

The Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-NEW
Development of Approaches to Enhance Forest Service/Public
Joint Understanding and Consensus on Fire Management Strategies
(Short title: Homeowner Risk Reduction Behaviors Concerning Wildfire Risks)

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

- 1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.**

The information will be collected from homeowners living in the wildland-urban interface affected by wildfires in the western United States. Specifically, the proponents will survey homeowner associations in Boulder, CO; Steamboat Springs, CO; and Sisters, OR. Distribution of surveys at these locations is as follows: Boulder - 900; Steamboat Springs – 200; and Sisters - 400. Selection of the locations is due to magnitude of recent wildfires in these areas and the risk faced by the communities located near these fires.

- 2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:**

- **Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection,**
- **Estimation procedure,**
- **Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification,**
- **Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and**
- **Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.**

Contact is with homeowner associations in each of the locations identified above. All homeowner associations in communities that evacuated due to wild fire activity will be asked to participate in the project. Focus groups will assemble after area homeowner associations agree to participate. Groups will consist of 6-8 individuals in each community.

The objective of each focus group is to provide a context and a foundation for working with the community. This approach will provide the proponent with a better understanding of the community and allow community representatives the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

Once the focus group work concludes, administration of the survey to all members

of the homeowner association will occur. A sampling strategy is not needed since the entire population of the homeowners' association will be surveyed. The survey will be administered via mail.

Internal validity of the statistical analysis of the homeowner data is our primary concern. This is of particular importance since this is an exploratory study and obtaining statistically valid results for each site as well as the aggregated analysis for all three sites is essential to justify further research on this topic. According to Sudman (*Applied Sampling*, 1976 p. 87) in order to conduct statistically valid analyses of subgroups in a population, you need 200 to 500 observations for each subgroup. Since the population of these sites ranges from approximately 200 to 900 we plan to conduct a census of the three-homeowner associations instead of a sample of the population in order to meet the target of a minimum of 200 observations. As stated elsewhere, we expect a response rate of approximately 66%, which would result in a data set of approximately 1000 observations for all three sites. This would put us slightly under the target of 200 observations for the Steamboat community; however, since we will be conducting a census of the population we will have the population parameters, which should strengthen the tests.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The data collection efforts will not involve the use of web-based surveying or other technology based approaches. The data collection effort is an application of the statistically proven method of mail surveying as detailed in Dillman (2000) *Mail and Internet Surveys: the Tailored Design Method*.

Step 1: All members of the targeted homeowner associations will receive a pre-notice letter indicating that they will receive a survey in the mail and briefly explaining the project.

Step 2: The second step is to send a survey to the entire population of the homeowners' association with a more detailed cover letter.

Step 3: Non-respondents will receive reminder notices (postcard) approximately two weeks after the initial mailing.

Step 4: Non-respondents will receive a reminder letter and another copy of the survey one month after the initial mailing.

Step 5: Final contact with non-respondents, consistent with the approach discussed by Dillman.

Based upon previous experience and a review of the literature, the proponents believe use of these methods will result in the desired 66-percent response rate.

They anticipate this response rate because the surveyed communities are very involved with the issue of wildfire and are therefore highly motivated to have their preferences heard.

Expanding on step 5, the following set of questions (see attachment) will be used to test for non-response bias. Approximately one month after second mailing of the complete survey (the fourth contact), we will select approximately 10 percent of the non-respondents and contact them via telephone to ask them a subset of the survey questions. The answers from the telephone contact will be compared to the responses of the survey respondents to test for statistical differences using paired t-tests.

- 4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.**

The proponents plan to conduct a final pretest of the survey instrument in a focus group context and via mail. The pretest will help refine the survey instrument and ensure minimal burden to the public. Modifications to the survey instrument will consist of minor wording changes necessary to make sure that all respondents are interpreting the statements as intended.

- 5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.**

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