Supporting Statement for OMB 0596-0189

UNDERSTANDING VALUE TRADE-OFFS REGARDING FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAMS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

May 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, Statutes, and Regulations

   - PL-108-148, Health Forests Restoration Act

   Public Law 108-148, the Health Forests Restoration Act, improves the ability of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management lands. Such fuels reduction projects protect communities, watersheds, and other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, enhancing efforts to protect watersheds and addressing threats to forest and rangeland health.

   Federal agencies assigned wildland-fire protection responsibilities have undertaken a very ambitious and expensive forest fuels reduction program. There is a need to understand what residential communities know about such programs and the extent these communities support fuels reduction programs. The purpose of this study is to provide credible information to fire managers allowing these managers to develop fuels reduction treatment programs acceptable to residential communities.

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.**

   The original survey instrument was pretested with 9 head of households in the Florida region were it was to be applied. We wanted to test for comprehensibility, language clarity, understanding of the risk ladder and chance grids, bid amounts used, and the time it would take participants to complete the survey. The results of this pretest showed people thought the language used was clear and understandable, and also had a good understanding of the risk ladder and chance grids visual aids, and had a good comprehension of the overall study. On average it took participants about 15 to complete the survey. Few minor changes were needed after the pretest phase. For the extension request 3 persons were contacted to ensure there was no change in the level of understanding and comprehensibility of the survey. Again, there was no problem with the survey instrument. See question 8 below for the name of head of households who took the survey

   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.)

Two information collections are associated with this supporting statement.

The first, an initial contact information collection (Exhibit A), consists of nine questions to determine if the respondent will participate in a longer telephone survey. Those agreeing to participate are asked for the following:

- Postal address (used to mail questionnaire)
- Future date and time for an in-depth telephone interview based on questionnaire
- Short series of questions to ascertain base knowledge of fuels reduction alternatives

Those agreeing to participate in the study will receive a questionnaire (Exhibit B). The questionnaire will prepare respondents for an in-depth telephone interview scheduled for a later date. Respondents are asked:

- To assess the wildland fire risk condition of their residential area
- To describe the losses they would expect in their community and residences from wildland fire
- Their preference for different fuel reduction options
- Their socio-economic information

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.

Information collected from individual heads of households

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

The collected information is used to evaluate change in knowledge from initial contact (short telephone interview) to the in-depth interview, to determine which combination of fuel reduction alternatives respondents believe are most effective and the amount they (respondents) would be willing to pay to implement such alternatives. Findings reported in one or more presentations to scientific and management audiences.

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?

Collection of information occurs over the telephone.

e. How frequently will the information be collected?

Each respondent provides information twice, once for the short survey and once for the longer, in-depth interview. After the in-depth interview, no further contact occurs with respondents and they do not participate in further surveys.

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

The collected information is included in reports and manuscripts, in scientific journals, with scientific and others through presentations.

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

Collection requirements have not changed over time.

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 sample selection is through an initial random digit dialing procedure. Random digit dialing is a comprehensive method, and ensures inclusion in the survey of a wide range of households. The possibility of having prospective respondents participate in a computer-based collection is not practical at this time.

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 economic value of changes in risk can be estimated using "stated preference" techniques. In this research, the proponents are using a relatively new stated preference technique, known as "conjoint analysis," to evaluate economic trade-offs associated with wildfire risk mitigation in the wildland-urban interface. Conjoint analysis is a marketing research technique used by the business sector and environmental economists to understand the value of characteristics associated with a good or service. Unlike other valuation techniques that focus attention on the holistic value of changes in a good or service, conjoint analysis decomposes total value into its component parts. The sum of the "part-worth," or marginal willingness to pay, is then the estimate of the total value.

Within the context of this study, attention focuses on identifying a set of salient attributes that influence homeowner and community decisions to invest in activities that reduce wildfire hazard in the wildland-urban interface. Respondents select a set of attributes from the variety of potential changes in structural (e.g., home characteristics) and non-structural (e.g., domestic and community landscapes) attributes that can affect wildfire hazard. Risk changes are also be included as an attribute. Including the cost of wildfire hazard mitigation in a choice problem allows calculation of estimates in the economic value of changes in risk and the economic value of changes in structural and non-structural hazard mitigation activities.

Previously, the conjoint analysis method has provided estimates in the value of changes in various forests attributes. To the proponent's knowledge, the current study constitutes the only application of this stated preference methodology to wildland fires. The information proposed for collection is not available through other means.

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

The information collection does not directly or indirectly impacts small businesses.

