

## **The Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-0186**

### Perceptions of Risk, Trust, Responsibility, and Management Preferences among Fire-prone Communities in the Western United States April 2008

#### **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.**

##### Laws, Regulations, and Statutes

- Public Law 95-307, Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Research Act of 1978
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

This is a request for renewal of a currently approved information collection. Public Law 95-307 directed the Secretary of Agriculture to research the multiple uses and products, including recreation, of forests and rangelands to facilitate their most effective use. Executive Order 12898 provides guidance to Federal agencies on identifying disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

Fire risk and the impact of recent fires have been significant on several Western urban-proximate national forests. The Forest Service does not fully understand how community residents residing in urban areas surrounded by national forests (wildland urban interface) perceive fire risk or impacts from forest fires. The Agency needs to know how residents have been addressing fire risk, residents' beliefs about individual responsibility in reducing fire risk, and the myriad of other concerns residents have related to fire and fire risk. This understanding is important, because it influences decisions about management of fire and fire risk on national forest lands and in the wildland urban interface.

This study seeks to gain first-hand information from residents in communities proximate to and surrounded by urban national forests in the Western United States. The information gathered will help resource managers better understand the beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors of those residents. Results will be helpful in managing fire education and information programs, continuing public collaboration efforts, and in the selection of fire management and risk mitigation strategies. Other fire management agencies and organizations will also benefit from this knowledge.

The Forest Service is proposing to expand the scope of the initial information collection to other fire-prone communities in the western United States. OMB approval would permit the Agency to respond rapidly and efficiently to information requests from managers, community groups, and other government

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and private sector agencies seeking information captured within this proposed collection.

Selection of specific forests for study by proponents will involve careful verification of need for a particular wildland urban interface area, including checking with local forest managers and researchers known to be conducting fire social science research. Proponents will ensure the information collection activities remain within allocated annual burden hours.

**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.)**

Information to be collected includes:

- Concern about fire and fire risk,
- Knowledge about fire,
- Salient values similarity,
- Trust,
- Value consistency and validity of inconsistency,
- Key fire management objectives,
- Personal experiences with fire,
- Stressors associated with fire,
- Responsibility and accomplishment for fire risk reduction,
- Future orientation,
- Mode of information receipt,
- Socio-demographics,
- Objectives/values and concerns related to fire management
- Alternative approaches to accomplishing fire management objectives
- Values/goals and trust
- Types of information needed or of interest

**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.**

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The information to be collected from individual residents of fire prone communities adjacent to national forest lands in the western United States, who agreed to attend and participate in a focus group session. All participants asked to complete the questionnaire and participate in a focus group discussion.

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

The information collected used as follows:

- To construct an executive summary on findings,
- To prepare journal articles for submission to peer review outlets,
- For presentations at scientific meetings, and
- For presentations to natural resource managers as appropriate.

Brief summaries may appear in other outlets, such as summaries of research findings produced by the unit for National Fire Plan reporting and general accomplishment reporting. Survey proponents are assessing the feasibility of a workshop for local Forest Service managers to share the findings from this study.

**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?**

Information collected via self-administered questionnaire and focus group discussions. Only group session participants asked to provide information, due to the need for in-depth qualitative and quantitative information, as well as the need to link the information collected from the group forums and self-administered questionnaires.

**e. How frequently will the information be collected?**

The information gathered from each respondent one time.

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

The collected information shared via a technical report sent to public and private sectors, as well as journal articles available to the public. Multiple natural resource management agencies will receive research findings, to ensure diffusion of information, as well as any agency or individual requesting summary findings. Upon request, fire safe councils and other public/community based groups surrounding each forest will receive the reports and other available presentations.

Findings from previously completed research conducted under this OMB approval were shared through unit research updates (summaries going out to

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an email tree and printed versions sent to the visitors' center in Washington D.C.), multiple presentations at professional and scientific meetings, a research paper contributed to the Forest Threats Encyclopedia (to be available online and in print), a station research paper, and other outlets.

