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Direct Observation Training

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Created by,
Transtria LLC

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Introductions

- Evaluation Officer(s)
- Evaluation Coordinator for local data collection
- Data collectors and experience with data collection

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Training Purpose and Desired Outcome

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Direct Observation

- Observations are made before and after the implementation of a physical change or new policy in a community (e.g., addition of sidewalks to school, new regulations around physical activity in PE).
- Researchers document the number of students, as well as their age, gender, and activity level, at a particular location for a specific duration.
- Results from these observations are compared to determine if an increase in physical activity has occurred as determined by the number of individuals or the intensity of activity in which individuals are engaged.

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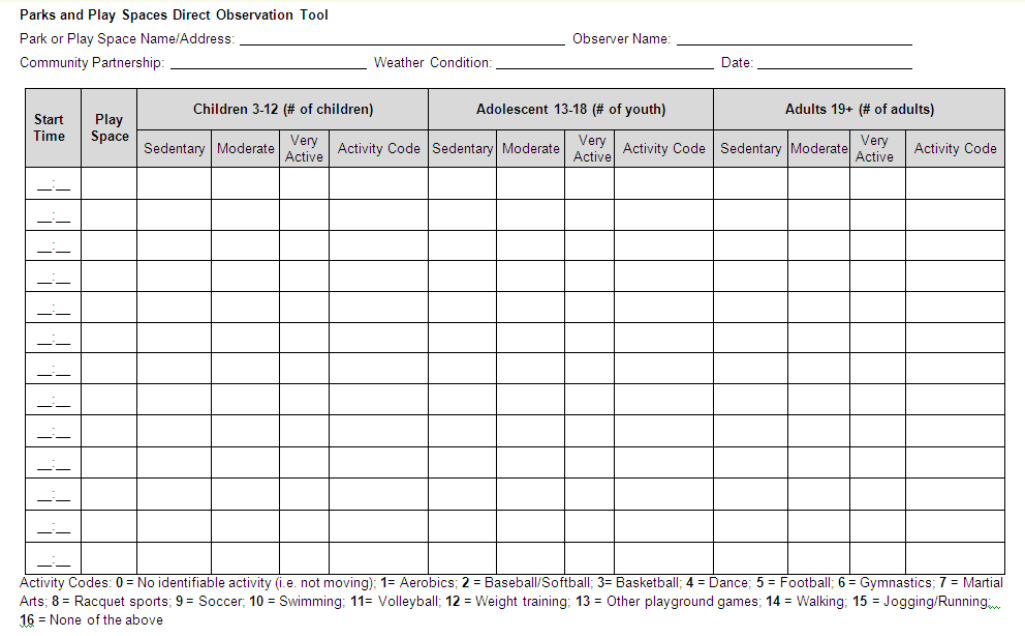
Direct Observation

Benefits & Challenges

Strengths: Allows for pre/post comparison; Evaluates the impact of physical/policy changes or improvements on behavior

Limitations: Influenced by external circumstances (e.g., weather, special events); Limited generalizability due to infrequency of observations



Parks and Play Spaces Direct Observation Tool

Park or Play Space Name/Address: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Start Time	Play Space	Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescent 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults 19+ (# of adults)			
		Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code
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Activity Codes: **0** = No identifiable activity (i.e. not moving); **1**= Aerobics; **2** = Baseball/Softball; **3**= Basketball; **4** = Dance; **5** = Football; **6** = Gymnastics; **7** = Martial Arts; **8** = Racquet sports; **9** = Soccer; **10** = Swimming; **11**= Volleyball; **12** = Weight training; **13** = Other playground games; **14** = Walking; **15** = Jogging/Running; **16** = None of the above

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Direct Observation

- Timing of the observations before/ after project completion (consider the following):
  - ✓ Weekday periods of greater/ lesser use – morning/ evening rush hour trips (adults), before/ after school (youth), lunch trips (adults), following afterschool programs (youth)
  - ✓ Weekend periods of greater/lesser use – faith-based services, sports games/ leagues
  - ✓ Special events – holidays (e.g., Halloween), concerts, parades
  - ✓ Seasonality – extreme heat/ cold, other unfavorable conditions (e.g., rain, ice)
- Resources needed to conduct the observations (consider the following):
  - ✓ Observers and training – number of people available to conduct observations (e.g., staff, students, volunteers), space and equipment to provide training
  - ✓ Security – monitoring observer safety when necessary (particularly at night)
  - ✓ Data collection – devices vs. pen/ paper

