

#3102



"James Gramann"  
 <jgramann@ag.tamu.edu>  
 11/30/2007 10:03 AM

To <Sandra\_Hamilton@nps.gov>  
 cc  
 bcc  
 Subject Fwd: RE: Cape Hatteras Visitor Use Study

Here is Vogel song's reply to my inquiry about instructions to interviewers.  
 No surprises here.

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----- Message from "Vogel song, Hans" <VOGELSONGH@ecu.edu> on Tue, 27 Nov 2007 13:25:11 -0500

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**To:** "James Gramann" <jgramann@ag.tamu.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: Cape Hatteras Visitor Use Study

Jim,

Data collectors were instructed to interview every nth individual that they encountered at a sampling site. For example, prior to arriving at a site they were instructed to choose a number between 4 and 10 and then interview the individual that they counted to at that particular number.

Interviewers were expressly told not to conduct interviews or to bypass any respondents based on any attribute that the potential respondent may have or not have.

While no formal monitoring of proper compliance was conducted, survey teams were de-briefed after each survey session and asked to report any problems with sampling and/or conducting interviews. The importance of utilizing a systematic sampling technique was reinforced at each meeting.

There were several comments made via phone calls and at public meetings that suggested that members of NCBBA were being under-represented in the sample. I am able to state that no efforts were made to distinguish this group from others. On the contrary, the sampling sites for this project were chosen in order to optimize and over-represent ORV users as a whole.

While I am unable to deny the accusations in the complaint that you received, I can assure you that all interviewers employed by this

project were trained not to bypass anyone based on group affiliation.

Of additional interest is the fact that a second survey was being conducted by the NPS at CAHA during the same time period. This was a short term satisfaction survey conducted by Gary Machlis's group. I know that several complaints based on the impression of improper sampling from this group were attributed to my study. Again, I am unable to determine if this was the case here.

Hans Vogelsong

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-----Original Message-----

From: James Gramann [mailto:jgramann@ag.tamu.edu]  
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2007 4:19 PM  
To: Vogelsong, Hans  
Cc: John\_Dennis@nps.gov; Sandra\_Hamilton@nps.gov  
Subject: Cape Hatteras Visitor Use Study

Hans,

The National Park Service will be conducting an economic/regulatory analysis for the Cape Hatteras ORV management plan and EIS. This plan and associated management regulations could draw on some of the conclusions from your Cape Hatteras Visitor Use Study, which I believe was conducted in 2000 and 2001.

On October 23, 2007 the NPS received a written complaint from a business owner in Buxton, NC about surveyor bias that he alleges he witnessed during the conduct of the survey. (It's not clear to me if this was during the full 2001 survey or the preliminary 2000 survey.)

The complainant writes "...The college kids used too [sic] take the samples were ineffective. I followed a kid as he surveyed Cape Point fishermen - ORV users. It was quite apparent that he-she was bypassing some ORV's and interviewing others. I asked the question - Answer was they are OBPA - CHAC - NCBBA members and we know they are biased in their answer. Have you been instructed to by pass these? YES was the answer...."

I realize that in any sample, it is normal procedure to interview only a portion of visitors making up the respondent universe. Therefore, skipping some, if not most, ORV users would be standard operating procedure in this type of study. But if the choice of who to interview is based on a process that does not assign a known (for example, equal) probability to each visitor group's chance of being interviewed, then the sample would not be generalizable to the visitor population. This is our concern.

I also realize that preliminary studies, such as pre-tests, are often used to test question wording, respondent comprehension, estimate survey

length, evaluate field methods, etc. In such studies, non-probability (or qualitative) samples are often drawn because there is no intent to generalize to a known population. However, even in these cases a diverse sample contacting a range of respondents is desirable.

Given that this allegation was made in writing and that the results of your research may be used to inform a controversial management decision, could you please furnish me a written statement that includes:

1. Specific information about the instructions given to the interviewers to follow during this survey;
2. Any efforts to monitor proper compliance with these instructions.

The NPS may need to have this information in the record to respond to any complaints under the Information Quality Act.

Thank you in advance for your timely response.

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