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

The initial approval (OMB Notice of Action dated July 29, 2005) allowed collection on one forest (San Bernardino National Forest). In July 2008, proponents requested to change the study area location to Lake Tahoe, California, subsequently approved by OMB (Notice of Action dated September 4, 2007).

Successful completion of that effort revealed significant interest in additional study, and the need to consider similar information in other fire prone areas. Based on the number of inquiries received by the proponent's Forest Service research unit regarding the ability and potential to collect similar data on other forests, the Forest Service is proposing to expand this collection to other fire-prone communities in the western United States.

This approval would permit us to respond rapidly and efficiently to information requests from managers, community groups, and other government and private sector agencies seeking information captured within this proposed collection. Furthermore, the ability to gather the information in multiple locations would allow us to understand variations and similarities among selected communities that are essential to understanding complexities of fire management and public-agency interactions. Initial findings also suggested needs for refinement of concepts covered in the focus group sessions during discussions, which we propose for this renewal.

**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.**

Due to the need for in-depth discussion and insights derived from the discussions, information technology is not suitable for this inquiry. Each focus group meeting begins with participants answering self-administered questionnaires, after which facilitators lead participants through a series of discussion topics. Comments are tape recorded and simultaneously entered on a laptop computer. Maintenance of anonymity assured. Only the cooperator and focus group transcriber have access to the tapes and coding of comments is by an ID number rather than the individual's name.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for**

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**use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

The information to be collected is not presently available, nor are we aware of such an endeavor planned through any other means. The limit of one forest area in the initial collection affirmed the need for further inquiry. Selection of a particular forest will involve careful verification of need for that particular area, including checking with local forest managers and researchers known to be conducting fire social science research to ensure verification of management needs and that no duplication of effort occurs.

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

This information collection does not impact small businesses, it involves community residents who will participate and provide their own opinions.

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**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 ability to manage fire and fire risk on the urban proximate national forests has gained importance as its complexity has increased. Ecosystem related concerns have gained in complexity, and residents' concerns have increased. Public input has become an expectation, and this is one very effective route for gathering public opinion on fire management on forests in the western United States. Without this information, the basis for management decisions will be limited and anecdotal information regarding public values and perceptions, and studies conducted in other areas that may or may not be applicable to the geographic and community characteristics of immediate concern.

This study will yield information that will help the agency understand public concerns and attitudes. For example, this study will help increase understanding of why participants believe certain fire risk reduction techniques are better than others, why participants do or do not trust the Forest Service, and illuminate public concerns about fire risk.

**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;**

Information gathered once through participation in a focus group session and minimally in advance to arrange participation into a specific group.

- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**

The self-administered questionnaire completed in the group session that the resident agrees to attend; however, scheduling occurs with the resident's full cooperation and agreement.

- **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;**

The results will be applicable to the focus group participants, and will be representative of the styles and ranges of thinking of these community residents proximate to urban-proximate national forest selected. The goal is provide a snapshot of the styles and ranges of thinking of community

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residents in the most fire-prone areas on this particular forest. The intent of focus groups is not to arrive at assurance of general consensus; rather it is to gain in depth insights and understandings not available through other routes.

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- **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**

Violations of anonymity are not a risk in this study, nor will the methods of securing anonymity impede sharing of information with other agencies or individuals desiring study results in non-identifiable statistical databases and group reporting formats. The data collection approach for both the focus group transcripts and the self-administered surveys maintains anonymity by not including participants' names or contact information in the information collected.

- **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 other special circumstances. Collection of information 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.**

Notice of the 60-day comment period was published in the Federal Register, vol. 73, No. 9, on Monday, January 14, 2008, pages 2212 and 2213. Comments in response to the Federal Register Notice received from two parties. See attachments.

**Comment 1:** **B. Sachau**, dated January 15, 2008, via e-mail (comment\_1.doc)

Ms. Sachau contends this information has already been collected and the expenditure of agency resources is wasteful. A similar comment was received in response to Federal Register Notice for 2004 information collection request, and sufficient contrary evidence has been provided based on response to the first collection and response to the proposed renewal.

