

Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-0019

PUBLIC INFORMATION COLLECTION, VISITOR'S PERMIT & REGISTRATION CARD

A. Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

Statutes and Regulations:

- Organic Administration Act (USC 16, 551),
- Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-557, Section 4),
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, Section 10)
- Executive Order 11644,
- 36 CFR, Section 261.57 (Subpart A);
- 36 CFR, Section 261.58 (Subpart E);
- 36 CFR 293.3 (Subpart A).

The Organic Administration Act requires the Forest Service to protect the National Forest System, including designated wilderness, from fire and other depredations. The direction to regulate and monitor wilderness is from this Act.

The Wilderness Act specifies congressional policy to secure for the American people an enduring resource of wilderness for the enjoyment of present and future generations. It defines wilderness as areas untrammelled by people that offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and directs agencies to manage wilderness to preserve natural ecological conditions. In some cases, visitor use quotas keep the number of people in balance with the desired ecological and social conditions directed by the Wilderness Act.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act establishes direction for managing designated rivers, such as protecting free flows, and prescribing certain conditions among the three classifications of rivers: wild, scenic and recreational.

Executive Order 11644 establishes policies and procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public land will be controlled and directed to protect the resources of the land, to promote safety of users, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of public lands.

Every year millions of people visit the National Forest System. At many locations visited, a permit for use is required. The Forest Service uses the Visitor Registration Card (Form 2300-32) to permit and monitor public use in areas where use is managed and/or monitored to: 1) prevent resource damage;

2) preserve the quality of the experience; or 3) for public safety.

The Visitor's Permit (Form 2300-30) provides information about visitor use and helps the Forest Service meet policy directives, as well as provide for public uses of the land in a responsible manner. The lack of useful and relevant visitor use data would hamper Forest Service efforts to provide high quality recreational opportunities for the public.

Information gathered on the forms helps the agency identify National Forest System wilderness and special management areas most frequently visited and provides the agency with critical information for appropriate stewardship of these lands.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

a. What information will be collected - reported or recorded? (If there are pieces of information that are especially burdensome in the collection, a specific explanation should be provided.)

The Visitor Permit (FS-2300-30) captures the:

- Visitor's name and address,
- Area to be visited,
- Dates of visit,
- Length of stay,
- Method of travel,
- Number of people, and where applicable, and
- Number of pack and saddle stock (i.e., the number of animals either carrying people or their gear)

The Forest Service employee who completes the Visitor's Permit will note on the permit any special restrictions or important information the visitor should know. The visitor receives a copy of the permit and instructions to keep the permit with them for the duration of the visit.

The Visitor Registration Card (FS2300-32) asks the visitor to provide:

- Name and address,
- Area to be visited,
- Dates of visit,
- Length of stay,
- Method of travel,
- Number of people, and where applicable,
- The number of pack and saddle stock (i.e., the number of animals either carrying people or their gear, usually horses, but often including llamas and goats) in the group, or number of watercraft or vehicles.

The file code for the information collected is 2300, with a retention period of 3 years.

b. From whom will the information be collected? If there are different respondent categories (e.g., loan applicant versus a bank versus an

appraiser), each should be described along with the type of collection activity that applies.

The information is collected from visitors (members of the public) to wilderness and other special management areas that have implemented the Visitor's Permit or Visitor Registration card to manage and/or monitor use levels and patterns.

c. What will this information be used for - provide ALL uses?

Information gathered on Visitor Registration Card (FS-2300-32) and Visitor's Permit (FS-2300-30) helps identify National Forest System wilderness and special management areas most frequently visited and provide the agency with critical information for appropriate stewardship of these lands.

The Visitor's Permit is required for entry into some special management areas on National Forest System Lands. Reservations and permit systems control public use in Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, restricted off-road vehicle areas, and campgrounds.

In areas where public use is managed and/or monitored, the Forest Service uses the Visitor's Permit to: 1) Prevent resource damage, 2) Preserve the quality of the experience, or 3) For public safety. For example, visitor permits help the Agency understand how many people may be using a particular trailhead or portion of a wilderness area. The Agency uses this information to respond to indicators or standards in a management plan.

The personal contact that is involved with issuance of a Visitor's Permit provides an excellent opportunity for the Forest Service to discuss resource protection, proper camping techniques, fire prevention, safety, and sanitation requirements with the visitor. The permit allows managers to identify heavily used areas and move use to lesser-impacted areas. The permit also provides managers with information useful in locating forest visitors if they do not return from their trip as planned (i.e., aid in search and rescue missions).