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.

Without this information, agencies with fire protection responsibilities will lack the capability to evaluate public understanding of both proposed fuels reduction projects and programs, and the public's willingness to pay for implementing such programs. Management officials would have difficulty identifying salient attributes that influence decisions by homeowners and communities to invest in activities that reduce wildfire hazard. Without this information, it would be difficult to plan better fuels reduction programs, increasing the possibility that Federal fuels reduction programs would not be effectively targeted. Understanding which fuels reduction programs have public support reduces the probability of lawsuits and appeals that may delay implementation of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act mandates.

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;**

  Respondents are contacted twice, during an initial contact and again during an in-depth interview. After the in-depth interview no other contact with respondents occurs.

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

  N/A

- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**

  N/A

- **Requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical,**

government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;

N/A

- **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;**

  Sampling will involve approximately 1500 households in Florida (and possibly other southeastern states such as Georgia). A stratified random sampling procedure is used. Communities selected to participate represent varying levels of historical wildfire damage, including communities that experienced catastrophic loss from the 1998 Florida wildfires. Communities not experiencing catastrophic wildfire loss in the recent past will serve as a control. If possible, proponents will identify a "risk gradient" based on risk maps developed by Research Work Unit SRS-4851 (Economics of Forest Protection and Management). The risk maps characterize the mean fire risk across Florida communities, allowing sampling of communities along the "risk gradient."

- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**

  N/A

- **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**

  While confidentiality cannot be assured, proponents are informed that information collected will not be attached to any personally identifiable information. All possible steps taken to secure the information (restricted access, locked offices, etc.). Such steps do not decrease the quality of information shared with others.

- **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.**

  No proprietary information is requested, and identifying information is stored separately from the data. Identifying information is not reported in any manuscripts, reports, or presentations. Temporary tracking will be necessary to ensure participating respondents receive the questionnaire and go through the in-depth interview; however, control identification numbers will be applied to the data in lieu of a direct link between identify and responses.

  There are no other 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 announcement of the renewal of this information collection package appeared in the Federal Register on February 22, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 36, page 9760).

One comment was received in response to the notice. The comment was on how the Department of Agriculture was a wasteful and power hungry agency, and that this data collection effort is not needed or should be gathered at taxpayer expenses. No substantive issues of the proposal were addressed Comment included in package.

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.

The following reviewed this information collection:

- Dr. John B. Loomis, Colorado State University, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Ft. Collins, CO 80523; Phone 970.491.2485

  Professor Loomis is one of the premier experts in the field of nonmarket valuation and has extensive experience in developing and conducting survey based research. He provided direction and guidelines on development of the survey instrument. He finds the survey questionnaire clear, easy to implement, and short enough to encourage completion.

- Dr. Jeffrey Englin, University of Nevada Reno, Department of Applied Economics and Statistics, Mail Stop 204, Reno NV 89557

  Professor Englin is an expert econometrician who contributed ideas on how to structure the survey questionnaire to obtain valid data for econometric analysis. He is also an experience researcher in the field of nonmarket valuation of recreation activities.

- National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) reviewed the information collection instrument and methodology in 2005. Proponents made modifications based upon comments received. Exhibit C documents the NASS review and proponent’s response.

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 following individuals were contacted by the proponent and asked to comment on the data collection aspect of the survey:

- Barbara Meier, 2484 Misty Meadows Ct., Spring Hill, FL 34606
- Norma Howarth, 536 Flame Tree Drive, Ocala, FL 33572
- Marty M. Hall, 10252 S. Covington Terrace, Homosassa, FL 34446

All three individuals indicated that the instructions were clear, they had no concerns about the information they were asked to provide, the interviewer called them in a timely manner to complete the interview, and the survey was easy to use.

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

Considering the difficulties created by telemarketing campaigns for survey based research we are planning to provide a one-time incentive of approximately $20 per respondent to ensure a response rate close to 70 percent.

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

Proponents informed that the information collected is not attached to any personally identifiable information. The collected information is secured via control identification numbers, restricted access, locked offices, etc.). Personally identifiable information is stored separately from data and is not included in any manuscripts, reports, or presentations. Temporary tracking is used to ensure participating respondents receive the questionnaire and go through the in-depth interview; however, control identification numbers are applied to the data in lieu of a direct link between personal identifiable information and responses.

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.

Questions about ethnicity, race, and income are included in the survey for purposes of demographics. Interviewers tell respondents that they may decline to answer any questions.