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**Comment 2:** **Mike Dubrasich**, dated April 2, 2008, via e-mail (comment\_2\_dubrasich.doc)



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Mr. Dubrasich submitted a lengthy pdf (over 100 pages), which is attached as Comment\_2\_Dubrashich.pdf. His comments seem specifically tailored to the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest and were submitted originally in response to an announcement focused on that project.

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**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 individuals listed below were contacted in 2008 and asked to provide comments on the renewal of this information collection, those comments are included as separate attachments. It was the proponent's intent to contact parties other than those contacted in 2004, to supplement the comments received on the original submission.

*(Note from proponent: In addition to these comments, it might be helpful to consider the comments submitted with the initial package in 2004. At that time positive comments were received from a number of individuals, including those with international research perspective on trust and risk management (Doctors Midden and Siegrist), land managers (Ms. Rosenthal and Mr. Dietrich), and Forest Service public affairs officers (Ms. Wenstrom and Ms. Abbas). In addition, comments from Fire Safe Council representatives were included, all speaking positively to the collection.)*

**Comment 3: Ellen Pollema**, forest resident and Fire Safe Council member, April 3, 2008, via e-mail

My perception and comments are based upon living in a Wildland urban interface community for sixteen years and interfacing with the U. S. Forest Service throughout the entire time period. As one of the founding members of a fire safe council [sic], I am very familiar with the management techniques of the fire agencies in the San Bernardino National Forest and the surrounding communities.

Basic Introduction

The supplementary information in the Federal Register dated June 7, 2004 listed that the participants would first complete the questionnaire and then be guided through a discussion. I chose to complete the survey as if I was a participant to determine any questions that were vague or produced uncertainty as to their intent. If the question number is not listed, I considered it clear and understood

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it. As to the discussion portion, it doesn't appear that any explanatory statements are to be made by the facilitator.

Questionnaire

- #6 Without a definition of a "value" or understanding fire management techniques, I would probably rate this question D/K. It would produce a better result if there was an introductory statement.
- #7 I would probably only guess at an answer because the wording intimidates me into feeling that I should have somehow understood the fire management goals of the Forest Service before I agreed to participate.
- #8 I don't understand how I would know whether the FS supports my views or not especially given that their fire management practices are not stated.
- #9 As I probably wouldn't know what the fire management efforts were, I'd base my answer solely on my historical perception of past efforts in my area.
- #10 Generally, I don't know what the FS decisions and actions are except if they are visible, such as a fuelbreak or prescribed burn; I'd only be guessing in my answer.
- #11 The average resident would have no idea how to find the reasons for decisions; I would assume that most answers would be based on a guess.
- #13 Although this question offers "0=I have no opinion or am not sure" as a possible response, even with my background I had difficulty answering most of the sub-parts because my answers would be based on feelings rather than knowledge. I don't really know what the shared values are; whether Congress is the ultimate authority over the Forest Service; or all of the laws controlling fire management.
- #16 My answers to rating my feelings about FS fire management would not be based on their ability or lack thereof, but my reaction to a forest fire in general.
- #23 The average resident wouldn't understand the role each of these parties has in relation to fire management. As it's one of the latter questions in the survey and I'd be tired of answering questions I didn't fully understand, I would probably take the easy way out and assign 10 points to each of the 10 parties.
- #24 As the average resident is generally unaware of the role of each of these parties, asking them to rate performance during the previous twelve month period would be polluted by any dealings - both positive or negative - they have had with the agency or group in the past.

Due special mention, the questions relating to residents' personal experience and responsibility were well designed and understandable.

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Introductory Document

There was no mention of the time limitation in the introductory statement. This may have been explained in the introductory correspondence to the resident. A reminder should be added.

The term “value” is not defined. Do you mean fair price or return OR utility or merit OR principle, standard or quality considered worthwhile or desired? I actually found ten definitions online at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/value> .

Asking the questions “what values and goals does the FS share with you...does not share with you” seems worthless unless those values and goals are stated. Are they the values of the local employees or people in Washington D.C.?