The Visitor Registration Card is a voluntary registration card providing Forest Service managers with an inexpensive means of gathering visitor use information without imposing mandatory visitor permit regulations. Similar to the Visitor's Permit mentioned above, Visitor Registration Cards help the Forest Service understand how many people may be using a particular trailhead or portion of a wilderness area. This information allows the Agency to respond to indicators or standards in a management plan without requiring a mandatory permit system to gather and record this data.

The Visitor Registration Card allows managers to identify areas that are being heavily used, prepare restoration and monitoring plans to reflect where use is occurring, and in extreme cases to develop plans to move use to lesser impacted areas. The Visitor Registration Card also provides managers with information useful in locating forest visitors if they do not return from their trip as planned.

d. How will the information be collected (e.g., forms, non-forms, electronically, face-to-face, over the phone, over the Internet)?

Does the respondent have multiple options for providing the information? If so, what are they?

Forest Service employees complete the Visitor's Permit at a Forest Service office. Visitors may obtain the permit in person or may call ahead and provide the required information. In some instances, the permit is complete at an un-staffed trailhead and then deposited into a collection container.

The Visitor Registration Card is available at un-staffed locations such as trailheads. Visitors complete the card without Forest Service assistance at the entry location, and deposit the card in an appropriate collection container.

e. How frequently will the information be collected?

The information collection occurs once per visit from persons who visit wilderness and special management areas that has a permit or registration system in place.

f. Will the information be shared with any other organizations inside or outside USDA or the government?

The Forest Service does not share the information collected with other organizations inside or outside the government.

g. If this is an ongoing collection, how have the collection requirements changed over time?

Collection requirements have remained stable since the forms were initially approved.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The Visitor's Permit and The Visitor Registration Card provides an efficient means of obtaining the data needed, and places the least burden on both the visitor and the Forest Service. The collection of information does not involve the use of automated, electronic, mechanical or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. One of the primary reasons for use of these forms is to gain information on use levels and patterns; therefore, it is critical that visitors complete the form just prior to entry into the special management area. While it is possible to collect this information electronically in advance of a visit, the quality of the information gathered would suffer considerably.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

The Visitor Permit and Registration forms capture data at the time a visitor uses a special area with one of these systems in place, and other sources of this data

do not exist. The Forest Service has determined that the information collected on Visitor's Permits and Visitor Registration Cards for the purposes of managing and/or monitoring visitor use in wilderness and special management areas is not available from other Federal, State, and other governmental and private entities.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

This information request does not pose a burden to businesses or other small entities. Visitors to National Forest System lands provide the information collected.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The use of the Visitor's Permits and Visitor Registration Cards is one of the most efficient means of collecting data from visitors. The personal contact generated by issuance of the permit results in improved visitor education and information about proper camping techniques, fire prevention, safety, and sanitation. The Registration Card allows the Forest Service to collect data in remote locations, where it is not feasible to have permanent staffing.

This information collection provides data that assists the Forest Service in preventing visitors from overusing areas, thus causing site deterioration in some environmentally sensitive areas. The Forest Service would have to spend additional funds to undertake special studies to collect use data. Finally, there would insufficient or inaccurate data available on which to base management decisions.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;**
- **In connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- **That includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the**

pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or

- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.6.

- 8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

The Forest Service solicited comments on information collection using Visitor's Permits and Visitor Registration Cards in a Federal Register notice published on July 24, 2006. The comment period closed on September 22, 2006. The Forest Service received no public comments.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals regarding this information collection:

**Dr. Troy Hall
University of Idaho
College of Natural Resources
PO Box 441142
Moscow, Idaho 83844-1142
(208) 885-9455**

Feedback: "The USFS Visitor's Permit and Visitor Registration Card provide critical information needed for wilderness management. They often are the only source of information collected about visitation to individual wildernesses, and use trend information is necessary for making responsible, effective stewardship decisions. I have personally observed visitors completing these forms, and they require no more than a few minutes to complete. Therefore, the time estimate of 3 minutes is quite reasonable. Most wilderness visitors take relatively few trips

per year, and hence the burden would be minimal. Furthermore, only one member of a visiting group completes a form, so the overall burden on visitors is minimized. For the important information they provide about wilderness visitation patterns and because they are used in search and rescue operations, the impact on wilderness visitors is entirely reasonable and not burdensome.”

Agency response: No action needed.

