

Information about Being in a Research
Study Clemson University

Title of Study: National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey

KEY INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Dr. Matthew T. J. Brownlee is inviting you to volunteer for a research study. Dr. Matthew T.J. Brownlee is an Associate Professor at Clemson University.

Study Purpose: The research is focused on understanding and characterizing visitor experiences at specific stations across the National Wildlife Refuge System. The National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Survey is implemented across the system to monitor visitor characteristics, experiences, and satisfaction with their refuge experiences, as well as evaluate visitor economic contributions to local communities. The purpose of this research is to generate, interpret, and provide empirical data that characterizes:

1. Refuge visitors, including their visitation frequency, average trip expenditures, and demographics.
2. Important information about visitors' recreational, educational, and informational experiences, and general preferences about future opportunities,
3. Refuge visitors' levels of satisfaction with current services and facilities, including important aspects of the experience that contribute to, or detract from, the quality of a visit.
4. Visitors' desires for future services and facilities.
5. Trends and comparisons between past and current data about refuge visitors, when applicable.

Voluntary Consent: Participation is voluntary, and you have the option to not participate.

Activities and Procedures: Your part in the study will be to complete a 20 minute survey – either online or on paper. The survey contains questions about your visitation frequency to wildlife refuges, average trip expenditures, and demographics. Included in the survey are important questions about your recreational, educational, and informational experiences, and general preferences about future opportunities at wildlife refuges. The survey also includes questions about your level of satisfaction with current services and facilities, including important aspects of the experience that contribute to, or detract from, the quality of a visit to a wildlife refuge.

Participation Time: If you participate, the survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Completing the survey is the only participation time in the study.

Risks and Discomforts: We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

Possible Benefits: The information you provide may not directly benefit you. However, the

results of this project will provide information for refuge managers, planners, and visitor services professionals to assist in 1) planning related to visitor use, including the development and refinement of transportation and conservation plans, 2) improving the design of visitor facilities, 3) enhancing the visitor experience while protecting important natural and cultural resources, 4) understanding the economic contributions of visitors to local communities, and 5) tracking changes in visitation related to demographics, experiences, and preferences.

EXCLUSION/INCLUSION REQUIREMENTS

To participate in the study, you must have visited a wildlife refuge where we obtained your name and address and be 18 years of age or older.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The results of this study may be published in technical reports, scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations. However, we will not disclose who participated in the surveys by name, specific location, or any other identifiable information that would link the results to an individual. The information collected during the study will not be used or distributed for future research studies. All names, addresses, or other identifiable records will be permanently destroyed after the study is complete.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-0636 or irb@clemson.edu. The Clemson IRB will not be able to answer some study-specific questions. However, you may contact the Clemson IRB if the research staff cannot be reached or if you wish to speak with someone other than the research staff.

If you have any study related questions or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Matthew T.J. Brownlee at Clemson University at 864-656-3400 or mbrownl@clemson.edu

CONSENT

By participating in the study, you indicate that you have read the information written above, been allowed to ask any questions, and you are voluntarily choosing to take part in this research. You do not give up any legal rights by taking part in this research study.