Conclusion

It appears that the study is to determine only the residents’ perception of “risk, trust, responsibility, and management preferences” rather than to determine the level of their knowledge of the USFS or other fire agencies.

Generally, both the introduction and questionnaire are understandable. However, by wording the questions slightly different, or providing definitions, the answers would probably better reflect whether the values, goals and objections are similar or dissimilar.

In addition, the data provided could also be helpful to determine what areas of public education are needed in order to assist residents in understanding fire management policies and practices of the Forest Service.

**Forest Service Response:**

*The effort and time taken for this review is appreciated.*

*#6 to 12, 23, 24: these questions have been raised before and these concerns have not proven to be problems*

*Ms. Pollema presumes that residents and participants require extensive knowledge to make the ratings and judgments requested. What we seek to characterize is the range of opinions held by publics from diverse backgrounds and degrees of experiences, in this way ascertaining perspectives of those whom might not have extensive experience but still will respond to fire management and the Forest Service. Public debate and opinion does not just occur among the resident experts, but is held to one degree or another by almost everyone. “Don’t know” remains an option for the few who really feel unable to offer any opinion, but this option is rarely taken.*

*#13: “my answers would be based on feelings rather than knowledge” This does not invalidate the response, trust is an emotional reaction. Trust decisions are made by individuals with widely varying degrees of knowledge. Recent evidence for this is substantiated by Dr. Marilyn Brewer’s research at the Ohio State University, which provides evidence for trust decisions even in laboratory simulations based on limited and contrived role assignments (reported at the*

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*88<sup>th</sup> convention of the Western Psychological Association meeting held in April, 2008). The experience of individuals in fire prone communities would certainly be more extensive than what experimental participants have gained in these scenarios.*

*#16: Not certain about the relevance of this distinction - Does this mean that if she were asked about management of fires by another agency the response would be the same? The statement suggests she would find another basis for her rating, but this cannot be assumed to be true for a majority of individuals who would participate.*

*Introductory Document*

*Not providing a definition of values has never been a problem. We want participants to use their own definition.*

*The point on distinction in views regarding the FS at different levels (local, regional, federal) is a good one. This has been raised in past discussions and seems to represent an important distinction to people. The discussions allow for elaboration of these concerns and distinctions and are not precluded in this collection.*

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**Comment 4: Dena Arbaugh**, resident of Big Bar, CA, April 7, 2008, PO Box 7011, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315 (See Comment\_4\_FocusGroups.pdf and Comment\_4\_survey.pdf)

Mrs. Arbaugh elected to write her remarks on the survey and focus group instruments and then scan and email them.

**Forest Service Response:**

*The respondent appears to have completed questionnaire and expressed views on natural resource management, rather than evaluating questionnaire and focus group protocols as research instruments. Regarding comment on values -- seems to be more focused on Forest Service's lack of explicitness about values than on definition of values.*

*Agency managers always introduce the questionnaire by saying "if you have any questions ask." In the few times the people have asked, "What do you mean by values?" the response is, "the things that you think are important and that concern you."*

*The danger in outlining very specific values to anchor the study is that Forest Service managers would be finding out less about what the public believes and views the public holds about the agency than their views about the material presented in the session.*

*Not everyone attending will remember the material afterwards (so responses would not really tell much about future behavior), nor will the material*

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*necessarily match attendees' understanding of Forest Service values regarding fire management.*

*The proposed approach was successful in the initial information collection. Respondents interpreted the Agency's values from their own perspectives and explained those in comments on the survey and during the focus groups. Proponents found these comments most revealing about the respondents' unique ways of thinking about management and related issues.*

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**Comment 5: Anne Fege**, Business and Ecology Consulting, April 7, 2008  
(See Comment\_5\_Fege\_FocusGroups.doc)

The focus group protocol guides a logical discussion of objectives, concerns (barriers), alternatives, and risks about fire management decisions. The guiding questions about shared values/goals, trust, and inconsistency seem very reasonable. I have no specific suggestions to offer for this protocol.

