG5- Page 6 – Recreation/visitation (wording is the same as previous)

Response summary:

Gone to the beach, a lake or a reservoir?	100%
Gone hiking	36%
Gone camping	27%
Have you visited any local historic or recreational site in the last 5 years?	73%
Visiting local historic sites or areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and commemoration of significant events and people.	55%
Visiting local open space, trails, “Rails-to-Trails” sites, parks or other areas which focus mainly on recreation.	55%
Visiting local natural areas where ecological or geological amenities are featured.	18%
Participating in local natural or historical education programs	18%
Average frequency	6 to 9 times

Comment summary: One person wanted clarification on “local natural areas”

Focus Group 6-February 2013, San Francisco, 13 participants – Parks Version

FG6-Page 1 – Description of NPS

Wording: Colorado State University is conducting a survey on whether the public values the National Park Service, which is an agency of the U.S. government. Even if you have not visited any type of National Park Service area or participated in any type of National Park Service program, it is important that we hear from you so the sample represents all Americans.

The National Park Service’s role is to manage and preserve the natural, historic and cultural resources of the National Park system. The National Park Service also works with partners to extend the benefits of natural, historic and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation to local communities through the agency’s external programs.

This survey will focus on **National Park Service areas** which are described briefly below. The enclosed map shows the locations of National Park Service areas.

- Nearly every state contains one or more of the 397 National Park Service areas.
- There are several types of areas which the National Park Service manages:

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of nature and nature-based recreation. These include National Parks (such as Yellowstone, and Acadia), National Preserves (such as Big Cypress and Tallgrass Prairie) and some National Monuments (such as Devils Tower, Cedar Breaks and Effigy Mounds). (with icons)

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture or the commemoration and remembrance of significant events and people. These include National Historic Sites (such as the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace and the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site), National Battlefields (such as Antietam and Gettysburg) and National Memorials (such as presidential memorials and the Flight 93 National Memorial).

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on protecting bodies of water. These include National Lakeshores (such as Apostle Islands and Sleeping Bear Dunes), National Seashores (such as Padre Island and Point Reyes) and National Rivers (such as the Rio Grande River and the Mississippi River).

National Park Service areas which focus mainly on recreation. These include National Recreation Areas (such as the Santa Monica Mountains and Lake Meade), National Parkways (such as the Blue Ridge Parkway) and National Scenic Trails (such as the Appalachian Trail).

Comment summary: A few expressed confusion about what the symbols were for, suggested noting that colors key back to map. Colors helpful but need to be darker (hard to read green and red), and brown is too close to the red (hard to tell apart). Some note that there might be too much detail for most readers. Many noted that the print on the map is too small, needs state

names, too hard to tell where parks are in the east. Also noted that Alcatraz is not on the map. Suggest breaking the map into regions. Add states to examples. Wording about representative sample needs work. Also suggestion to make more bullets (fewer sentences). Wording on recreation and nature-based recreation (difficult to differentiate).

FG6-Page 2 – Likert scale questions

Wording: National Park Service areas can mean different things for different people. Please check the box which best describes how you feel about the statements below.

<u>Response summary:</u>	Ave	Max	Min
National Park Service areas are important to me because I currently enjoy visiting them.	3.77	5	3
There are too many National Park Service areas.	2.15	4	1
I feel that National Park Service areas are important because I enjoy knowing that they are preserved even if I never visit them.	4.42	5	4
It is important to me to know that future generations can visit and enjoy National Park Service areas.	4.54	5	4
National Park Service areas lock up valuable commodity resources (such as timber or oil and gas) which should be developed.	1.85	3	1
It is important to me that National Park Service areas are protected because I expect to visit some of them someday.	4.23	5	3
National Park Service areas are important to me because they protect our history, heritage and culture and provide educational opportunities.	4.46	5	4
National Park Service are important to me because they are good places to bring children.	4.54	5	4
Private businesses could do a better job of managing National Park Service areas.	2.82	5	1
It is important to have National Park Service areas in order to protect the environment and wildlife habitat.	4.42	5	3

Additional Q: Do you think that the National Park Service has any influence on water quality in San Francisco?