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 – Annual Burden

(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)
Initial telephone contact - declining to participate	N/A	133	1	133	5 minutes (.083 hour)	11.08 hours
Initial telephone contact – agreeing to participate, Reading Mailed Questionnaire and Participating in In-depth interview	N/A	367	1	367	50 minutes (.8333 hour)	305.83 hours
Totals	---	500	---	500	---	316.91 ≈ 317 hours

<u>Respondents</u>

Initial telephone contact with 1500 households to obtain 1,100 completed interviews.

Telephone Contact – Declining to participate

Spread over the 3-year life of this OMB renewal, the estimated annual number of respondents declining to participate is 133.

1,500 households – 1,100 participants = 400 nonrespondents ÷ 3 years = 133 nonrespondents per year

Initial Telephone Contact – Agreeing to participate, Reading Mailed Questionnaire, and Participating In-Depth Interview

Of the 1,500 households contacted over 3 years, approximately 1,100 will agree to participate in the survey. Spread over the 3-year life of this OMB renewal, the estimated annual number of individuals who agree to participate via initial telephone contact, receive and read the mailed survey/questionnaire, and participate in the in-depth interview is 367.

1,100 individuals ÷ 3 years = 366.667 individuals per year ≈ 367 respondents

Total annual responses

133 responses + 367 responses = **500 responses per year**

Burden Hours: The annual burden for each activity associated with this Information Collection Request calculated as follows:

Telephone Contact – Declining to Participate

133 respondents per year x 5 minutes (.083 hour) per response = 11.08 hours

Telephone Contact – Agreeing to participate, Reading Mailed Questionnaire, and Participating In-Depth Interview

367 respondents per year x 45 minutes (.75 hour) per response = 305.83 hours

Total annual burden hours

11.08 hours + 308.83 hours = 316.91 hours per year ≈ **317 hours per year**

- **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.**

Table 2 – Estimated Annualized Cost to Respondents

(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
Initial telephone contact - declining to participate	11.08 hours	$17.91	$ 198.44
Initial telephone contact – agree to participate, Read Mailed Questionnaire and respond to	305.83	$17.91	5,477.42

(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
In-depth interview			
Totals	317 hours	---	**$5,675.86**

The estimated cost for information collection based on mean of all private salaries in the State of Florida ($17.91) from the Bureau of Labor, May 2007 (latest date available for state of Florida, http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_fl.htm#b00-0000). This is close to the average national rate for all salaries, $17.90 per hour, from the Bureau of Labor News Release for the month of April 2008, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/realer.pdf.

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

Table 3 – Estimated Cost to the Government

ACTION ITEM	PERSONNEL	GS LEVEL	HOURLY RATE*	HOURS	Total
Developing, printing, storing forms: Labor	1	14	$75.93	5	$379.65*
Developing, printing, storing forms - Materials	1	14	$75.93	2	$151.86*
Travel – Employees					$1,,000
Contractor Services**					$10,667
Incentives paid to respondents ($20 x 367 responses)					$7,340
Collecting information – Labor	1	14	$75.93	5	$379.65
Collecting information – materials					$112.33
Analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting – labor	1	14	$75.93	13	$987.09
Analyzing, evaluating, summarizing, and/or reporting – materials					$87.33
Totals					$21,104.91

* Most of the costs of developing, printing and storing the necessary materials have been incurred, as this is an extension of the research collection effort and all materials are already available. There is a minimal cost during the first year to reproduce needed materials.

**This includes salary costs associated with the Directors and Assistant Director of the University of Georgia Survey Research Center, and salary for interviewers. Costs annualized over 3 years.

** Taken from: http://www.opm.gov/oca/08tables/index.asp, Cost to Government calculated at hourly wage multiplied by 1.3*

Costs based on estimates split across the various functions and responsibilities for the Research Economist, support staff, and Federal cooperator involved in this project.

Total annual cost to the Government: **$21,104.91**

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

There is a decrease of 596 hours since the last submission. This is a result of corrections in calculation errors in the initial submission. This recalculation has resulted in a decrease in both the number of annual responses (from 1,100 to 500) and the annual burden hours (from 912 to 317). This information renewal requests approval for 317 burden hours, based on an estimated 500 responses annually.

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

One or more manuscripts will be submitted to peer-reviewed journals interested in fire management and natural resources economic issues.

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 number will be displayed on the written survey instrument along with the expiration date and will be available upon request to participants in the telephone interview.

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 identified in item 19 of form 83-I, "Certification Requirement for Paperwork Reduction Act."