The questionnaire is comprehensive and flows well. I have the following suggestions and comments, identified by question:

1. through 4. Both individual and community perceptions are valuable
12. Likely you (or others) have used this question before, is it really understood that it is "all people, all life experiences?"
13. Suggest that "rely on" be defined, as participants may have very different reference points "Rely on," for what?
14. For national forests and communities that have experienced a recent large fire, the record of fire management also extends to how an incident command team handled that fire(s). Maybe ask a separate question, of local fire management and teams.
17. and 21. Open-ended questions are good.
18. I reviewed all of these situations carefully, and they seem complete.
20. Most (of us) do not have a stressful point of reference, and would answer "no" to these questions. So maybe precede this set of questions, with a question regarding whether respondent considers a wildfire experience in the past xx years as stressful (even if you have essentially gathered this information in question 18). If not, they skip this question. Also add 1-2 items about actions/steps taken to reduce risk or stress, such as maintenance of house, landscaping, retrofit (see comments on question 25).
23. Great question! Add another party, "Local elected officials who make land use and zoning decisions." Many high-risk settings are due to local land use decisions. If the forest is near BLM, NPS, USFWS land, also include those agencies.

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25. First item, consider changing to “home protection and risk reduction” from wildland fires. We can no longer promise protection, we can promise risk reduction. Three items on inquiries are great. Replace “Changed structure of my home....” with several items, as they are distinctly different actions (ask Jim Absher!):
- Made a major investment in a new roof or new deck
  - Made minor retrofits in the house, such as putting screens on vents or replacing section of wood fence next to the house
  - Cleaned up debris in the yard and/or moved wood piles and other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from the house
  - Changed landscaping or pruned many existing plants in the yard
  - Thinned trees or natural shrub vegetation
27. Separate financial aspects of barriers, suggest these items:
- I don’t have financial resources to replace a roof, deck or fence.
  - I don’t have financial resources for low-cost retrofits that will reduce property risks.
  - I don’t have any financial resources right now.
28. Likely “sacrifice my immediate happiness or well-being” is a financial sacrifice, in two statements. If so, add the word financial. If there is another aspect of sacrifice, then add two statements regarding financial.
32. and 33. These seem to be artificially drawing attention to Hispanic people. Could item 32 be included in making two categories for white/Caucasian in 33?

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35. First ask whether this is a primary residence or a secondary/vacation home. Then ask how many years they have lived in this structure.
37. Also, ZIP code of this structure, and then ZIP code of primary residence, if this is a second home.

**Forest Service Response**

*(Question 12) Respondents will answer in terms whatever they define as "people." This is a question referring to the general trustworthiness of others, and would not therefore be defined.*

*(Question 13) The question clearly states, "rely on the Forest Service's fire management." Prior participants were asked this same question and did not express any concerns with it.*

*(Question 14) Our intention is for respondents to answer relative to what they understand to be the record. They are able to include any parties they wish in making their assessment and it would be very difficult to ask them to assess separately various parties involved in recent incidents. This represents a significant additional burden to the respondent, and the focus group discussion would allow ample opportunity for individuals to clarify these distinctions should they wish to do so.*

*(Question 20) Question is focused on the last seven days, not past years. The last item in the set is "I have not experienced any of these difficulties". This item is an established instrument with verified reliability and validity. Making changes as suggested would be inadvisable.*

*(Question 23) This occasionally comes up as an "other" and in discussions (local officials). It's a very low frequency response. However, local officials have been added as an option, other federal agencies have not.*

*(Question 25) The first item has been revised as suggested. We have added a small selection of the suggested clarifications as deemed appropriate to our information needs and interests. The defensible space item addresses clearing of vegetation and other combustibles, and is therefore asked separately.*

*A clarification has been added to address the concerns surrounding item 27.*

*(Question 28) Can't change the wording of the original scale items, again this is an established scale. So, to be able to use it, we need to adhere as closely as possible to its published form to allow comparisons to prior research findings.*