Definitely yes	3
Probably yes	4
Probably no	6
Definitely no	0

Comment summary: Suggest just saying “National Parks.” Several noted that the question on private business was confusing, some wondered what private businesses are currently doing in NPS. Generally these questions cause a lot of confusion. Two people suggested moving the statement about locking up resources to the end.

FG6-Page 3 – Payment vehicle

Wording:

- The federal government does not have sufficient funding to maintain the current level of the government programs it provides and is considering selling some National Park Service areas.
- Maintaining the current number of National Park Service areas will not be possible unless all American households help pay the costs. All American households would need to pay because National Park Service areas are federal lands.

Were you previously aware of these budget issues? (yes = 6, no=7)

- A special dedicated fund would be established and would be funded by a special federal tax. This special federal tax would be paid by all households annually for 10 years.

By law, the money going into the fund would only be used for maintaining National Park Service areas that would otherwise be sold and would be managed by a volunteer citizen advisory board.

- The amount of the special federal tax would not exceed \$500 per household and would depend on the number and types of areas sold.

Have you previously heard of this proposed program? (yes = 2, no = 11)

- We want to know how much National Park Service areas are worth to you, so please answer the following questions the same way that you would if you really had to pay the amount shown (on the next page) to avoid selling National Park Service areas.
- Please take into account your household income (whether your budget would allow you to actually spend the dollars indicated), and whether you value the National Park Service areas that much.
- Consider everything else you would buy with the money you would pay for National Park Service areas. Also consider that there are many other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.

Your answers will be used to help the federal government balance the cost of keeping and managing National Park Service areas with the benefits of these areas to American households. Thus, we want you to give serious thought to the following questions as this could affect the amount of National Park Service areas that are sold or kept.

Comment summary: Many object to giving more money to the government (either saying the government has enough or citing waste), saying we need to control government spending. Much skepticism about dedicated funding, termination of the tax after five years, make-up of the advisor board. Some felt the page was too long, too wordy. One suggested an incentive. Several cite the current economic situation, note that while people support the parks, may not be able to afford. Several say they would pay a much smaller amount but not \$500. Some wanted more information on specifically how the money would be spent, what the

benefit to them would be. Suggest charging higher user fees, others ask whether the tax would replace user fees. Confusion about the tax itself – is it per year or spread out over five years, how would it be collected, paid. One pointed out that the government should sell any land, that it is not “theirs” to sell, belongs to citizens (“ours”).

FG6-Page 4 – Willingness to pay

Wording:

Options 1 and 2 are two different proposals to sell some or all types of National Park Service areas.

Option 3 would retain all current National Park Service areas.

Whichever option that a majority of households choose will be carried out and all households will pay the amount specified. There is no right or wrong answer, please choose the option that you would most support.

At the bottom of this table, please check the box to indicate which option you would choose:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of nature and nature-based recreation. (with icons)	Sell 15,755,400 acres 20% decrease	Sell 7,877,700 acres 10% decrease	Keep all 78,777,000 acres No sale
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture or the commemoration and remembrance of significant events and people.	Sell 74 sites 40% decrease	Sell 9 sites 5% decrease	Keep all 184 sites No sale
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on protecting bodies of water.	Sell 631,200 acres 40% decrease	Sell 78,900 acres 5% decrease	Keep all 1,578,000 acres No sale
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on recreation.	Sell 1,039,750 acres 25% decrease	Sell 831,800 acres 20% decrease	Keep all 4,159,000 acres No sale
Your household's annual cost for each of the next 10 years:	\$0	\$60	\$500
I would choose:	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3

On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “very uncertain” and 10 is “very certain,” please circle the number that best describes how certain you are that you would actually choose the option you checked if you actually had to pay.