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Direct Observation

- Recommended timeframe for observations
  - Scan one area for 15-30 minutes
  - Scans should last for 30 seconds to 1 minute (depending on the foot traffic in the area)
  - Scans should be one minute observing/counting and one minute rest
- Schedule observations at different times of the day (2-3 times per day recommended)
  - Morning (7:30AM)
  - Noon (11:30AM)
  - Afternoon (3:30PM)
  - Evening (6:30PM)
- Schedule observations for multiple times a week (2-3 days recommended)
  - Two weekdays (Monday through Friday) and one weekend day (Saturday and Sunday)
  - Example: Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

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Enhanced Evaluation Design

- **Before and After** – Collecting data before and after an environmental change occurs (e.g., assessing the use of the environment before and after a renovation occurs)

- **Comparison** – Collecting data on different locations to assess differences in the locations (e.g., assessing the use of the environment of two parks that are located in very different areas of town)

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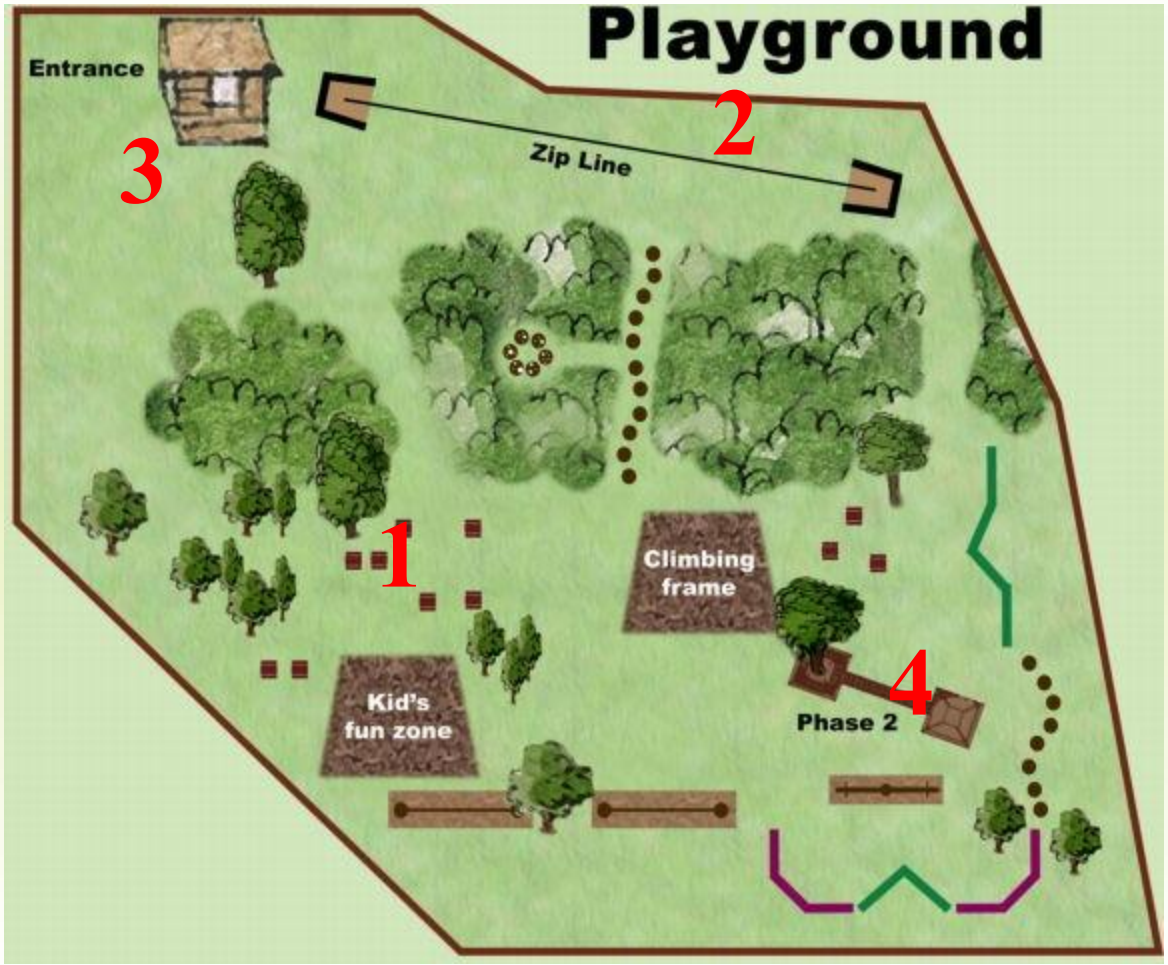
Map Project Area