*(Questions 32 and 33) We cannot alter ethnicity/race questions because of OMB guidelines for asking these items, no change was made.*

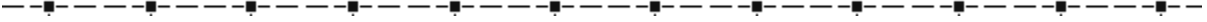
*(Question 35) Now we ask if the fire prone residence is primary home or a secondary/vacation home.*

*(Question 37) Zip code of primary residence and secondary / vacation home clarified.*

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**Federal Reviews**

Reviews were gathered from Jan Cutts (Tahoe National Forest), Dr. Haiganoush Preisler (Research Statistician), Tom Pordugal (Commodity Section; USDA / NASS / SD / SMB). Their comments and Agency responses follow.

**Jan Cutts**, District Ranger, American River Ranger District, Tahoe National Forest, March 3, 2008

Hello Pat - my apologies for the very late response. I read the research proposal documents and am impressed with the information you are hoping to gather.

Here are my thoughts about the four elements on which you've ask for feedback.

1. present availability of the data to be collection: This data is very available - there are many, many members of the public who have opinions about Forest Service fire management. The time of year the data is collected may affect the interest the public has in being involved; in other words, research sessions conducted directly after fire season (fall and winter) may produce different information than another time of year (spring).

2. frequency of collection: This appears to be a reasonable frequency.

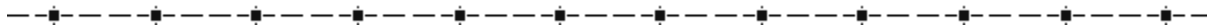
3. clarity of instructions (in survey and focus group protocol): The instructions are very clear; sufficient information for a person to understand what is being asked, how to respond, and what the context and expectations of the research is.

4. data to be recorded (in other words responses that participants will provide): This is a good, rounded set of questions and appears to be designed to pull out nuances.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this. It looks like a great project - and will be helpful in our understanding of public perceptions. Let me know if there's anything else I can help with. Take care - Jan

**Forest Service Response**

*No response is necessary. The review is complementary and suggests a strong interest in the information from a natural resource management point of view. This opinion affirms prior positive responses to the information, not only during our first review process, but also in response to various products that have emerged from the initial collection.*



**Haiganoush Preisler**, Research Statistician (Statistical Scientist), Pacific SW Research Station, February 21, 2008

Review for study on 'Perceptions of risk, trust, among fire-prone communities in western US' by Pat Winter

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Regarding:

- 1) Present availability of the data to be collected.

Past experience of the researcher has been high response rates for focus groups such as the one suggested here. The same could be expected here.

- 2) Frequency of collection:

There will be one session only and the group will not be a random sample but rather a number of pre-existing groups in the community in areas actively involved in fire issues. For the purpose of this study this might be a better potential respondent universe than a random sample. This with the proviso that results will be qualified accordingly.

- 3) Clarity of instructions:

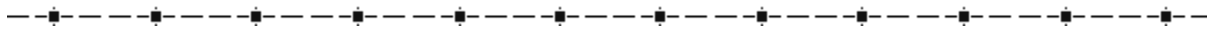
The methods, instructions to the individuals in the study and the questionnaire are well written and clear. Although you might check question number 12. Clarify who you mean by 'people' in the sentence 'In general, do you find people to be'.

- 4) Data to be recorded.

The responses that the participants will provide should be adequate for answering the objectives of the study.

***Forest Service Response***

No response is necessary. The review is positive and suggests we have made the appropriate qualifying statements about our methodology and analysis.



**Tom Pordugal**, Commodity Section, National Agricultural Statistical Service,  
March 27, 2008

I reviewed the OMB Docket and am responding to Section B on pages 9 and 10 which describes their statistical methodology. The most important point to address is that no formal estimation procedure will be used to summarize the questionnaire data, implying no levels of precision are necessary to the study. The questionnaire content is mostly categorical, so the summary analysis would consist of ratios - no direct expansions to some total. Their sample will consist of about 200 of 270 participants in pre-existing focus groups in the forest and surrounding communities directly involved in fire and fire management, and each focus group will average 10 to 12 members. Of the 270 individuals contacted for the focus groups, the assumption was made that 200 will agree to meet and participate in the survey and focus group portion of the study. The selected sample will not be chosen based on stratification by region, implying no formal sampling methodology. To maximize response rates on individual questionnaires, the study requires individuals who are highly motivated to participate, given the time involved for the focus group and the lack of

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compensation. It was stated that response rates on previous questionnaires was high.

