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February 12, 2009
Director
Forest Management Staff
USDA Forest Service
Mail Stop 1103, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20250.

via E-mail to: InfoCollection0201@fs.fed.us

**Re: Information Collection; Role of Communities in Stewardship Contracting
Projects OMB Number: 0596-0201**

Dear Director,

In reference to *(1) Whether this collection of information is necessary for the stated purposes and the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical or scientific utility.* It appears that the collection of this information is necessary for the stated purposes and the proper performance of the functions of the agency. After reading through the Programmatic Monitoring of the Role of Communities in Stewardship Contracting Final Report for FY 2006 and FY 2007, the information appears to have practical utility.

In reference to *(2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used.* The validity of the methodology and assumptions used appear to be sound. We do not feel is in our scope to comment on the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information.

In reference to *3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.* It would be helpful to compare information collected in previous years with subsequent years. In addition, it may prove beneficial to report the results by region in conjunction with reporting the results nationally. For the FY 2007 report, the use of the Regional Vetting Analysis enhanced the quality of information obtained and should be used again in following years. Specifically, the recommendations for improvements made by the regional teams should be implemented where appropriate and evaluated for effectiveness.

In reference to (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents should be asked of the respondents during surveys. The quality of information collected through the various collection techniques should also be evaluated. For example, is it possible to obtain the same quality of information from an email than a phone call? In the FY 2006 report it indicated that phone calls were used because it was believed that the one-on-one approach would more accurately capture perceptions than other information collecting techniques. This still needs to be considered.

Thank you for allowing our input into your process.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Emily Ewart

Emily Ewart
Resource Specialist, Meeteetse Conservation District