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Mapping Tool

Parks and Play Spaces Mapping Table

Play Space Name/Address: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Play Space	Setting	Location	Type	Condition	Surface	Intervention
1	☐ Park ☐ Rec. facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Supervised ☐ Organized ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	
2	☐ Park ☐ Rec. facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Supervised ☐ Organized ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	
3	☐ Park ☐ Rec. facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Supervised ☐ Organized ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	

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Mapping 1

Parks and Play Spaces Mapping Table

Play Space Name/Address: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Play Space Name/Address: Write the name of the facility and, if there are more than one playground located in the facility, indicate which playground you are mapping.

Observer Name: Write your name.

Community Partnership: Write the name of your organization.

Weather Condition: Record the temperature and other weather conditions (e.g., rainy, sunny, windy).

Date: The date of mapping (which should be the same as observation).

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Mapping 2

Play Space	Setting	Location	Type	Condition	Surface	Intervention
1	☐ Park ☐ Rec. facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Supervised ☐ Organized ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	

Park or play space: All descriptive details about the park or play space should be easily referenced between the sketched map and the Mapping Table. From the sketched map, place the area number in the first column of the Mapping Table and follow the row across to complete all categories.

Setting: Record whether the play space being used is a park, playground, recreation facility, or other space (specify).

Location: Record whether the play space being used is indoors or outdoors.

Type: Choose from the following categories.
Court space: An area marked for basketball, volley ball and/or other court games. Contains permanent markings specifically for court games.
Field: An area marked for football, soccer, baseball, and/or other field games. It contains permanent markings or goals, backstops, or other features specifically for field games.
Playground: A self-contained space for swinging, sliding, climbing, or other types of play.
Pool: Consists of wading or swimming pool and the surrounding space.
Gym: A large indoor space primarily for physical activity and game play.
Multi-purpose room: An auditorium, classroom, studio, or other indoor space that may be used for physical activity (e.g., dance, aerobics, strength training).
Multi-purpose field: An open, outdoor, unmarked field that may be used for physical activity.
Other: Record any other type of area not specified above.

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Mapping 3

Play Space	Setting	Location	Type	Condition	Surface	Intervention
1	☐ Park ☐ Rec. facility ☐ Other:	☐ Indoor ☐ Outdoor	☐ Court ☐ Field ☐ Playground ☐ Pool ☐ Gym ☐ Multi-purp. room ☐ Multi-purp. field ☐ Other:	☐ Accessible ☐ Usable ☐ Supervised ☐ Organized ☐ Equipment ☐ Other:	☐ Sand/dirt ☐ Grass ☐ Gravel ☐ Wood chips/ mulch ☐ Foam/ rubber/ tile ☐ Cement/ pavement ☐ Hardwood ☐ Carpet ☐ Other:	

Condition: Choose from the following categories.

- **Accessible:** Not restricted from public use
- **Usable:** Safe for physical activity
- **Supervised:** By personnel
- **Organized:** Physical activity programs are occurring in the play space
- **Equipment:** Provided by the school or other agency. ***Do not*** code "Yes" if the equipment is permanent or is owned by people in the park or play space.

Surface:

- **Sand/ dirt**
- **Grass**
- **Gravel**
- **Wood chips/ mulch**
- **Foam/ rubber tile**
- **Cement/ pavement**
- **Hardwood**
- **Carpet**
- **Other (specify)**

Intervention: Record the specific intervention changes that assist children in participating in physical activity in this play space. This will include modifications such as lines painted on courts (e.g., four-square), cuts in the grass or field areas (e.g., baseball diamonds), and poles (basketball hoops, etc.).

Do not record temporary improvements such as chalk lines and portable nets. A modification identifies what the area is primarily designed for, regardless of how it used at a particular time. Identify spaces that have multiple improvements that overlap but cannot be used simultaneously. For instance, a court space may have poles and painted lines that are used for both volleyball and basketball.