If the study required ratio estimates with a degree of precision, then the proposed sample of 200 could be investigated further.

***Forest Service Response***

No response is necessary. The review restates the nature of the collection as proposed.

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

No remuneration or gifts are offered. Light refreshments served during the group session, to help ensure participant comfort.

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

Respondents assured of the anonymous nature of their responses. Contact information maintained separately from responses and destroyed once focus groups are scheduled and held. Although constructed codes will be used to link the questionnaire to the focus group comments, records of discussions will only be handled and viewed by the coding team. There will be no way to directly identify any individual. Any reporting of comments or responses to the surveys will be in-group form, or if from an individual, will be assigned a pseudonym or be free of identifying information. This is not out of keeping with Agency policy, given that the handling of data assures that data can be anonymous and still allow sharing of datasets and findings as appropriate.

**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.**

Participants complete the *Impact of Event Scale - Revised*, examining impacts of stressors on daily functioning. This measurement addresses aspects of post-traumatic stress disorder, which proponents believe to be similar to the personal experiences of residents in a high fire risk area. This is a valid and reliable scale for assessing stress response, and though questions may be viewed as sensitive, anonymity is assured and respondents may skip any objectionable items. Assessing stress is an important component of understanding the impacts of fire risk on community residents and because it is an established scale, proponents have obtained the information on reliability and validity of the scale and found it to be excellent for this purpose ([www.criminology.unimlb.edu.au/victims/resources/assessment/ptsd/ies-r.html](http://www.criminology.unimlb.edu.au/victims/resources/assessment/ptsd/ies-r.html)).

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**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)**

Table 1 - Estimated Annual Burden Hours

| <b>(a)<br/>Description of the<br/>Collection Activity</b>        | <b>(b)<br/>Form<br/>Number</b> | <b>(c)<br/>Number of<br/>Respondents</b> | <b>(d)<br/>Number<br/>of<br/>response<br/>s<br/>annually<br/>per<br/>Responde<br/>nt</b> | <b>(e)<br/>Total<br/>annual<br/>respons<br/>es<br/>(c x d)</b> | <b>(f)<br/>Estimat<br/>e of<br/>Burden<br/>Hours<br/>per<br/>respons<br/>e</b> | <b>(g)<br/>Total<br/>Annual<br/>Burden<br/>Hours<br/>(e x f)</b> |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Scheduling of groups/initial contacts (includes non-respondents) | n/a                            | 270                                      | 1  | 270  | .25  | 67.5 ≈ 68  |
| Self-administered survey   | n/a                            | 200                                      | 1  | 200  | .3   | 66.67 ≈ 67   |
| Focus group discussion including comment sheet                   | n/a                            | 200                                      | 1  | 200  | 1.75   | 350  |
| Totals   | ---                            | 270                                      | ---  | 670*   | 2.25   | ≈ 485  |

\*Note that of the 270 individuals contacted to be scheduled, we assume 200 will agree and be participants in the survey and focus group portions of the study

Proponent’s experience with previous versions of this information collection indicates that of 270 individuals contacted and asked to attend a focus group, 200 will agree to attend. This initial contact will take 15 minutes (or .25 hour).

The 200 attendees will taking self-administered survey will complete it in 20 minutes (.3333 hour). The focus group discussion (including comment sheet) will involved the same 200 people and will last approximately one hour and forty-five minutes (1.75 hour).

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Total estimated annual burden is **485 hours**.