Circle the number which best describes how certain you are:

Response summary:

Number choosing Option 1	1
Number choosing Option 2	6
Number choosing Option 3	5
Average certainty	8.35

Comment summary: Protests over taxes. Many people chose the middle option, smaller cuts but also smaller cost. Several were concerned about what would happen to the lands that were sold, how they could be used (one person mentioned fracking in the discussion). Some wanted to know the total amount of money that would be raised by the tax, information on what it costs to run the parks. Some calculated the monthly cost.

FG6-Page 5 – Tax reallocation (same matrix as above)

Wording: Another way to pay to avoid selling National Park Service areas is to reduce the budget for the funding of other federal programs. For the purpose of this survey the funding for Interstates and U.S. highways would be reduced. We have chosen highways since nearly everyone uses them.

This method would not increase your taxes, but would transfer existing tax dollars to National Park Service areas. Every dollar transferred to the National Park Service would reduce the amount of money that the federal government would have to spend on Interstate and U.S. Highways.

At the bottom of this table, please check the box to indicate which option you would choose:

Response summary:

Number choosing Option 1	0
Number choosing Option 2	9
Number choosing Option 3	4
Average certainty	7.33

Comment summary: Many object to the transfer, cite need for maintenance for road, safety, won't be able to get to the parks without roads, want to know the effect the transfer would have on roads. Also want to know the total amount that would be transferred. Want to know how money would be spent. Some note that parks are important but don't want to take money from highways, don't like having to make this choice.¹¹

FG6-Page 6 – CVM

Wording: If there were only two choices: **Option #1** – the sale of National Park Service areas as described above or **Option #3** retain all current National Park Service areas as described above where your household would have to pay an annual tax of \$500 for ten years, would you choose Option #3?

Response summary: 9 out of 13 said yes to all or nothing question

Comment summary: Most said yes to this question, citing the importance of the parks. One person questioned why each state would get the same amount. Many again note that users should pay, that this is a bad time to ask for money, that other services are more important. Some want more information on how the money would be spent. One person stated that they had been educated by the survey, and would change to option 3, knowing more. Another felt that the tone or language was unfriendly, said it sounded like it came straight from the government.

FG6-Page 6 – Recreation – visitation

Response summary: In the last two years have you

Gone to the beach, a lake or a reservoir?	92%
Gone hiking	62%
Gone camping	46%
Have you visited any type of National Park Service area in the past 2 years?	85%
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on natural resource preservation and nature-based recreation	85%
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and culture or the commemoration and remembrance of significant events and people.	38%
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on water recreation and protection	46%
National Park Service areas which focus mainly on land recreation and protection	69%
Average frequency	4 to 5 times

Comment summary: Some wanted to be able to describe other activities like visiting museums, etc. One suggested that it might be relevant whether the person visited areas where fees were required. One person noted that they needed to look at the map to find the categories of parks they had visited. Also noted that more demographics are needed.

Appendix B – Draft Surveys

The most recent iteration of each survey version is included in the pages which follow. As noted above, several versions will be developed with a range of dollar values and a range of program and unit reductions. The drafts below show representative examples of the values to illustrate the format that will be used.

Your National Park Service: What Do You Think?



- Colorado State University is conducting a survey on public attitudes to the National Park Service. It is important we hear from everyone. Your opinion is valuable even if you have not visited any National Park or participated in any type of National Park programs.
- The National Park Service provides many programs, outside of National Parks, in communities in every state.
- These programs have several purposes:

Preservation of local historic buildings and sites which commemorate American history and culture or significant events and people.



The National Park Service provides grants for historic preservation, advice to private property owners who wish to preserve historic buildings and sites and administers tax credits for renovation and preservation of historic buildings and sites. The National Park Service also maintains the National Register of Historic Places and runs programs which target specific cultural or historical subjects such as the Underground Railroad, lighthouses and important battlefields.

Creation and improvement of recreation opportunities for local communities.



The National Park Service distributes cost sharing grants to help local communities provide recreation facilities such as trails and open space and carries out other programs which increase recreation opportunities and facilities for local communities. The National Park Service also helps to transfer federal lands to local communities for parks and other recreation areas.