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Surface Area

Sand/ dirt

Grass

Gravel

Wood chips/ Mulch

Foam/ Rubber tile

Cement/ Pavement

Hardwood

Carpet

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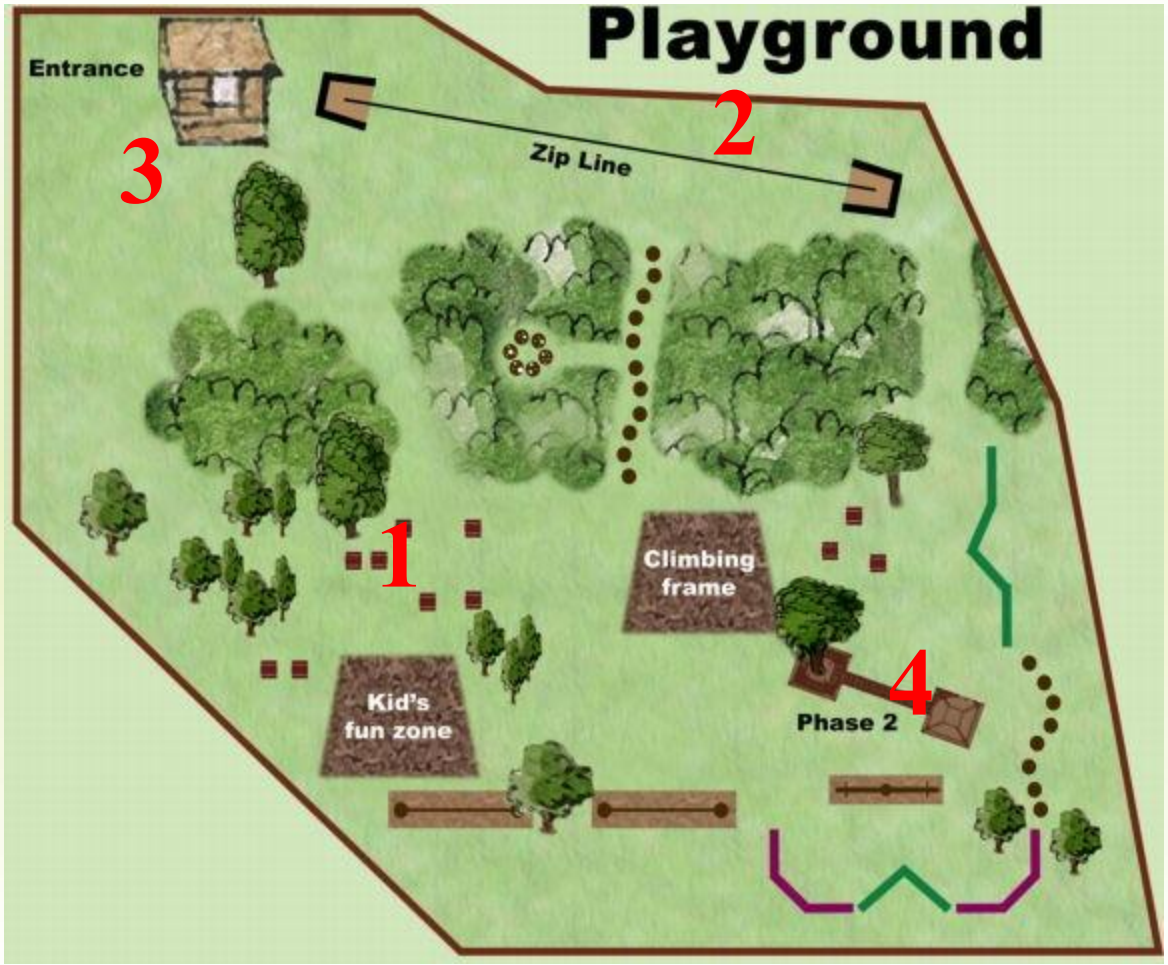
Map Project Area



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Scanning Tool

Parks and Play Spaces Direct Observation Tool

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Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

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Scanning 1

Parks and Play Spaces Direct Observation Tool

Park or Play Space Name/Address: _____ Observer Name: _____

Community Partnership: _____ Weather Condition: _____ Date: _____

Park or Play Space Name/Address: Write the name of the facility and, if there are more than one playground located in the facility, indicate which playground you are mapping.