- **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):** None
- **Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

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Table 2 - Estimated Cost to Respondents

| (a)<br>Description of the Collection Activity | (b)<br>Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents (Hours) | (c)*<br>Estimated Average Income per Hour | (d)<br>Estimated Cost to Respondents |
|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Scheduling into focus groups                  | 68  | \$17.92                                   | \$1,218.56                           |
| Completing survey                             | 67  | 17.92                                     | \$1,200.64                           |
| Focus group discussions                       | 350   | 17.92                                     | \$6,272.00                           |
| Totals  | ≈ 485   | \$17.92                                   | \$8,691.20 ≈<br>\$8,691              |

Based on average weekly salary from Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for March 2008 (<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/realer.pdf>) = \$17.92/hour (derived from all industries, all states), the estimated cost to respondents for this information collection is **\$8,691**.

- 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 \$6,238-**

**Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection \$1,800-**

**Employee travel costs \$8,000**

**Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information \$73,917 assuming 3 years of collection; 200 respondents per year**

**Employee labor and materials for collecting the information \$8,000-**

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**Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating,  
summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information**  
\$24,800-

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**Table 3 - Estimated Cost to the Government**

| ACTION ITEM  | PERSONNEL   | GS LEVEL      | HOURLY RATE* | HOURS | TOTAL COST  |
|--|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------|-------------|
| Employee labor and materials for developing, printing, and storing forms   | Clerk       | GS-7, step 5  | \$27.61      | 226   | ≈ \$ 6,240  |
| Employee labor and materials for developing computer systems, screens, or reports to support the collection                    | Clerk       | GS-7, step 5  | \$27.61      | 65    | ≈ \$ 1,795  |
| Employee travel costs  | Scientist   | N/A           | N/A          | N/A   | \$ 8,000    |
| Cost of contractor services or other reimbursements to individuals or organizations assisting in the collection of information | N/A         | N/A           | N/A          | N/A   | \$ 73,917   |
| Employee labor and materials for collecting the information  | Scientist   | GS-13, step 5 | \$58.25      | 137   | ≈ \$ 8,980  |
| Employee labor and materials for analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting on the collected information             | Scientist   | GS-13, step 5 | \$58.25      | 426   | ≈ \$ 24,815 |
| Total estimated cost to the Federal government for this information collection (all three years)                               | ≈ \$123,747 |               |              |       |             |
| Total estimated ANNUAL cost to the Federal government for this information collection  | ≈ \$41,249  |               |              |       |             |

\* Taken from: <http://www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/index.asp>, Cost to Government (Sacramento area) calculated at hourly wage multiplied by 1.3

The hourly wage for a GS-13/step 5 is \$44.81 multiplied by 1.3 (cost to government) equals \$58.25/hour: \$44.81/hour x 1.3 (cost to government) = \$58.25/hour cost to government.

The hourly wage for a GS-7/step 5 is \$21.24 multiplied by 1.3 (cost to government) equals \$27.61/hour: \$21.24 x 1.3 (cost to government) = \$27.61/hour cost to government.

Total annual estimated cost to the Federal government for this information collection is **\$41,249**.

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

This request is for three-year renewal of information collection 0596-0186. The increase in burden hours is based on experience gained from the initial collection of information. The proponents are also requesting approval to choose the geographic location of each year's survey based on previous wildfire activity.

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

Questionnaire responses will go into a Windows data file and be re-verified. Analysis of questionnaire responses will include summary and descriptive



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statistics, as well as correlation. Other analyses conducted as appropriate for a non-random sample and constraints will be clearly noted in any presentation of findings.

Focus group discussions will be transcribed and cross-verified for correspondence with audio recordings of discussions. Content analysis will be employed for each discussion area, with themes developed in keeping with content analysis protocols. Analysis of transcripts may employ software designed for this purpose.

Findings will be summarized in a technical report, and aspects of the study will be prepared for submission to one or more peer reviewed journals. In addition, findings will be included in papers, book chapters, and unit research-update summary, as well as other agency reporting mechanisms. The focus will be on respondents, rather than attempts to generalize to the population of community residents within and surrounding the subject forest. Findings will be included in presentations at scientific meetings, natural resource agency meetings, and public meetings, as appropriate.

**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 OMB approval number and expiration date will be displayed.

**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.