Protection of natural environments which are significant or important to local communities.



The National Park Service works with local communities and landowners to protect remarkable local ecological, biological or geological features.

Educational resources for teachers, students and families.



The National Park Service produces lesson plans and other educational materials which incorporate local historic sites into school courses. The National Park Service also provides training for state and local professionals who do historic restoration, preservation and renovation.

Please check the box which best describes how you feel about the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I appreciate that knowing that historic sites and buildings are being protected in communities throughout the U.S. by NPS programs even if I don't ever visit or use them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I appreciate that knowing that trails, parks, and open spaces are being protected in communities throughout the U.S. by NPS programs even if I don't ever visit or use them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I currently enjoy visiting local historic sites and buildings in my community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I currently enjoy using local trails, parks and open spaces in my community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Local governments do not need any help from the U.S. government to protect local historic sites and buildings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Local governments do not need any help from the U.S. government to provide trails, parks and open spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. NPS programs are important to me because I currently enjoy visiting local historic sites and buildings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I enjoy knowing that future generations can visit and enjoy local historic sites and buildings that are protected by NPS programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I enjoy knowing that future generations can visit and enjoy local trails, parks, and open spaces that are protected by NPS programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Private businesses can do a better job than government protecting local historic sites and buildings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. NPS programs are important to me because I expect to visit local historic sites and buildings someday.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. NPS programs are important to me because I expect to visit local trails, parks, or open spaces someday.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. There are too many National Park Service programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. NPS programs are important to me because they provide opportunities to learn about nature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. NPS programs are important to me because they provide opportunities to learn about history.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- The federal government is running a large deficit and is considering cutting some National Park Service programs to save money and not offering new programs.

1. Were you previously aware of these budget issues?

☐

Yes

☐

No

- One proposal to avoid some or all of the cuts to National Park Service programs is to set up a special dedicated fund for these programs.
- By law, the fund would only be used for existing National Park Service programs or for potentially expanding some.
- The special fund would be paid for by a federal income tax. This special federal income tax would be paid by all households annually for 10 years.
- Studies show that people tend to act differently when they face hypothetical decisions such as this one. For example, some people may say that they would pay a certain dollar amount for National Park Service programs, but if they were really required to do so they would not.
- We want to know what National Park Service programs are worth to you, so please answer the following questions as if you really had to pay the amount shown (on the next page). Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.
- Please take into account your household income and whether afford it and whether you value the National Park programs that much.
- Consider everything else you would buy with the money and other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.
- Your answers will be used to help the federal government balance the cost of National Park Service programs with the benefits of these programs to American households. Thus, we want you to give serious thought to the following questions as this could affect the amount of National Park Service programs available in the future.





Options 1 and 2 are different proposals to cut some or all types of National Park Service (NPS) programs.

Option 3 would keep all current National Park Service programs.

Option 4 would enable the National Park Service to expand some programs.

Whichever option a majority of households chooses will be carried out, and all households will pay the amount specified. There is no right or wrong answer, please choose the option that you would most support.

1. At the bottom of this table, please check the box to indicate which option you would choose:

	Option 1 Cuts to all programs	Option 2 Smaller cuts to all or some programs	Option 3 No cuts to programs	Option 4 Increase some programs
 Local historic sites that the National Park Service helps protect each year:	40% decrease 1,200 sites	5% decrease 1,900 sites	No cuts 2,000 sites	5% increase 2,100 sites
 Acres transferred by National Park Service to local communities for recreation:	30% decrease 1,890 acres	No cuts 2,700 acres	No cuts 2,700 acres	5% increase 2,835 acres
 Natural Areas protected which are important to local communities:	30% decrease 80 areas	10% decrease 103 areas	No cuts 114 areas	No increase 114 areas
 Sets of educational materials produced by the National Park Service each year for teachers and students:	20% decrease 19 sets	No cuts 24 sets	No cuts 24 sets	20% increase 29 sets
Your household's annual cost for each of the next 10 years:	\$0	\$50	\$100	\$115
I would choose:	Option 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Option 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Option 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Option 4 <input type="checkbox"/>

2. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “very uncertain” and 10 is “very certain,” please circle the number that best describes how certain you are that you would actually choose the option you checked if you actually had to pay.