Lisa Eidson
University of Montana
32 Campus Drive
Missoula, MT 59812
(406) 243-6933

Feedback: “Both the Visitor's Permits and Visitor Registration Card forms provide valuable information to the Forest Service about wilderness visitors and their recreational trips to wilderness. Since recreation is both a purpose for which wilderness was designated and, potentially, the most damaging use of it, understanding visitor movements in wilderness is integral to furthering adequate and proactive wilderness stewardship. Neither of these short forms should take more than a few minutes to complete. Therefore neither form should be prohibitive or hindering to visitors, especially since the typical wilderness visitor may only fill out one form per year. Overall, the minimal time and effort required for wilderness visitors to complete these forms is reasonable, given the importance of the information they provide to the wilderness management community.

On another note, the only confusing thing I find about both of these forms is the list of numbers below each input box. I'm sure these have some administrative meaning, but may be confusing to visitors.”

Agency response: The numbers which appeared below the input boxes on previous versions of the forms have been removed.

Paul Schaberg
Green Mountain Club member
40 Wright Ct.
South Burlington, VT 05403
(802) 865-3494

Feedback: “The information being requested on these forms looks reasonable. I’m familiar with these types of forms when I go hiking, and I don’t see any requests for information on these forms that are out of the ordinary. The information fields on the form are self-explanatory. Were I asked to fill out these forms, I would think the request very reasonable, providing the data that is gathered is put to good use. This is all pretty standard stuff.”

Agency response: No action needed.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than re-enumeration of contractors or grantees.

The Forest Service does not provide a payment or gift to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

No assurance of confidentiality is provided to visitors completing either form. Request for information are processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

There are no information requests in either the Visitor’s Permit or the Visitor Registration Card that pertain to sensitive issues such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters commonly considered private.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

- **Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form.**

- a) **Description of the collection activity**
- b) **Corresponding form number (if applicable)**
- c) **Number of respondents**
- d) **Number of responses annually per respondent,**
- e) **Total annual responses (columns c x d)**
- f) **Estimated hours per response**

g) Total annual burden hours (columns e x f)

(a) Description of the Collection Activity	(b) Form Number	(c) Number of Respondents	(d) Number of responses annually per Respondent	(e) Total annual responses (c x d)	(f) Estimate of Burden Hours per response	(g) Total Annual Burden Hours (e x f)
Visitor's Permit	FS 2300-30	132,825	1	132,825	.05 hours (3 minutes)	6,641.25
Visitor Registration Card	FS 2300-32	253,575	1	253,575	.05 hours (3 minutes)	12,678.75
Totals	---	386,400	---	386,400	---	19,320

- **Record keeping burden should be addressed separately and should include columns for:**
 - a) **Description of record keeping activity:** None
 - b) **Number of record keepers:** None
 - c) **Annual hours per record keeper:** None
 - d) **Total annual record keeping hours (columns b x c):** Zero
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

(a) Description of the Collection Activity	(b) Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents (Hours)	(c) Estimated Average Income per Hour	(d) Estimated Cost to Respondents
Visitor's Permit	6,641.25	\$15/hour	\$99,618.75
Visitor Registration Card	12,678.75	\$15/hour	\$190,181.25
Totals	19,320	---	\$289,800

- 13. Provide estimates of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information, (do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in items 12 and 14). The cost estimates should be split into two components: (a) a total capital and start-up cost component annualized over its expected useful life; and (b) a total operation and maintenance and purchase of services component.**

There are no capital operation and maintenance costs.

- 14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

The response to this question covers the actual costs the agency will incur as a result of implementing the information collection. The estimate should cover the entire life cycle of the collection and include costs, if applicable, for:

Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, storing forms

Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection

Employee travel costs

Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information

Employee labor and materials for collecting the information

Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information

Estimated Government Costs

Item	Employee Labor and Materials for Developing, printing, storing forms	Employee labor and materials for collecting the information	Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information	Totals
Visitor's Permit	4,500 (150,000 forms @ \$.03 per form)	\$42,100 (2 min/form X GS-3 wages X 132,825 forms)	\$13,300 (132,825 forms @ \$0.10 / form)	\$ 59,900
Visitor Registration Card	\$2,750 (275,000 forms @ \$0.01 per form)	\$37,000 (1 min/form x GS-3 wages x 253,375 forms)	\$12,700 (253,375 forms @ \$.05 / form)	\$ 52,450
Total	---	---	---	\$112,350

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in items 13 or 14 of OMB form 83-I.

This is a revision of a currently approved collection. There is an annual increase in the hour burden. This is due to a projected increase in visitors who will report through a Visitor's Permit or Visitor Registration Card (from 368,000 to 386,400 respondents), resulting from increased visitation to National Forest System units.

16. For collections of information whose results are planned to be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

National forests use the information collected. No aggregation of data occurs. There are no plans for a centralized tabulation and publication.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The forms associated with this information collection will display the OMB approval expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in item 19, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

(This information collection does not employ statistical methods.)