Observer Name: Write your name.

Community Partnership: Write the name of your organization.

Weather Condition: Record the temperature and other weather conditions (e.g., rainy, sunny, windy).

Date: The date of mapping (which should be the same as observation).

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Scanning 2

Observers: Observers will be split into groups of two to observe different areas at the same time (see example below). Areas correspond with the play spaces on the Parks and Play Spaces Mapping Table.

Play Space 1:	Observer 1
	Observer 2
Play Space 2:	Observer 3
	Observer 4

Start Time: This is the clock time for the beginning of each observation period. Each observation will last the same amount of time (with the length of time dependent on the number of individuals within the observed area) with a <u>one</u> minute break in-between observations to record (see below for an example). In the first column, record the start time for each period of observation.

Period 1: Minute 1 – Observation
Minute 2 – Break/Record
Period 2: Minute 3 – Observation
Minute 4 – Break/Record
Period 3: Minute 5 – Observation
Minute 6 – Break/Record

Start Time	Play Space
__:__	
__:__	

Map: Before observation begins, the observers will split the street into sections (e.g., segments and intersections) and each observer will be responsible for observing his/her section. The observers should record the area number in the second column of the observation tool.

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Scanning 3

Scanning: When scanning an area, observers should start on the far right end of the area and scan to the left side, then back to the right side for the duration of the scan time. During the scan, the observer should complete the observation tool by tallying activity by age group, in addition to reporting the activity codes for the age group. Be sure to count each individual only one time for both activity codes and activity intensity level (see below).

Ages: Each age category has its own count. Please provide the number of youth or individuals represented during the four minute period participating in whatever intensity level of activity and their given task (i.e., activity code).

Children 3-12

Adolescent 13-18

Adults 19+

Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescent 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults 19+ (# of adults)			
Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code

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Scanning 4

Children 3-12 (# of children)				Adolescent 13-18 (# of youth)				Adults 19+ (# of adults)			
Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code	Sedentary	Moderate	Very Active	Activity Code

Activity Level (Sedentary, Moderate, Very Active): During scans of the target area, all people should be accounted for as either participating in very active, moderate, or sedentary behaviors. Mark a tally mark for each individual in the proper activity level and age box (i.e. if you see a 14 year old walking, put a tally mark in moderate under Adolescent).

- **Sedentary** behaviors are defined as activities in which people are not moving (e.g. standing, sitting, playing board games)
- **Moderate intensity** behaviors require more movement but no strenuous activity (e.g. walking, biking slowly)
- **Very active** behaviors show evidence of increased heart rate and inhalation rate (e.g. running, biking vigorously, playing basketball)

Activity Codes: Define what tasks individuals are participating in during the scanning period. All codes are labeled at the bottom of the observation tool.

0 = No identifiable activity; **1** = Aerobics; **2** = Baseball/Softball; **3** = Basketball; **4** = Dance; **5** = Football; **6** = Gymnastics; **7** = Martial Arts; **8** = Racquet sports; **9** = Soccer; **10** = Swimming; **11** = Volleyball; **12** = Weight training; **13** = Other playground games; **14** = Walking; **15** = Jogging/Running; **16** = None of the above; **17** = Biking

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SOPARC Video Practice

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Practical Experience

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Data Collection

Timeframe

- Date(s) of data collection?
- Date(s) of environmental change (if applicable)?
- Date that Evaluation Officer will receive the data?

Process for receiving the data

- Send data to Evaluation Officer by scanning and emailing
- Send data to Evaluation Officer by making copies and sending through mail

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Data Analysis

Receiving the data

- Evaluation Officer will send an email stating they have received the data
- Evaluation Officer will contact the Evaluation Coordinator if there are questions about the data

Data entry and cleaning

- Evaluation Officer will work with Transtria staff to entry and check the data in spreadsheet

Data analysis and summary

- Evaluation Officer will analyze the data and prepare a summary
- CPs will receive raw data and a summary

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Evaluation Plan

- How many parks will you be collecting data for?
- What design are you using?
  - Before/after
  - Comparison
- If comparison design, how do you plan to select your comparison park?
- How do you plan to use this data?
- What audience to you intend to share this data with?

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Questions?