Very uncertain										Very certain
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

3. If there were only two choices: **Option #1** – cuts to all National Park Service programs as described above or **Option #3** retain all current National Park Service programs as described above where your household would have to pay an annual tax of \$100 each year for ten years, would you choose Option #3?

☐

Yes

☐

No

4. If you answered Yes to Question 3 above, go to Question 1 on the next page. If you answered No to Question 3, please tell us why (check the single most important reason).

- ☐ National Park Service programs are not worth that much to me.
- ☐ I can't afford to pay that much.
- ☐ I pay enough taxes already.
- ☐ Taxes are too high already.
- ☐ Only the people who use National Park Service programs should have to pay for them.
- ☐ National Park Service programs should be paid for with existing tax dollars.
- ☐ Other (please describe):
-

Next, we would like to know about you and your recreational activities. Your answers to these questions will only be used to see how well our survey sample represents the American public as a whole. Your answers are confidential. You will not be identified in any way.

1. In the last 2 years have you participated in any outdoor activities anywhere, not just in the National Parks? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visited a beach, a lake or a reservoir | <input type="checkbox"/> Gone hiking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watched birds or other wildlife | <input type="checkbox"/> Gone camping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list) | |
-

2. Have you visited any local historic or recreational site in the last 2 years?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No → If No please skip Questions 3 and 4.

3. Which types of activities have you participated in within the last 2 years (check all that apply):



Visiting local historic sites or areas which focus mainly on the preservation of American history and commemoration of significant events and people.

(For example, buildings or sites on the National Register of Historic Places, local parks which commemorate cultural or historic events, etc.)

☐


Visiting local open spaces, trails, parks or other areas which focus mainly on recreation.

☐


Visiting local natural areas where ecological or geological amenities are featured.

☐


Participating in local natural or historical education programs

(For example, using a suggested travel itinerary featuring historical sites, or attending an educational presentation.)

☐

4. In total, how often did you visit any type of local park, trail or other site in the last 2 years?

☐

1 to 3 times

☐

4 to 5 times

☐

6 to 9 times

☐

10 to 19 times

☐

20 or more times

5. What is your zip code? _____

6. Are you:

☐

Male

☐

Female

7. What year were you born? _____

8. Are you retired?

☐

Yes

☐

No

9. Do you belong to any local, state or national organizations whose main purpose is to protect National Parks or other federal public lands?

☐

Yes

☐

No

10. What is the highest level of school you have completed

☐

Some high school

☐

High school graduate or GED

☐

Some college or technical school (but no degree)

☐

Associate's degree or bachelor's degree

☐

Professional degree

☐

Master's or doctoral degree

11. Here is a list of racial categories. Please select one or more which best describes your race:

☐

American Indian or Alaska Native

☐

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

☐

Asian

☐

Black or African American

☐

White

☐

Other _____

12. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

☐

Yes

☐

No

13. Next we'd like to ask you about your household income. Your answer will be kept strictly confidential, and only used for comparing groups of people. Which of the following income categories best describes your household's total income in 2012, before taxes?

☐

Less than \$15,000

☐

\$15,000 up to \$24,999

☐

\$25,000 up to \$34,999

☐

\$35,000 up to \$49,999

☐

\$50,000 up to \$74,999

☐

\$75,000 up to \$99,999

☐

\$100,000 up to \$149,999

☐

\$150,000 up to \$199,999

☐

\$200,000 or more

14. What is the total number of people who contribute the household income noted above? _____(number)

15. How many children under the age of 18 are in your household? _____(number)

Your National Park Service: What Do You Think?



- Colorado State University is conducting a survey on public attitudes to the National Park Service. It is important we hear from everyone. Your opinion is valuable even if you have not visited any National Park or participated in any type of National Park programs.
- Nearly every state contains one or more of the 397 National Park Service areas.
- The National Park Service manages three main types of areas:



National Park areas which focus on the preservation of nature and nature-based recreation. These include National Parks (such as Yellowstone, and Acadia), National Preserves (such as Big Cypress and Tallgrass Prairie), some National Monuments (such as Devils Tower, Cedar Breaks and Effigy Mounds), National Recreation Areas (such as the Santa Monica Mountains and Lake Meade), National Parkways (such as the Blue Ridge Parkway) and National Scenic Trails (such as the Appalachian Trail).



National Park areas which focus on the preservation of American history and culture or the commemoration and remembrance of significant events and people. These include National Historic Sites (such as the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace and the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site), National Battlefields (such as Antietam and Gettysburg) and National Memorials (such as presidential memorials and the Flight 93 National Memorial).



National Park areas which focus on protecting bodies of water. These include National Lakeshores (such as Apostle Islands and Sleeping Bear Dunes), National Seashores (such as Padre Island and Point Reyes) and National Rivers (such as the Rio Grande River and the Mississippi River).

Please check the box which best describes how you feel about the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. National Park areas are important to me because I currently enjoy visiting them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. National Parks make me proud to be an American.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. National Parks do not directly benefit me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I enjoy knowing that National Park areas are preserved even if I never visit them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The US should sell off some National Park areas to help reduce the national debt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. It is important to me to know that future generations can visit and enjoy National Park areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. National Park areas protect wildlife habitat and the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I would not be willing to pay a higher entrance fee to visit National Park areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. National Park areas protect our history, heritage and culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. National Park areas help promote the outdoors and a healthy lifestyle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. National Park areas help protect the quality of our water supply.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. National Park areas are good places to bring children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- The federal government is running a large deficit and is considering selling some National Park areas to raise money and is not able to purchase other lands that are suitable for new National Park areas.
- The National Park areas sold would come from all states, throughout the country.
- If sold, these lands could be used for houses, resorts, offices or other developments.

1. Were you previously aware of these budget issues?

☐

Yes

☐

No

- One proposal to avoid some or all of the sale of National Park areas is to set up a special dedicated fund for National Park areas.
- By law, the fund would only be used for keeping existing National Park areas and purchasing some new areas.
- The special fund would be paid for by a federal income tax. This special federal income tax would be paid by all households annually for 10 years.
- Studies show that people tend to act differently when they face hypothetical decisions such as this one. For example, some people may say that they would pay a certain dollar amount for National Park areas, but if they were really required to do so they would not.
- We want to know what National Park areas are worth to you, so please answer the following questions as if you really had to pay the amount shown (on the next page). Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.
- Please take into account your household income and whether afford it and whether you value the National Park areas that much.
- Consider everything else you would buy with the money and other government programs that you might rather spend money on. Please try to put yourself in a realistic situation.
- Your answers will be used to help the federal government balance the cost of National Park areas with the benefits of these areas to American households. Thus, we want you to give serious thought to the following questions as this could affect the amount of National Park areas available in the future.




Options 1 and 2 are different proposals to sell some or all types of National Park areas.

Option 3 would retain all current National Park areas.

Option 4 would enable the National Park Service to purchase some new areas.

Whichever option a majority of households chooses will be carried out, and all households will pay the amount specified. There is no right or wrong answer, please choose the option that you would most support.

1. At the bottom of this table, please check the box to indicate which option you would choose:

	Option 1 Cuts to all parks	Option 2 Smaller cuts to all or some parks	Option 3 No sale of parks	Option 4 Purchase some new park areas
 National Park areas which focus on the preservation of nature and nature-based recreation.	30% decrease sell 58,055,200 acres	10% decrease sell 74,642,400 acres	Keep all 82,936,000 acres	No increase, but keep all 82,936,000 acres
 National Park areas which focus on the preservation of American history and culture.	40% decrease sell 110 sites	5% decrease sell 175 sites	Keep all 184 sites	5% increase 193 sites
 National Park areas which focus on protecting bodies of water.	20% decrease sell 1,262,400 acres	Keep all 1,578,000 acres	Keep all 1,578,000 acres	20% increase 1,893,600 acres
Your household's annual cost for each of the next 10 years:	\$0	\$50	\$100	\$115
I would choose:	Option 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Option 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Option 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Option 4 <input type="checkbox"/>

2. On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is “very uncertain” and 10 is “very certain,” please circle the number that best describes how certain you are that you would actually choose the option you checked if you actually had to pay.

Very uncertain									Very certain
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. If there were only two choices: **Option #1** – the sale of National Park areas as described above or **Option #3** retain all current National Park areas as described above where your household would have to pay an annual tax of \$100 each year for ten years, would you choose Option #3?

☐

Yes

☐

No

4. If you answered Yes to Question 3 above, go to Question 1 on the next page. If you answered No to Question 3, please tell us why (check the single most important reason).

- ☐ National Park areas are not worth that much to me.
- ☐ I can't afford to pay that much.
- ☐ I pay enough taxes already.
- ☐ Taxes are too high already.
- ☐ Only the people who use National Park areas should have to pay for them.
- ☐ National Park areas should be paid for with existing tax dollars.
- ☐ Other (please describe):
-

Next, we would like to know about you and your recreational activities. Your answers to these questions will only be used to see how well our survey sample represents the American public as a whole. Your answers are confidential. You will not be identified in any way.


1. In the last 2 years have you participated in any outdoor activities anywhere, not just in the National Parks? (Check all that apply.)


- ☐ Visited a beach, a lake or a reservoir ☐ Gone hiking
- ☐ Watched birds or other wildlife ☐ Gone camping
- ☐ Other (please list)
-


2. Have you visited any type of National Park area anywhere in the U.S. in the past 2 years?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No → If No please skip Questions 3 and 4.

3. Which types of National Park Service areas you have visited in the last 2 years (check all that apply):

 **National Park areas which focus on the preservation of nature and nature-based recreation.** ☐
 (National Parks, National Monuments, National Preserves, National Reserves, National Parkways, National Recreation Areas, National Scenic Trails)

 **National Park areas which focus on the preservation of American history and culture.** ☐
 (National Battlefields, National Battlefield Parks, National Battlefield Sites, National Military Parks, National Historical Parks, National Historic Sites, National Memorials)

 **National Park areas which focus on protecting bodies of water.** ☐
 (National Lakeshores, National Seashores, National Rivers, National Wild & Scenic Rivers, Riverways)

4. In total, how often did you visit any type of National Park Service area in the last 2 years?

- ☐ 1 to 3 times ☐ 4 to 5 times ☐ 6 to 9 times ☐ 10 or more times

5. What is your zip code? _____

6. Are you:

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

7. What year were you born? _____

8. Are you retired?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Do you belong to any local, state or national organizations whose main purpose is to protect National Parks or other federal public lands?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. What is the highest level of school you have completed

- ☐ Some high school ☐ High school graduate or GED ☐ Some college or technical school (but no degree)
☐ Associate's degree or bachelor's degree ☐ Professional degree ☐ Master's or doctoral degree

11. Here is a list of racial categories. Please select one or more which best describes your race:

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander ☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American ☐ White ☐ Other _____

12. Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Next we'd like to ask you about your household income. Your answer will be kept strictly confidential, and only used for comparing groups of people. Which of the following income categories best describes your household's total income in 2012, before taxes?

- ☐ Less than \$15,000 ☐ \$15,000 up to \$24,999 ☐ \$25,000 up to \$34,999
☐ \$35,000 up to \$49,999 ☐ \$50,000 up to \$74,999 ☐ \$75,000 up to \$99,999
☐ \$100,000 up to \$149,999 ☐ \$150,000 up to \$199,999 ☐ \$200,000 or more

14. What is the total number of people who contribute the household income noted above? _____(number)
15. How many children under the age of 18 are in your household? _____(number)